

# **COUNTRY SYSTEM MAPPING**

## **Country Report: Greece**

**European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education**



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This country report has been drafted by Amélie Lecheval for the Agency in co-operation with the Greece Team:

Representative Board member: Athina-Anna Christopoulou

Country Analyst: Anastasia Vlachou



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#### Secretariat

Østre Stationsvej 33  
DK-5000 Odense C Denmark  
Tel.: +45 64 41 00 20  
[secretariat@european-agency.org](mailto:secretariat@european-agency.org)

#### Brussels Office

Rue Montoyer 21  
BE-1000 Brussels Belgium  
Tel.: +32 2 213 62 80  
[brussels.office@european-agency.org](mailto:brussels.office@european-agency.org)



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## INTRODUCTION

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The goal of the Country System Mapping (CSM) activity is to identify, map and analyse the key features that impact the effective implementation of inclusive education policy in practice in all Agency member countries' education systems. In a departure from previous thematic activities undertaken by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency), CSM considers the **whole** education system from the perspective of implementing policy for inclusive education in practice. However, within this system-wide view, there is a focus on the specific priorities Representative Board members (RBs) have already identified in relation to monitoring and evaluation, cross-sector working and quality assurance.

The main output from the CSM work is a systematic mapping of information on each country's education system.

Information from the individual CSM Country Reports has been analysed in two ways:

- **Thematic Analysis** to highlight issues (challenges and opportunities) emerging from the reports to use as the starting point for the Agency's Thematic Country Cluster Activities (TCCA).

Challenges for inclusion are defined as things the country needs to work on to reach an inclusive education system. Strengths for inclusion are things that encourage and reinforce inclusive practice in the country and could potentially be shown as an example to other countries.

- **Mapping** to inform TCCA groupings, based on the system structures and processes countries have (or do not have) in common.

The agreed goal for the mapping element of the CSM analysis work was to highlight parameters, or comparative factors, that indicate which country systems are structured and/or working in different – or similar – ways.

The information from the CSM work will be used within the remainder of the [Multi-Annual Work Programme 2021–2027](#) (MAWP). As of autumn 2024, country cluster activities will be organised which are closely aligned to individual country approaches to key issues for inclusive education, as well as system structures and processes countries have in common.



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## Work within a shared vision for inclusive education systems

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All Agency work is aligned with the [position on inclusive education systems](#). This agreed position states that the ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that:

All learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers ([European Agency, 2022, p. 1](#))<sup>1</sup>.

Agency work focuses on supporting the development of inclusive education systems in member countries to ensure every learner's right to inclusive and equitable educational opportunities. This aim is directed at all learners. However, all aspects of Agency work clearly recognise that some groups of learners face obstacles and barriers that mean they should be considered **learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education in mainstream schools in their local community, alongside their friends and peers**.

UNESCO identifies the possible obstacles and barriers to education learners may face as arising from:

... gender, remoteness, wealth, disability, ethnicity, language, migration, displacement, incarceration, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion and other beliefs and attitudes ([UNESCO, 2020, p. 4](#))<sup>2</sup>.

Many learners may face a combination of these factors and the intersectional (inter-connected) nature of learners' needs must be acknowledged. Every learner has their own unique experiences of discrimination and/or barriers to learning. Everything and anything that can marginalise learners and increase their chances of exclusion from mainstream inclusive education must be understood and recognised.

All Agency member countries are committed to working towards ensuring more inclusive education systems. They do so in different ways, depending on their past and current contexts and histories. Inclusive education systems are a vital component within the wider aspiration of more socially inclusive societies that all countries align themselves with, both ethically and politically. However, all Agency work clearly recognises that countries have differences in their ways of thinking about, identifying and making provision for different groups of learners who may be considered vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education.

All countries have undergone key conceptual changes in their thinking and policy priorities for developments as they move towards inclusive education as an approach that ensures high-quality education for all learners. Across countries, the first shift was made from the concept of special educational needs to special needs education. This shift represented a focus away from the learner (identified as having special educational needs) towards a focus on the provision they receive (special needs education for learners who experience difficulties at school). The term 'special needs education' has also widened the focus

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<sup>1</sup> European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022. *Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems*. Odense, Denmark

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, 2020. *Global Education Monitoring Report: Inclusion and education: all means all*. Paris: UNESCO



beyond learners with disabilities to include learners who appeared to be failing in school for a wide variety of reasons.

It is worth emphasising here that there have never been agreed definitions of the concepts of special educational needs or special needs education that can be consistently used across countries. The groups of learners considered as having special educational needs which require additional provision largely differ across countries.

The most recent shifts emphasise a move away from a concern with types of special needs or the categories a learner may or may not fall into, towards thinking of inclusion and inclusive education as an approach for all learners. They emphasise the barriers experienced by learners and focus overall on learners who may be vulnerable to exclusion from educational opportunities for different reasons.

Agency work focuses on supporting the development of inclusive education systems in its member countries to ensure every learner's right to inclusive and equitable educational opportunities. This aim is directed at all learners, while recognising the need to specifically address learners who may be vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education.

## Overview of the Country System Mapping

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The information collected in the CSM activity aims to provide evidence of and reflection on **where countries currently are** in their inclusive thinking, policy and provision for all learners, but in particular for those learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education.

CSM work focuses on the **whole** education system and how certain structures, mechanisms and processes may impact on the implementation of policy for inclusive education in practice. It aims to get insights into how the needs of all learners – including individuals or groups of learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education – are being considered. Many questions refer to learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education. Countries have opportunities to clarify what 'learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education' means for them and their systems.

However, it is acknowledged that it may not be possible for countries to provide information covering all learners and all learner groups.

The questions specifically focus on four priorities RBs have identified for wider future Agency work in relation to:

- Monitoring and evaluation
- Cross-sector working
- Quality assurance
- Effective policy implementation.

There are six main sections:

Section 1. Background to the inclusive education system

Section 2. Overview of the education system

Section 3. Legislative and policy framework



Section 4. System governance

Section 5. Quality assurance and accountability

Section 6. Stakeholder collaboration, co-operation and effective communication

Where countries have provided additional comments and reflections, these are included in a separate Section 7.

In each of these sections, relevant information was collected covering International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels 02 (pre-primary education) to 3 (upper-secondary education).

Each section has two subsections which require different types of country information, as outlined below.

All questions were rephrased into statements for the purpose of this report.

### **System description**

Sections 1 to 6 include specific questions that aim to provide a factual description of key aspects of the legislation and policy framework for inclusive education in the country. The system information aims to accurately describe the relevant policy frameworks in countries.

Different types of questions are used to collect information that describes important system features – structures, mechanisms and processes – relating to governance, monitoring, quality assurance and collaboration. The descriptive information includes sources of original material and, where possible, is supported with quotes and citations from relevant policy documents and published work.

The descriptive information will be analysed to highlight parameters, or comparative factors, that indicate how countries are structured and/or working. This mapping will be used to inform country cluster groupings based on system structures and processes that countries have in common.

The descriptive information will also be used to prepare thematic cluster activities with Agency member countries. These activities will elaborate and collect even more detailed country information for the different priority areas from 2023 onwards.

### **Evaluative commentary**

An important element of the questions is the evaluative, qualified and evidenced-based reflection on the factual information provided in sections 1 to 6.

The evaluative commentaries aim to provide a qualified reflection on the implementation of the legislation and policy framework for inclusive education in practice. They provide observations on and interpretations of the system factors that impact positively or negatively on inclusive education.

The evaluative commentaries reflect on **where and why the practice of inclusive education differs from or actively supports the stated policy intentions and goals** in the system description.





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For the evaluative commentaries linked to each section, the following general questions are posed:

- What have been the perceived main challenges (barriers and hindrances) for inclusive education? Why do they exist and what are the consequences?
- What have been the perceived opportunities (support and ways forward) for inclusive education? What areas for development are identified and how can they be successfully implemented?

In addition, specific topic-related questions are also suggested.

The analysis of the evaluative commentary information will take a grounded approach. It will aim to identify issues that emerge as barriers to or supporting factors for meeting the needs of all learners in inclusive systems.

This analysis will be used to inform future Agency activities with member countries regarding country-specific and common system challenges and opportunities.



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## SECTION 1. BACKGROUND TO THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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This section provides key background information in relation to inclusive education in the country.

### **1.1 Overview of the historical development of inclusive education**

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The history of people with disabilities and/or special education needs and their education has gone through various stages of change based on the social perceptions of each era. The most distinct stages could be summarised in three:

1. the stage of rejection, isolation and charitable care (1930–1969);
2. the stage of separate education and initial integrationist initiatives (1970–1980);
3. the stage of integration and inclusive initiatives (1990 to present).

(Buchner et al., 2021; Information Bulletin of Special Education 1994; Education Acts 453/1937, 905/1951, 1143/1981, 1566/1985, 2817/2000, 3699/2008, 4823/2021; Nteropoulou-Nterou & Slee, 2019; Vlachou (2001, 2000, 1999, 1994); Zoniou-Sideri et al., 2006).

#### **1930–1969: The stage of rejection, isolation and charitable care**

During the first half of the twentieth century, the majority of disabled children were perceived as the social stigma of their families, were isolated within asylums, segregated private institutions or behind the closed doors of their home. Disability was accompanied by feelings of guilt and embarrassment. The education of disabled children was solely dependent on private and/or religious charitable initiatives. The dominance of private and philanthropic sector(s) over this area and the great number of illiterate disabled people was a result and reflection of the non-existing legislative framework to ensure the right of the disabled children to be educated. Private/philanthropic initiatives were solely based on the politics of institutionalisation connected with an extensive sector of residential or total institutions in the sense of Goffman's asylums. The notion of education at that time was limited in the scope and nature of the work done at sheltered workshops whenever such workshops existed in the institutions. A strong discourse on defectology in the child and psychopathology was developed. Special Education operated with piecemeal legislative provisions; examples are:

- Law 453/1937:
  - defined the notion of 'mentally retarded child' (sic);
  - established the first special primary school;
- Law 905/1951:
  - defined issues related to the education of the pupils with visual impairments;
  - decided on the provision of a life allowance.



Importantly, the Educational Act of 1964 went some lengths to modernise and democratise the ordinary educational system (i.e. made education free of charge, referred to the education of children with visual impairments/blind children in ordinary schools).

### **1970–1980: The stage of separate education and initial integrationist initiatives**

The European Union has started to place particular emphasis on integration, educational and social, and funded programme implementation and research in the member states. The first HELIOS programmes brought together experts and representatives of organisations for people with disabilities and their parents, who designed and implemented joint actions. During this period, the Ministry of Education introduced the Act 1143/81 (that had been prepared since 1975). The 1143/1981 Act has been considered to be the first political action to establish the legislative dimension of special education.

The Act recognised for the first time the responsibility of the state for disabled children's education. This Act, entitled 'Act on Special Education, Vocational Education, Employment and Social Care of deviant individuals', clearly favoured special segregated education. Article 3 stated that 'Special Education is provided only in special schools, special classes and institutions'. There is no reference to integration. The purpose of the law was:

the provision of special education and special vocational training to those who deviate from the norm, the implementation of social care measures and the corresponding possibilities of their integration in the social life...

The definition of learners with disabilities was based on a medical categorical approach, including socially delinquent learners. Education, from the age of 6 to 17 years, is not yet compulsory for disabled children, while it was for children without disabilities. In 1981, Greece was incorporated into the European Union.

From 1982 onwards, the new political discourses, influenced by wider European trends, claimed that the Ministry of Education was in full support of integration. The new government passed the 1566/1985 Act concerning 'The structure and function of primary and secondary education'. It was claimed that the orientation of the Act was to reconsider the ordinary educational system and to incorporate, for the first time, special education within the process of restructuring the broader educational framework. The 1566/1985 Act put into practice the legislative, at least administrative, conditions for the integration of learners with disabilities and special needs. However, the Act was still based on a medical-individualistic approach to special needs. Further, the Ministry of Education in the 1566/85 Act, instead of creating conditions for the development of alternative models of integration, promoted mainly the model of special or resource room classes. In practice, both the 1143/81 and 1566/1985 Act resulted in the increased tendency of creating special schools and/or special classes within ordinary schools. For instance, in 1978 there were 67 special schools while in 1992 there were 200 special schools; from 2,725 learners in special schools in 1982 they reached the number of 12,383 in 1992; as far as special classes are concerned, from 7 special classes in 1983 there were 602 such classes in 1992.

The development, however, was done with little scientific planning and the result of this practice was to fill special classes with children with learning problems, different special



needs, minorities, etc. The special classes that had been developed by the 1143/81 Act were mainly self-contained classes that the children attended during the whole school year, while the special classes created by the 1566/1985 Act were ‘tutoring classes’/resource room units and served mainly learners of general education. Much later, in relation to other countries and in relation to various external factors, such as the HELIOS programmes, integration began to be discussed and some other models were tried at a very limited level, aimed at placing learners with special needs, especially blind children, in general classes with other children.

### **1990 to present: The stage of integration and inclusive initiatives**

Once Greece was incorporated into the EU, its education system, including special education, was influenced by wider European trends as well as The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education in 1994. During this period, disability and parents’ associations showed intense mobility, claimed participation in decision-making processes, in the modernisation of education, the promotion of the social integration of children with disabilities and special needs. Some of these claims were won for the first time by the disability movement. At the same time, conferences were organised by these bodies in collaboration with experts and public opinion began to be sensitised. Further, the first systematic efforts of teacher training in special education had begun, as scientists from the field of special education and a few scientists from the field of inclusive education from Greece or abroad began to appear, raised a scientific discourse and claimed the space previously held by doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists. The issue of social attitudes and perceptions, the change of terminology, the educational and social integration of disabled people, and the modernisation of education were topics that began to be heard for the first time in teacher training classes at universities from 1990 onward.

Six years after the Salamanca statement, the Ministry of Education introduced the 2817/2000 Act entitled ‘Education of persons with special education needs’. For the first time, learners needs are described as relative to their education, emphasis is given on the educational needs, special classes are renamed as ‘inclusive classes’ – even though they are still functioning as pull-out programmes – while special schools are restricted only to learners who are diagnosed as having severe and complex disabilities.

The Act refers to the creation of IEP (Individualised Educational Plans), and Greek Sign Language is being established as a formal language in ordinary education. An additional, positive element of the 2817/2000 Act is the appointment of education staff (i.e. music therapists, sign language interpreters, mobility instructors for learners with visual impairments) while at the same time it ensures the provision of modern technology teaching tools in the education of learners with SEN (i.e. Braille machines, book recording programmes for learners with partial or total visual impairment, sign language dictionaries, etc.). While there is an effort to incorporate into this Act more inclusive terminology and place emphasis on inclusion, at the same time it seems that a special education system is developed alongside or within ordinary education. No measures are established for supporting collaborative teaching practices and the new act is still based on a deficit approach to special needs.



The dominance of a ‘deficit model’ in the Greek context is reinforced in the next Act as well (Law 3699/2008). Despite the recognition that ‘disability constitutes a natural part of the human condition’, the dominance of a deficit approach is evident in the statement that ‘the type and degree of special educational needs defines the form, kind and category of special education provision (Law 3699/2008, article 1, point 1). As a matter of fact, the 3699/2008 Act includes almost 15 categories of disability and /or special educational needs. However, the same Act indicates that ‘Special Education is the set of educational services provided to learners with disabilities and identified special educational needs or to learners with special educational needs’.

The state is committed to continuously establish and upgrade the compulsory nature of special education as an integral part of compulsory and free state education, and to ensure the provision of free state special education for people of all ages and for all stages and educational levels. It is also committed to ensuring, to all citizens with disabilities and identified special educational needs, equal opportunities for full participation and contribution to society, independent living, financial self-sufficiency and autonomy, with full guarantee of their rights to education and social and professional integration. The provision of special education to learners with SEN (according to the degree of difficulty of the learners but also the social/educational conditions, i.e. areas where there is no special school) includes:

- placement in a mainstream class without additional personnel resources;
- placement in regular classes where learners with SEN receive support by the hour or receive parallel support by teaching assistants and/or special education teachers;
- placement in resource room units/pull-out programmes in mainstream schools for some hours of the school day or school week (in which only learners with SEN are educated);
- placement in special schools.

Thus, Greece belongs to the ‘multi-track’ approach to integration and/or inclusion.

In 2012, Greece signed the implementation processes of the UNCRPD. The development of thinking about inclusive education within the context of universal declarations of support for the principles of ‘Education for All’ and ‘Cultural Diversity’ developed as a result of social transformation and as an outcome of globalisation, mass migration and multiculturalism; these trends brought forward notions such as ‘citizenship’, ‘social justice’, ‘diversity’ ‘quality education’ and a broader notion of inclusion – these concepts entered the education landscape as academics, policy-makers and practitioners engaged with the changing world of special education as well as the changing role of education.

So in 2021, a new Act (4823/2021) was introduced (it is not yet fully in force) to upgrade the education system with an emphasis on creating a pyramid of advisory and monitoring systems, promote in some way the autonomy of the school unit even though the educational system in Greece remains highly centralised, create support systems, and increase accountability. The 4823/2021 Act is claimed to be based on an:

Educational approach which takes into account the needs of the heterogeneity of the learner population, and aims to remove barriers to learning and ensure



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equal access to the educational system of all learners, including learners with disabilities and special educational needs (Law 4823/2021 Article 4 ).

## **1.2 Legislation and policy definitions linked to key concepts within inclusive education systems**

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### **Inclusive education**

The educational approach takes into account the needs of the heterogeneity of the learner population and aims to remove barriers to learning and ensure equal access to the educational system of all learners, including learners with disabilities and special educational needs (Law 4823/2021 Article 4. Source: Legislative Definitions country report).

### **Special needs education**

No definition.

### **Learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education**

No legal definition exists. However, the following groups of learners are considered as vulnerable to exclusion from education:

- learners with disability and/or special needs;
- learners who attend school in areas with low educational quotient, high school drop-out and limited access to tertiary education, as well as low socio-economic quotients, such as low component well-being quotient and high risk poverty quotient;
- educationally, socially and/or culturally disadvantaged learners (who attend intercultural schools);
- refugees;
- Roma.

Source: *Legislative Definitions country report*

### **Learners with special educational needs**

Article 1, Law 3699/2008, as amended, recognises disability as ‘a complex social and political phenomenon’. The state undertakes to ensure equal participation in society, independent living and economic autonomy for people with disability and special educational needs, as well as full consolidation of their rights to education and social and professional inclusion:

The state and all services and officials of the state must recognise disability as part of human existence but also as a complex social and political phenomenon and in any case prevent the degradation of the rights of persons with disabilities to participate or contribute in social life (European Agency, [Country information](#)).



Article 3 of the law defines learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN) as those who have significant difficulties in learning for the whole or some period of their school life, due to sensory, intellectual, cognitive or developmental problems, mental health and neuropsychological disorders which, according to their interdisciplinary assessment, affect the process of their school adjustment and learning.

1. Learners with disabilities and special educational needs include especially those with intellectual disabilities, sensory visual disabilities (blind, visually impaired), sensory hearing disabilities (deaf, hard of hearing), motor disabilities, chronic non-curable diseases, speech and language disorders, special learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, attention deficit disorder (with or without hyperactivity), developmental disorders (autism spectrum), mental disorders and multiple disabilities.
2. The category of learners with disabilities and special educational needs does not include learners with low school performance that is causally associated with external factors, such as linguistic or cultural factors.
3. Learners with complex cognitive, emotional and social difficulties, delinquent behaviour due to abuse, parental neglect and abandonment, or due to domestic violence, belong to people with special educational needs.
4. Learners with special educational needs refers also to learners who have one or more intellectual abilities and talents developed to a degree that far exceeds the expectations for their age group. The remaining provisions of this law do not apply to these categories of learners.

Sources: *European Agency [Country information](#); Act 3699/2008; Legislative Definitions country report*

### **1.3 Individuals or groups of learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education focused on in the report**

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No information.

### **1.4 Development of thinking around learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education**

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No information.

### **1.5 Future education system developments that may impact positively or negatively on inclusive education**

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With regard to persons with disabilities and following the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities review of the educational policy of Greece in 2019, a special technical group was formed which consisted of members of the political leadership and competent officials of all ministries. The committee reflected on the current situation in the public administration – at all fields of the state – and developed an extensive series of



proposals aimed at establishing a **National Action Plan for Disability**. These processes resulted in the formulation of the first National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, drawn up under the co-ordination of the Minister of State. The National Action Plan was formulated in accordance with the United Nations guidelines and finalised in consultation with the disability movement and civil society. The National Action Plan is currently being implemented and provides a wide array of actions in the field of education for learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs.

### **The Strategic Action Plan for the Equal Access to Education of Persons with Disabilities**

Following the finalisation of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the **Strategic Action Plan for the Equal Access to Education of Persons with Disabilities** was formulated by the Greek Ministry of Education. The Strategic Action Plan, which was an extension of the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, comprises 13 operational objectives, with a clear implementation deadline in key areas of inclusive policy and practice.

The Strategic Action Plan aims to:

- support the right of persons with disabilities to equal access to education;
- contribute to the removal of barriers to learning and the creation of safe learning environments that can meet the diverse needs of children and young people with disabilities;
- contribute to putting into practice the constitutional requirement that guarantees that persons with disabilities 'have the right to enjoy provisions that ensure their autonomy, professional integration and participation in the social, economic and political life of the country' (article 21, paragraph 6).

The National and the Strategic Action Plan comprises 13 operational objectives, which are further grouped into projects and actions, with a clear implementation deadline in the following key areas of intervention:

1. Developing and supervising a Strategic Action Plan for the equal access of persons with disabilities to a quality, inclusive education
2. Reviewing the current legal framework
3. Allocating adequate human and material resources
4. Improving environmental and learning accessibility, with benefits and adaptations to the environment, assistive technology, educational materials and social life in all educational structures of all levels of education
5. Strengthening early childhood intervention
6. Strengthening vocational education
7. Ensuring equal access to lifelong learning and higher education
8. Ensuring equal treatment of persons with disabilities in higher education
9. Developing pilot programmes with regard to specific issues
10. Expanding the statistics data collection





11. Safeguarding equal access to education for learners belonging to vulnerable social groups, e.g. refugee-immigrants with disabilities, Roma with disabilities
12. Ensuring the right to free expression/raising the voice of people with disabilities
13. Evaluating the operation of inclusion classes and parallel support.

Eighteen months after the finalisation of the Strategic Action Plan for the Equal Access to Education of Learners with Disabilities, several steps have been taken for its implementation by all the directorates of the Ministry and several others have been planned. Indicative steps are shown below:

#### *1. Developing and supervising a Strategic Action Plan for the equal access of persons with disabilities to a quality, inclusive education*

The formation of the Strategic Action Plan has been completed. A supervisory framework for its implementation has been set up with specific indicators and objectives. A committee has been set up for the monitoring and evaluation of the progress made with regard to the implementation of the actions of the Strategic Action Plan.

Future steps: The Strategic Plan will be periodically updated, according to the needs and priorities of the Ministry. An information campaign is planned concerning the equal access of people with disabilities to education and the promotion of inclusive education.

#### *2. Reviewing the current legal framework*

Law preparatory committees have been set up to develop laws in all areas anticipated in the Action Plan (primary and secondary education, lifelong learning, vocational training and tertiary education). As a result:

- Law 4823/2021 has been issued which, among others, reforms the supportive educational structures with an inclusive approach;
- a new Unified Regulation of School Networks of Educational Support (SDEY) and the Interdisciplinary Support Committees (EDY) of school units of the general and vocational education has been issued;
- Law 4763/2020 has been issued which reforms vocational education and places emphasis on apprenticeship issues for persons with disabilities and/or special educational needs.

Future steps: Legislative regulations have been devised, which are expected to be included in the Framework Law for Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). New laws and regulations will be issued which will focus on the reform of the institution of parallel support and inclusive classes as well as the reform of the Special Vocational Training Schools.

#### *3. Allocating adequate human and material resources*

The permanent appointment of 4,500 special education teachers and 10,500 mainstream teachers has been made. Teacher-training activities on inclusive education issues are being implemented (e.g. a programme with the title 'Teacher training in differentiated instruction' is currently provided to 22,500 teachers by the Institute of Educational Policy).



Future steps: A series of [ESPA](#) projects for the provision of inclusive education will keep on being implemented. Within the framework of project National Recovery Plan 'Greece 2.0' entitled 'Teacher training Actions', training of special education and inclusive education teachers in the use of technological tools and digital material in the educational process is planned, among other programmes.

#### *4. Improving environmental and learning accessibility, with benefits and adaptations to the environment, assistive technology, educational materials and social life in all educational structures of all levels of education*

Two physical and digital accessibility committees have been set up which assess the current situation and establish a Universal Accessibility Plan that ensures accessibility to all education services and schools in the country. Large-scale actions are being taken to develop accessible material, printed and digital. A total of 166 new general education curricula have been issued.

Future steps: An Accessibility Plan is currently being drafted by the physical and digital accessibility committees created by Law 3699/2008. A draft Accessibility Guide has been drawn up and, after its pilot application, it is expected to be distributed to all schools of the country, to all Lifelong Learning Structures, Tertiary Education and all bodies supervised by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. An Inclusive Education Guide has also been prepared which will be distributed to all schools in the country. Complementary to the 166 new curricula, there will be an education Guide prepared with the inclusive education principles as a focal point. Curricula for Special Kindergartens, Special Primary Schools and Vocational Education and Training schools will be devised. Resources are planned by the National Reform Trust so as to equip the special schools and inclusive classrooms with the necessary technological equipment and tools. For this reason, a mapping project of the needs in technological equipment of the aforementioned schools and inclusion classes across the country is currently underway.

#### *5. Strengthening early childhood intervention*

An action plan for early educational intervention is currently being prepared, in collaboration with ministries.

Future steps: A key action to the plan is the pilot programme for early educational intervention, which will be implemented via National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) specialised project 'Upgrading of Special Education and educational services, creation of an inclusive school', in co-operation with the Institute of Educational Policy (IEP). Through the ESPA project, due to be developed are:

- a text on policy and recommendations about the legislative and institutional framework and the issuance of a common ministerial decision;
- a protocol of diagnostic assessment and support in early intervention ages;
- a Transition and Studies programme, an Individualised Programme of therapeutic Intervention-Rehabilitation, and transition of children with disabilities aged 3–9 years.



Moreover, the issuance of a common ministerial decision is underway, with the proposal of IEP as to the regulation of issues concerning the design and implementation of early intervention.

#### *6. Strengthening vocational education*

Legislative changes to upgrade the vocational education of learners with disabilities are currently underway.

Future steps: Upgrading of vocational education and training (VET) schools will be realised through legislative regulations, which are due to be implemented. Curricula for vocational education and training schools will be devised.

#### *7. Ensuring equal access to lifelong learning and higher education*

Emphasis has been placed on upgrading the institution of apprenticeship and improving the connection of learners with disabilities to the labour market. A legislative framework has been introduced, which unequivocally states that an indispensable prerequisite for the conversion and licensing of the Lifelong Learning Centres is abiding by the accessibility specifications for people with disabilities.

Future steps: Upgrading the institution of apprenticeship for learners with disabilities is among the directorate's main priorities.

#### *8. Ensuring equal treatment of persons with disabilities in higher education*

The legal framework governing higher education, with a focus on inclusion and the design of a plan to enhance universal accessibility, is in the pipeline. The accessibility of all higher education structures is recorded. An Accessibility and Support Committee for Persons with Disabilities has been set up in each higher education institution and a relevant network has been created. The inclusive dimension of education is promoted in university curricula. Actions are being taken to improve the connection of learners with disabilities to the labour market.

Future steps: Legislative regulations are expected to be included in the Framework Law for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Anticipated, inter alia, are the following:

- Designation of a competent body for disabled learners in the administration of HEIs
- Institutionalisation of a consultant professor for equal access for persons with disabilities and special educational needs
- Establishment of a committee for equal access for the disabled and persons with special educational needs in every HEI.

#### *9. Developing pilot programmes with regard to specific issues*

Future steps: The pilot programme for the creation of inclusive school communities was decided to be implemented within the context of the programme 'Implementation of the European Child Guarantee – Promoting Inclusive Education in Greece Phase 2', which has been selected for funding by the European Commission Reform Directorate, after



submission of a relevant proposal from the Directorate of Special Education. The implementation of the programme is due to start in June 2022.

The pilot programme for early educational intervention will be implemented by the Institute of Educational Policy in the context of the most specialised NSRF project 'Upgrading of Special Education and Training Services, creation of an inclusive school'. The project concerns early identification protocols and action plans for Early Educational Intervention with the aim to timely detect special educational needs and intervene for immediate provision of necessary educational support.

#### *10. Expanding the statistics data collection*

The way of collecting data regarding primary, secondary and university learners with disabilities is upgraded. The infrastructure has been created in the MySchool database (Diophantus, 2013) regarding the collection of data for learners with disabilities by category of disability. The way of collecting data for trainees/apprentices with disabilities from the educational units of vocational education, training and lifelong learning is also systematised.

Future steps: Statistics data collection will be further upgraded.

#### *11. Safeguarding equal access to education for learners belonging to vulnerable social groups, e.g. refugee-immigrants with disabilities, Roma with disabilities*

Statistics have been collected for this vulnerable population. Following co-operation with the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum, the relevant data collection procedure has been standardised. A plan is being prepared to upgrade the educational and psycho-social services provided to these people.

Future steps: An advisory committee for the development and implementation of a plan for the provision of integrated assessment services and support interventions to learners belonging to vulnerable social groups is underway.

#### *12. Ensuring the right to free expression/raising the voice of people with disabilities*

Law 4823/2021 makes relevant provisions.

Future steps: The institutions in which a higher percentage of representation of learners with disabilities could be secured are being explored.

#### *13. Evaluating the operation of the Inclusion Classes and Parallel Support*

The overall evaluation of the way in which inclusion is approached in our country is underway.

Future steps: The action will be completed through an NSRF project of the IEP, a relevant invitation has been issued and a proposal has been submitted. The title of the project is 'Upgrading of Special Education and training services, creation of an inclusive school'.

Apart from the implementation of the action plan mentioned above, **wider reforms** are also taking place in the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs at this time which are expected to have an impact on inclusive education. Specifically, some of the main axes of



the policies currently being implemented and expected to do so in the near future are the following:

- strengthening the provisions of all learners, aiming at the transition to an inclusive educational model;
- emphasising the cultivation of ‘21st century skills’/skills upgrade;
- investing in teachers’ capabilities (training – evaluation);
- emergency management of the pandemic and identification of new opportunities;
- digital transformation;
- prioritising and investing in upgrading vocational education and training.

## Evaluative commentary

This section provides a qualified, evidenced-based reflection on the **challenges, opportunities and consequences** of developments towards inclusive education. It specifically considers political decisions that have impacted (positively or negatively) upon the vision for and implementation of inclusive education in the country. It also considers how changes in thinking around learners who are vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education have impacted upon policy and practice.

The incorporation of Greece into the EU, the International Declarations, the social transformation in terms of migration and multiculturalism, and the intense mobility of disability and parents’ associations have given impetus to political notions of equal participation, respect to diversity, quality education, social justice, inclusion/cultural inclusion (Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou 2012; [Anastasia Vlachou lecture, 2021](#)).

At the same time, however, inclusion and inclusive education was a top-down policy – more of a European directive than an educational demand (Zoniou-Sideri, Nteropoulou-Nterou and Vlachou-Balafouti 2012). This has generated resistance from the field of education, as it was neither prepared for nor supported in implementing inclusive learning practices/communities (Lampropoulou and Panteliadou, 2000; Vlachou, 2001).

The 1566/1985 Act provided a great opportunity by focusing not on special education as a separate field but on the structure and function of primary and secondary education, aiming to incorporate for the first time the education of learners with disabilities and/or SEN in ordinary education; it failed, however, to create the conditions for the development of alternative models of integration since it promoted mainly the model of special or withdrawal classes (Zoniou-Sideri et al., 2006). Further, the notions of ‘special/segregated provisions’ (1143/1981 Act) and ‘integration’ (1566/1985 Act) were introduced within the same decade. Thus, while in other countries these complex notions were introduced within a period of more than 40–50 years, within Greek society both notions were introduced almost simultaneously, generating social and practical confusion as to what equality of opportunity in special education means (Vlachou, 2001). Thus, the 1566/1985 Act, while introducing a specific ideology, lacked basic specifications and programmes that would promote its implementation (Lampropoulou and Panteliadou 2000).



The beginning of the 21st century (2817/2000 and 3699/2008) can be characterised as the symbolic starting point of a new era for the Greek inclusive discourse. The language of social and educational inclusion is now central in discussions of social policy, blending with the more traditional language of integration and benefit-orientated policy (Zoniou-Sideri et al., 2006). It states that children with special needs should be educated in mainstream schools, *unless the type and severity of their 'difficulties' do not make that possible*. While the most recent Acts (3699/2008; 4823/2021) utilise an inclusive discourse, at the same time, a strong deficit and individualistic approach to learning (and to disability and special educational needs) prevails (Koutsoklenis and Papadimitriou, 2021; Nteropoulou-Nterou and Slee, 2019). Two major challenges that the Greek educational policy face are:

1. to move away from the historically dominant medical/deficit and individualistic approach to learning, and focus more on issues of inclusive curricula, inclusive pedagogies and inclusive assessment;
2. to create substantial mechanisms and measures in order to close the gap between stated and enacted policies.

Currently, the vast majority of disabled learners and learners with special educational needs are in ordinary education, but while the policies talk about inclusion, the practices reflect more traditional integrationist approaches (Hellenic Statistical Authority, ELSTAT; [Anastasia Vlachou lecture, 2021](#)). More complications are to be found in the policy/practices related to secondary education and to children with specific disabilities (i.e. learners with intellectual disabilities, learners with complex needs) (Buchner et al., 2021).

Despite the above, in comparison to the past, one of the positive aspects of current policies and trends is that the inclusion of disabled children and adults within the wider community has started to become more visible in different social arenas, even though much development and work is still needed.



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## SECTION 2. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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This section provides information on the structures and features of the whole education system that influence the development and implementation of inclusive education in the country.

### 2.1 Overview of the education system

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The provision of free education to all citizens and at all levels of the state education system is a constitutional principle of the Greek State. The Greek educational system is centralised. National laws, presidential decrees and ministerial acts are prevalent within it. The compulsory mainstream education system lasts 11 years and extends from the ages of 4 to 15. Compulsory education in Greece is:

- Two-year compulsory attendance for 4 and 5-years-olds in *nipiagogeio* (pre-primary school) – (ISCED 0.2).
- Six-year attendance of learners in *dimotiko scholeio* (primary school) – (ISCED 1).
- Three-year attendance of learners in *gymnasio* (lower secondary education school) – (ISCED 2).

The formal Greek education system includes:

- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Second Chance Schools (SDE)
- Post lower secondary vocational education and training
- Post-secondary vocational training
- Higher education.

#### Primary education

##### *Nipiagogeio (pre-primary school)*

Pre-primary education in *nipiagogeio* (ISCED 020) is part of primary education as it is regulated by the same legislation ([Law 1566/1985](#)). Recently introduced compulsory attendance for a two-year period starts at age 4 and is free of charge ([Law 4521/2018](#)). From the school year 2021/22, this is fully implemented at national level including all municipalities of Greece ([Law 4704/2020](#)) ([Ministry of Education, Eurydice](#)).

Infant centres (*vrefikoi stathmoi*), infant/child centres (*vrefonipiakoi stathmoi*) and child centres (*paidikoi stathmoi*) represent early childhood care. They are run under the remit of the municipal authorities. They cater for children between the ages of 2 months and up to the age of the beginning of compulsory education.





### *Dimotiko scholeio*

Primary education is the next stage. *Dimotiko scholeio* (primary school) spans 6 years. It concerns children in the age range of 6–12 years and includes grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Since school year 2016/17, there is a single type of school with a new revised daily timetable. Within this framework, all pre-primary and primary schools provide an optional all-day programme. They may be public or private.

The Ministry of Education supervises the organisation and operation of pre-primary and primary schools. Infant and child centres – education areas for children up to 4 years old – are mainly overseen by the Ministry of Interior Affairs (with municipalities operating as the relevant bodies) and by other bodies as well ([Eurydice](#)).

### *The objectives of pre-primary and primary schools*

*Nipiagogeio*: Pre-primary education's purpose, as stipulated in the framework [law 1566/1985](#), is to help children develop physically, emotionally, mentally and socially, and in particular:

- develop their senses and organise their actions, motor and mental ones;
- enrich and organise their experiences from the physical and social environment and acquire the skill to differentiate the relations and their interactions therein;
- develop the ability to comprehend and express themselves with symbols and particularly in the fields of language, mathematics and aesthetics;
- forge interpersonal relations boosting their gradual and harmonious social inclusion;
- develop initiatives freely and effortlessly in an organised environment and adjust in the two-way relation between an individual and a group ([Law 1566/1985](#)).

*Dimotiko scholeio*: According to [law 1566/1985](#), primary school aims at the multifaceted intellectual and physical development of children. In particular, primary school helps learners:

- broaden and re-arrange the relationship between creative activity and things, conditions and phenomena under study;
- build up mechanisms helping them to assimilate knowledge, develop physically, improve their physical and mental health;
- conquer the content of the most basic concepts and gradually acquire the ability to ascend from sense data to the sphere of abstract thinking;
- attain the ability to use correct oral and writing skills;
- familiarise themselves with moral, religious, national, humanitarian and other values and organise them into a system of values;
- cultivate their aesthetic criterion, so as to appreciate works of art and express themselves accordingly, through their own artistic creations.

Source: [Eurydice](#)





## Secondary Education

*Gymnasio* (lower secondary school/junior high school) is compulsory. They may be public or private.

- It lasts three years (Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3).
- It provides general education.
- It covers ages 12–15.
- It is a prerequisite for enrolling at general or vocational upper secondary schools (*Lykeio*).
- Parallel to *imerisio gymnasio* (day lower secondary school), *esperino gymnasio* (evening lower secondary school) operates. Attendance starts at the age of 14.

The purpose of the general compulsory secondary education provided in *gymnasio* is to promote the comprehensive development of learners in relation to the opportunities they have at this age and the corresponding requirements of life ([Law 1566/1985](#)).

In particular, the *gymnasio*, among other purposes, helps learners to:

- expand their value system and focus on creative goals and humanitarian practice;
- complement and combine the acquisition of knowledge with the corresponding social concerns;
- successfully deal with various situations and seek solutions to the problems of life responsibly, in a climate of creative dialogue and collective effort;
- cultivate their linguistic expression, in order to express their thoughts in oral and written speech with clarity and correctness;
- realise their potentials, inclinations, skills and interests;
- acquire knowledge about the various professions and to seek their further improvement within the framework of cultural, social and economic life.

### *Lykeio*

The second stage is the optional *geniko* or *epangelmatiko lykeio* (general or vocational upper secondary school).

- It lasts three years (Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3).
- Learners enrol at the age of 15.
- There are two different types:
  - *Geniko* (general) *lykeio*. It lasts three years and includes both common core subjects and optional subjects of specialisation;
  - *Epangelmatiko* (vocational) *lykeio*. It offers two cycles of studies: the secondary cycle; the optional post-secondary cycle, the so-called ‘apprenticeship class’.
- Parallel to day *lykeia*, there are also:
  - *Esperina genika* (evening general) *lykeia*;
  - *Esperina epangelmatika* (evening vocational) *lykeia* ([Eurydice](#)).



The purpose of the general non-compulsory education provided at the *Geniko* (general) *lykeio* (upper secondary school) (ΓΕΛ) (day and evening), according to [Law 4186/2013](#), is the gradual deepening and specialisation in the individual subjects, but also:

- the provision of a high level of general education, which contributes to the balanced cognitive, emotional, spiritual and physical development of all learners;
- the promotion of critical thinking, initiative, creativity and learners' abilities;
- the development of knowledge-application skills and problem-solving;
- the cultivation of our national, religious and cultural heritage but also the preparation of young people for European civil society;
- respect for human rights, diversity and cultural diversity in a multicultural society;
- the strengthening of the values of freedom, democracy, collegiality and solidarity, and the formation of an active citizen consciousness;
- the cultivation of skills that will facilitate learners' access to the labour market.

According to [Law 4186/2013](#), the objectives of vocational education services provided by *epangelmatika lykeia* – EPAL (vocational upper secondary schools) (day and evening) can be summarised as follows:

- provision of general high quality education;
- preparation of young people to join European civil society;
- Reinforcement of the values of freedom, democracy, collegiality and solidarity, and formation of active citizenship awareness;
- provision of integrated vocational skills and competences that facilitate learners' access to the labour market;
- strengthening the ability to keep abreast with developments in the employment sector;
- reception and assimilation of new technological and professional knowledge, skills and competences within the framework of lifelong learning;
- career advancement through higher education-level studies;
- development of actions for quality assurance in technical–vocational education.

The purposes of the Vocational Training Schools (ΕΣΚ) and the Vocational Apprenticeship Schools of ΟΑΕΔ (ΕΠΑΣ ΟΑΕΔ), according to [Law 4763/2020](#), are, among others, the following:

- the provision of initial vocational education and training services to graduates with a degree of compulsory education or a degree equivalent to it;
- tackling school drop-out, upgrading the basic skills of holders of compulsory education or equivalent and integrating them into the labour market;
- with regard to ΕΣΚ: ensuring the integration into professional life of vulnerable learners and vulnerable social groups;



- with regard to the ΕΠΑΣ ΟΑΕΔ: the provision of post-secondary vocational education level three, with application of the binary system, which combines theoretical and laboratory training in the classroom with apprenticeship in the workplace.

### Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is provided at:

- Second Chance Schools – SDE
- Vocational training institutes – IEK
- vocational training schools, ESK and vocational training apprenticeship schools – EPAS of OAED
- Lifelong Learning Centres – KDVM.

Source: [Eurydice](#)

**Table 1. Types and numbers of educational institutions in Greece**

Type of educational institution in English (and in Greek)	ISCED levels	Main orientation of the programmes provided	Total number of educational institutions	Number of public educational institutions	Number of government -dependent, private educational institutions	Number of private, independent educational institutions
Single type all-day pre-primary school ( <i>eniaiou typou oloimero nipiagogeio</i> )	0	–	5,684	4,928	–	756
Single type all-day primary school ( <i>eniaiou typou oloimero dimotiko scholeio</i> )	1	–	3,750	3,598	–	152
All-day primary school, 1–5 teachers ( <i>oligothesio oloimero dimotiko scholeio</i> )	1	–	639	639	–	–



Type of educational institution in English (and in Greek)	ISCED levels	Main orientation of the programmes provided	Total number of educational institutions	Number of public educational institutions	Number of government -dependent, private educational institutions	Number of private, independent educational institutions
Minority primary school ( <i>dimotiko scholeio meionotikis ekpaidefsis</i> )	1	–	35	35	–	–
Day lower secondary school ( <i>imerisio gymnasio</i> )	2	G	1,580	1,477	–	103
Day lower secondary school with upper secondary classes ( <i>imerisio gymnasio me lykeiakes taxeis</i> )	2.3	G	185	185	–	–
Evening lower secondary school ( <i>esperino gymnasio</i> )	2	G	49	49	–	–
Evening lower secondary school with upper secondary classes ( <i>esperino gymnasio me lykeiakes taxeis</i> )	2, 3	G	25	25	–	–



Type of educational institution in English (and in Greek)	ISCED levels	Main orientation of the programmes provided	Total number of educational institutions	Number of public educational institutions	Number of government -dependent, private educational institutions	Number of private, independent educational institutions
Day general upper secondary school ( <i>imerisio geniko lykeio</i> )	3	G	1,109	1,016	–	93
Evening general upper secondary school ( <i>esperino geniko lykeio</i> )	3	G	49	48	–	1
Day vocational upper secondary school ( <i>imerisio epangelmatiko lykeio</i> )	3, 4	V	325	323	–	2
Evening vocational upper secondary school ( <i>esperino epangelmatiko lykeio</i> )	3, 4	V	77	76	–	1

Source: [Eurydice](#)

## 2.2 Specific features that are present within the education system

**Early tracking of learners into a particular educational pathway (i.e. streaming learners by abilities into different types of provision or school; this includes placing children into separate schools)**

The special educational needs of learners with disabilities and special needs are ascertained and diagnosed by the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASYs), the Interdisciplinary Educational, Evaluation and Support



Committees (EDEAYs) and are validated by the Ministry of Education, Community Centres for the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents of other ministries ([Eurydice](#)).

**‘Double-shift’ patterns to the school day (i.e. learners attend for either a morning or afternoon session)**

Not present.

**Grade retention (i.e. holding learners back to repeat school years, instead of providing flexible support that enables learners to progress with their peers)**

Present. Learners may repeat the class for one year if they are unable or have difficulty in attending the 1st grade ([Eurydice](#)).

**Multiple languages of instruction**

Not present. Greek is the official language of the Greek State, used in the entire territory and at all levels of education.

The Muslim minority, which accounts for approximately 1% of the total population of Greece residing in Thrace, numbers approximately 100,000 members who are of Turkish, Pomak and Roma origin. Minority schools are operating for the Muslim minority, where the teaching takes place in the Turkish and the Greek language at the same time ([Eurydice](#)).

Furthermore, eight intercultural high schools operate in Greece, utilising multiple languages of instruction and communication aiming to promote the inclusion of immigrant and/or refugee learners. Intercultural high schools, according to Law 4415/2016, implement research and innovative programmes on an experimental basis, related to intercultural education as well as confronting educational and social exclusion due to racial and/or cultural origin.

Finally, the Greek Sign Language has been recognised by Law 2817/2000 as the official language of the deaf and hard of hearing in all educational levels.

**Specific policies on access to compulsory education in local schools (i.e. school selection policies)**

*Pre-Primary school*

According to [Presidential decree 79/2017](#), the school unit must accept all applicants. If the number of children exceeds 25 per class (article 50, [Law 4692/2020](#)), there are two options:

- additional classes are created, if there is the logistical infrastructure and with the decision of the Primary Education Director (article 50, Law 4692/2020);
- a lottery is conducted between all children, so as to choose 25 learners per class.



### Primary school

According to [Presidential decree 79/2017](#), for entry into the 1st grade of primary school, parents are required to submit the following documentation:

- Confirmation of *nipiagogeio* (pre-primary school) attendance
- Proof of permanent address
- Learner medical records or similar documents ensuring learner's vaccinations
- Personal health assessment paper
- Birth certificate.

Source: [Eurydice](#)

## 2.3 Public and private authorities responsible for different types of provision

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Greece (Hellas), officially the Hellenic Republic, is a parliamentary republic. The Hellenic Republic is a unitary state organised on a decentralised basis; it comprises two levels of governance, the central (state) governance and the local self-government. The former is exercised centrally (government ministries) as well as at a decentralised level (*apokentromeni diikisi*), while the latter is exercised at regional and municipal level.

The 'Kallikratis' programme, which has been in full force since Jan 2011, focused on restructuring decentralised administration, reducing the number of municipalities, as well as enhancing them by conferring new functions to local level. The Kallikratis reforms also introduced concrete measures to address the financial crisis by enhancing transparency, supporting innovation and the use of new technologies, ensuring the financial autonomy of local authorities and strengthening their role in the formulation and implementation of policies at local level.

Regions are responsible for the administration of affairs of their district. They shape, plan and implement policies at regional level as part of their responsibilities under the principles of sustainable development and social cohesion of the country, taking into account national and European policies. Presently, there are 13 regions throughout the country. The former Prefectures (*nomarhies*) largely still exist but are now called Regional Units (*Perifereiakes Enotites*) and form administrative and territorial constituent parts of the regions.

Municipalities are responsible for the administration of local affairs. They manage and regulate all local matters in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proximity with the aim of protection, development and continuous improvement of the interests and the quality of life of local society.

Between the two levels of local self-government there are no relations of control and hierarchy, but of co-operation and collaboration, which are developed according to the law, common agreements, as well as with the co-ordination of joint actions.

Education in Greece is mainly centralised and governed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (ΥΠΑΙΘ) at all levels. The Ministry exercises control over public schools,



formulates and implements legislation, administers the budget, co-ordinates national-level university entrance examinations, sets up the national curriculum, appoints public school teaching staff, and co-ordinates other services. One of the oldest ministries, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs was established in 1833, and it is responsible for running the country's education system as well as supervising the religions in Greece.

Although the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has primary responsibility for education, there are also other ministries involved in some special branch of education:

- the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs – private pre-primary education and care settings, Vocational Training Schools/ESK and Vocational Apprenticeship Schools/EPAS;
- the Ministry of Culture and Sports – Higher Schools of Dramatic Art;
- the Ministry of Interior – municipal Infant centres (*vrefikoi stathmoi*), infant/child centres (*vrefonipiakoi stathmoi*) and child centres (*paidikoi stathmoi*) which represent early childhood care settings;
- the Ministry of Tourism – Touristic Academies;
- the Ministry of Health – Vocational Training Institutes of the National Emergency Aid Centre;
- the Ministry of National Defence – military academies.

The central administrative body for the education system across all fields, agencies and levels is the [Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs](#).

At regional level, the regional education directorates oversee the implementation of the national educational policy. At local level, the directorates of primary and secondary education supervise all schools in their area. In their turn, school units make sure they run smoothly ([Eurydice](#)).

The planning of the educational policy at central level is also significantly influenced by the academic and educational community, scientific associations and trade unions, society and social expression media, as well as the educational unit itself; the latter provides central authorities with valuable information on its operation and the services offered.

### **Administrative structure of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs**

The **administrative structure** of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs includes the following services:

- Minister's Office
- Deputy Ministers' Offices
- Office of the Secretary General for Primary, Secondary and Special Education
- Office of the Secretary General for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth
- Office of the Secretary General for Higher Education
- Office of the Secretary General for Religious Affairs.





The following services are under the **Minister's Office**:

- Directorate-General for Strategic Design, Programming and e-Government
- Directorate-General for Digital Systems, Infrastructure and Examinations
- Directorate-General for Financial Services
- Directorate-General for Human Resources
- Independent Directorate for Internal Control
- Independent Department for Parliamentary Control
- Independent Department for Legislative Initiative
- Independent Office of Scientific Consultants
- Press Office.

The following services are under the **General Secretariat for Primary, Secondary and Special Education**:

- Directorate-General for Primary and Secondary Education Studies
- Directorate-General for Primary and Secondary Education Teaching Personnel
- Directorate-General for International and European Affairs, Education for Hellenic Diaspora and Intercultural Education
- Independent Directorate for Private Education
- Independent Directorate for Compilation, Submission of Supporting Documents and other issues
- Independent Department for Regional Service Human Resources
- Independent Department for the Co-ordination and Monitoring of Refugee Education
- 13 Regional Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education.

The following services are under the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth:

- Directorate General for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth
- Independent Department of Implementation of European Legislation.

The following service is under the **General Secretariat for Higher Education**:

- Directorate-General for Higher Education.

The following services are under the **General Secretariat for Religious Affairs**:

- Directorate for Religious Administration
- Directorate for Religious Education and Inter-religious Affairs.

The following services also operate in the Ministry of Education:

- Office of the Legal Council of the State



- Service of the Court of Audit's Commissioner.

The following councils/boards are set up and operate in the Ministry of Education:

- Central Service Council for Administrative Staff (KYS DIP)
- Central Service Council for Primary Education (KYS PE)
- Central Service Council for Secondary Education (KYS DE)
- Central Selection Board for the compilation of selection lists and the selection of Primary and Secondary Education Directors and Regional Directors
- Central Service Council for Special Education Personnel (KYSEEP)
- Central Council for Vocational Education and Training (KSEEEK)
- Supervisory Board for Secondary Ecclesiastic Education (ESDEE)
- Service Board for Secondary Ecclesiastic Education (YSDEE).

Source: [Eurydice](#)

### **Private primary and secondary education**

In Greece, besides state schools, private primary and secondary education schools operate. They do not belong to the state. Natural or legal persons establish and maintain them. A decision of the Minister of Education grants an operation licence for a private school under certain conditions to:

- Natural persons
- Legal persons
- Associations of persons
- Legal entities under public law.

Private schools fall under the competence of the Ministry of Education. The latter exercises supervision and control through regional administration bodies (primary and secondary education directorates). The same applies to state schools. Pursuant to [Law 682/1977](#), as amended and in force, private and public education includes the same types of schools. Private schools follow the organisation of state schools. They award certificates equivalent to state schools. They follow the timetable and the teaching curriculum in force.

Deviations from the timetable and extra-curricular activities are allowed once the competent education directorate checks the validity of the curriculum and the pedagogical content of teaching, and provided that:

- The extended weekly timetable, including the compulsory programme and the extra-curricular activities, may not exceed 40 hours.
- The extra-curricular activities are decided before the teaching year starts, apply throughout the year, involve every learner in the class or classes they are implemented in, and are included in the school unit's extended timetable, which is notified to the competent Directorate of Education.



- The hours private school teachers spend occupied with extra-curricular activities during the extended timetable are considered to be part of their compulsory weekly teaching hours.

Furthermore, according to their compulsory or extended weekly programme, private schools may teach more foreign languages in parallel, as well as may choose which and how many foreign languages to teach, in addition to the foreign languages provided for in the timetable specified by the Ministry of Education.

#### *Private international schools*

Private international schools also operate ([Law 4186/2013](#)). Natural persons (non-Greek citizens) or legal persons who do not live in Greece may establish them. The authorisation to establish and operate a private international school is subject to conditions defined by law. There are 30 private international schools in Greece. Several of these schools are the outcome of bilateral educational agreements signed between Greece and other states. The existence of a transnational agreement does not substitute an operation licence. The Hellenic Ministry of Education supervises their operation via the competent primary and secondary education directorates.

According to their curriculum, International schools are classified as:

1. International schools following the curriculum of the foreign country. They address mainly foreign nationals living in Greece. Based on [Law 3794/2009](#), schools adhering to the curriculum of an EU member state allow for EU member state learners' attendance without restrictions. In schools following the curriculum of a third country, Greek learners may also attend, after permission by the Ministry of Education, and under certain conditions.
2. International schools with a Greek curriculum. They follow the same curriculum as Greek state schools. They place emphasis on foreign language teaching and several other subjects.
3. International schools with a Greek and foreign curriculum. They operate as two independent sections.

It should be noted that teaching of specific Greek subjects according to the Greek curriculum is compulsory for all international schools in the country which follow a foreign curriculum ([Eurydice](#)).

## **2.4 Levels of autonomy open to educational institutions – schools, local authorities, school maintainers, etc. – within the system**

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Schools have little autonomy for both primary and secondary education levels. Furthermore, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicators suggest that secondary schools in Greece have relatively little autonomy. PISA 2012 has two indices of school responsibility:

- for resource allocation (i.e. appointing and dismissing teachers, determining teachers' starting salaries and salary raises, formulating school budgets and allocating them within the school);



- school responsibility for curriculum and instructional assessment within the school (i.e. establishing learner assessment policies, choosing textbooks, determining which courses are offered and the content of those courses as well) (OECD, 2013a).

Both indices are very low for Greece. Similarly, evidence shows that Greece is an outlier relative to many other countries with respect to the small proportion of decisions taken at school and local level. The Ministry of Education is responsible for all normative and policy-making functions, including the formulation of study plans and curricula. Taking this into account, the enhancement of the pedagogic autonomy of schools is among the priorities of educational policy in Greece. A first step in this direction is the empowerment of the role of school principals and teacher teams. This is also among the priorities of the Ministry of Education. In this framework, a mechanism is currently under consideration for the programming and evaluation of educational work (European Agency, [CPRA](#)).

### **The 2021 law for the upgrading of schools ([4823/2021](#))**

#### *Greater autonomy in schools*

in terms of the organisation of teaching, greater local autonomy was established with:

- free choice of school materials from approved school textbooks being introduced and recommended in replacement of the single state-determined textbook;
- autonomy in terms of the form, number and duration of learner assessment tests;
- approval of educational activities and programmes by the school unit (previously, approval was required from the Ministry of Education);
- possibility of organising educational peer groups.

#### *Strengthening the role of teachers in educational management positions*

Establishment of supportive bodies – distributed leadership model: In-School Co-ordinators, Mentors, Deputy Principals (selection upon the recommendation of the Principal), Liaison Officers for Apprenticeship in special vocational schools, etc.

Teachers in management positions assume the responsibility for the organisation of pedagogical meetings for the exercise of disciplinary control, while at the same time have the ability to utilise school facilities outside school hours and secure additional resources from organising events and accepting donations and sponsorships ([Eurydice](#)).

## **2.5 General mechanisms for funding schools**

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In Greece, education is provided free of charge at all three levels of education, primary, secondary and higher education, and is funded primarily through the state budget and resources of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The state budget consists of two parts, the Ordinary Budget covering operating expenses and the Public Investment Budget that finances the Public Investment Programme (PIP). The PIP is divided into the national part, financed from purely national resources, and the co-financed part, financed from national and EU resources or other organisms. The PIP aims to meet the country's development policy with projects that contribute to its growth and modernisation on a



long-term basis, particularly covering infrastructure costs (buildings, equipment, co-financed actions, etc.) ([Eurydice](#)).

Funding is given through the PIP from national and co-financed resources managed as funding agencies by the regions of the country. The implemented Regional Operational Programmes (RIPs) are co-financed by national and European Community funds. Actions financed through the EDP relate to infrastructure projects, such as the construction of new buildings or the provision of the necessary equipment, support for pre-primary and infant care, etc. Also, co-financed resources are available through the Sectoral Programmes of the NSRF (National Strategic Reference Framework) 2014–2020. There are 13 RDPs in the territory and seven Sectoral Programmes under the Partnership Agreement (FTA) of the country for the period 2014–2020 (NSRF).

Public primary education in Greece is provided free of charge by the state in: *Nipiagogeia* (pre-primary schools) and *Dimotika scholeia* (primary schools) and starts at the age of 4 with attendance in *Nipiagogeia* ([Law 4521/2018](#)). Secondary education in Greece includes two cycles: compulsory and non-compulsory secondary education. Compulsory secondary education is provided by *gymnasia* (lower secondary schools), day and evening. Non-compulsory secondary education is divided into:

- General education offered at *lykeia* (upper secondary schools): day lykeia and evening lykeia
- Vocational education provided by *epagelmatika lykeia* – EPAL (vocational upper secondary schools), day or evening.

See section 2.1 for further details of the structure of the education system.

Both primary and secondary education are funded by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Interior through the municipalities.

Primary and Secondary Education is financed centrally by the state budget through the Ordinary Budget and the Public Investments Programme. Also centrally, the Computer Technology and Press Institute DIOPHANTUS organises, co-ordinates and implements the production and distribution process of textbooks in all public primary and secondary education schools throughout the country, as well as in Greek schools abroad under decisions by the Minister for Education and Religious Affairs. At the same time, the company Building Infrastructure S.A. is responsible for the construction of schools in Attica and the procurement, storage and distribution of equipment for schools (e.g. desks, benches, blackboards, etc.) throughout Greece. Moreover, the company constructs school buildings anywhere in Greece following programmatic agreements or similar ministerial decisions, whenever requested.

The 13 implemented Regional Operational Programmes (RIPs) are co-financed from national and European Community funds. Actions financed through the EDP relate to infrastructure projects, such as the construction of new buildings or the provision of the necessary equipment, the support of primary education, etc. Also, co-financed resources are available through the seven Sectoral Programmes of the NSRF 2014–2020, the funding agencies of which are the ministries and the regions, in the framework of the Partnership Agreement (FTA) of the country for the period 2014–2020 (NSRF).



The School Committees (*Scholikes Epitropes*) are established at local level. They are municipal legal entities entrusted with the management of appropriations allocated by the Ministry of Interior to cover operational costs in primary and secondary schools. With regard to maintenance and repair expenses for school buildings, the Ministry of Interior distributes funds to municipalities, which in turn, depending on the size of the action undertaken, either manage funds themselves or grant them to the school boards following the decision of the municipal council. Resources are, therefore, distributed on need basis. The allocation of funds by the Ministry of Interior to the municipalities is based on the following criteria: the number of classes in school buildings (30%) and the number of learners (70%). The funds allocated by the Ministry of Interior for the transfer of learners are also managed at regional level.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Interior directly subsidises municipalities of the country, where lower and upper secondary music and art schools operate for boarding learners ([Eurydice](#)).

Schools in Greece are not autonomous in the following sectors of responsibility:

- the use of public resources for capital expenditure, for any purchases and acquisition of electronic equipment (PCs);
- fundraising and, in particular, sponsorships and donations, the renting of school premises for activities beyond the school schedule and loans;
- the use of private resources for purchasing movable and immovable assets or for recruiting teaching and non-teaching staff.

All of the above are decided at a central level by the supreme educational authorities.

However, in the direction of the autonomy and self-management of primary and secondary schools for the management of the finances of the schools, the operation of school committees is foreseen; in particular, a school committee for primary and a school committee for secondary education. In these two school committees (one or more for each grade) for each municipality, autonomy has been granted in terms of managing the operating expenses of the schools in their area of responsibility.

A board governs school committees. Among its members, a school head must be appointed and at least one representative from the parents' association.

More specifically, the work of each school committee is:

- the management of the appropriations allocated to cover the operating costs of schools (heating, lighting, water, telephone, sewer, purchase of consumables, etc.);
- the execution of works for the repair and maintenance of schools and any kind of equipment;
- to address the respective directorates of primary and secondary education for the procurement of furniture, equipment and books;
- the management of income from the running of school canteens, etc.



The school committee's revenues come from subsidies from municipalities, school property proceeds, clearances from the exploitation of school canteens and from any kind of contributions, donations, legacies and bequests and any other legitimate source.

The specific amount of funds made available to every school head for meeting the schools' operational needs are determined by decision of the school committees.

For the purposes of auditing the financial management of the school boards, the following books must be necessarily kept:

- INCOME–EXPENSES book
- Statement of receipts – payments (in each school)
- A receipt booklet.

Within the first 15 days of January, school heads send the original statements of receipts and payments, together with the respective supporting documents, to the school committee.

The president of the school committee submits a copy of the INCOME–EXPENSES book to the management board of the school committee by the end of February each year, as well as a brief annual report table for the preceding fiscal year, together with the relevant documents.

Based on the INCOME–EXPENSES book and the report table, the management board of the school committee audits the financial management details and decides on its approval by means of a decision thereof, taken by the end of March. The decision of the management board of the school committee is subject to approval by the relevant municipal council.

With regard to the budget, stocktaking, the treasury service, loans, the property and the general economic management, the relevant provisions applicable to municipal child and infant/child centres are the same as those applicable to municipalities. Furthermore, procurements are performed in accordance with the relevant provisions on the procurement of local government bodies, as they apply each time ([Eurydice](#); [Standard Regulation of Operation of Municipal Child and Infant/Child Centres](#)).

### **Private education**

In Greece, Early Childhood Education and Care is also provided in the private pre-primary education and care settings (profit- or non-profit-making), as well as in part-time childcare settings for infants or/and children and in integrated infant/child care centres within the competence of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Joint Ministerial Decision D22/11828/293/4-4-2017). The private primary and secondary education schools that operate in Greece fall under the competence of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.

Supervision and control is exercised through regional administration bodies, as it is done with public schools in every region. Private primary and secondary education schools are run with the same structure and function as the respective public schools, awarding equivalent certificates and adhering to the curriculum in force. The Ministry of Education





and Religious Affairs is the competent authority to grant licence to natural persons and legal entities for the establishment of private schools.

In private schools of every level, tuition fees are paid in exchange for the services provided. The tuition fees for pre-primary schools (*nipiagogeia*), primary schools (*dimotika scholeia*), lower and upper secondary schools (*gymnasia, lykeia*) of private education cover:

- tuition Fees for all compulsory subjects taught in every private school class in compliance with the curriculum of the Ministry of Education;
- tuition fees for compulsory subjects taught outside mandatory teaching hours;
- tuition fees for non-compulsory subjects, educational or other activities, and any transportation charges for the transfer of learners, which is optional.

Should the private school offer courses for the International Baccalaureat (IB) or should it offer courses in both grades of education, tuition fees are adjusted accordingly. Any tuition fees discount, in case of two siblings for instance, is decided by the school itself. Health and security benefits are offered, as well as meals, but not family allowances or tax exemptions arising from private school attendance.

The tuition fees applicable each year to the first grade of pre-primary, primary, secondary and upper-secondary education are determined by private schools and should be publicly announced within January and February of the previous school year. During this period, tuition fees have to be officially announced to the competent body of the Ministry of Development and Investments that posts it on the Ministry's website. The omission to do so within the above deadline results in having to keep the same tuition fees for the coming school year as in the current year.

However, the tuition fees' increase rate for the next grades of pre-primary, primary and secondary education is determined by means of a mathematical formula based on the value change of the general consumer price index, the average teacher salary increase in private education, and the maximum increase rate in tuition fees. The average increase rate in teacher salaries is determined each year by May at the latest, by decision of the Ministry of Development and Investments for the current school year. So is the maximum increase rate in tuition fees announced ([Law 3377/2005](#)).

With regard to the transportation of learners to and from the private school, this is often done by means of school buses owned by the school ([Eurydice](#)).

## **2.6 Specific mechanisms for funding the inclusion of learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education**

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The government and European programmes fund education for:

- learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream and special schools and special support services;
- learners belonging to other vulnerable groups.





Inclusive policies are supported both by the National Investment Programme and [ESPA 2014–2020 \(Partnership Agreement \(PA\) 2014–2020\)](#) projects. In recent years, the strategic structure of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) has implemented and continues to implement several discrete actions in the 2014–2020 NSRF operational programme ‘Development of Human Resources in Education and Lifelong Learning’. The programme is funded by the European Social Fund and the Greek public sector. These actions support inclusive policies such as:

- individualised support for learners in mainstream schools (parallel support, special support personnel, school nurses);
- the strengthening of special schools, pull-out programmes/special resource units (*Tmimata Entaxis*), and their supportive structures (Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support – KEDASY, School Networks of Educational Support – SDEY, Interdisciplinary Educational Evaluation and Support Committees – EDEAY) through the recruitment of the appropriate personnel;
- the development of digital, accessible educational material for primary education for learners with disabilities and/or SEN.

Source: European Agency, [Country information](#)

### **Financial Support for Families of Learners with Disabilities and/or Special Educational Needs (Ds/SEN)**

The financial support provided to learners’ families in general is also applicable to families of SEN learners.

Furthermore, the transportation of learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs from their place of residence or a specific place of gathering to special schools they are attending – and vice versa – takes place without any kilometre limitations. The aforementioned learners are transported with the means of municipalities and regions or, if this is not feasible, by means of a public agreement on the provision of services. If these learners are transported under the responsibility of those with parental responsibility or of the legal guardians thereof, an allowance is granted calculated on the basis of the (single) mileage distance from the place of residence to the school at a rate of EUR 0.35/km for every day the learner has attended school. The annual cap of EUR 1,500 applicable to the rest does not apply to learners with special educational needs.

Special education school units provide special support equipment and additional auxiliary material for learners with special educational needs, such as special software, appropriate ICT equipment, augmentative and alternative communication, braille typewriters, wheelchairs, etc., in order to facilitate access to knowledge for learners with disabilities (e.g. learners with vision problems, with neurological, motor, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, etc.). Resources of the Public Investment Programme of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs cover this expense.

Moreover, hearing aids are provided to learners of public education (up to the age of 20), as well as to those who have hearing problems and attend private schools which provide special education or special vocational training. The maximum amount for each hearing aid cannot exceed EUR 1,500.



## Financial support for learners

Infants and children of early childhood education and care are entitled to daily provision of the required, in terms of quality and quantity, necessary nutrition. The provided meals include breakfast and lunch.

In the same context, the monitoring of children's health during their stay in the municipal infant/child and child centres is an obligation of the institution to which the centre belongs and is operated by a paediatrician, who visits the station every 15 days. In addition, each child has a health record that is updated by a paediatrician, who also invites the parents to informative gatherings related to children's hygiene issues, at least three times during the school year.

In public primary and secondary education, textbooks and additional material are offered free of charge and the transfer cost of learners from remote areas is covered. Moreover, under specific conditions, free board and accommodation to a limited number of learners are provided based on socio-economic criteria.

Social support to learners encompasses scholarships, donations and financial support by various foundations, natural persons and legal entities of private law, to learners and schools of all grades-levels of education.

According to [Law 4186/2013](#), scholarships or awards may be awarded to learners of vocational upper secondary schools from the state Scholarship Foundation. For the preparation of the relevant programmes, educational, social and developmental criteria are taken into consideration, such as academic performance, marital status, income and occupational sectors, disciplines and specialisations identified as particularly important for the growth of the national economy.

All learners are provided with health care through their parents who are directly insured with a public insurance fund ([Eurydice](#)).

## Evaluative commentary

This section provides a qualified, evidenced-based reflection on the **challenges, opportunities and consequences** of system features and structures for the implementation of inclusive education in practice. It specifically considers the impact of policy-making, structures and processes at national, regional, local and school levels on inclusive education practice.

The education system in Greece, as a whole, is highly centralised and highly bureaucratic in its structure. Its bureaucratic feature is related, among other parameters, to the fact that there are many different departments within or under the Ministry of Education, many directorate-general, independent directorates, service councils, general secretariat, etc., responsible for different dimensions/sectors of education. This multiplicity is generative to difficulties in terms of co-ordination and collaboration among the different departments, while it is one of the factors for educational inertia and a lack of coherence as well as compartmentalisation of policies and practices. Further, the strong central bureaucracy implies that all major decisions about different aspects of education are taken from a central agency (the Ministry of Education). This highly controlled and



centralised education system offers little opportunities to teachers for differentiation in terms of the curriculum offered; lack of flexibility and lack of differentiation in terms of curricula, pedagogy and assessments hinder the creation of more inclusive learning communities (Koutrouba et al., 2018). However, the newly introduced law for the upgrading of schools and the empowerment of teachers (4823/2021) states as an aim to offer greater autonomy to schools.

In terms of the structure of the educational system, greater emphasis should be given to the smooth transition of disabled children from home to pre-primary education by creating supportive familial and child-centred services and mechanisms connecting home and pre-primary education (Nisiotou, Vlachou and Fyssa, 2010). Also greater emphasis should be given in policy making to the creation of well-organised and systematic transition phases from one level of education to the other with particular emphasis to transition to adulthood.



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## SECTION 3. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

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This section provides information on the overall framework of legislation and policy governing the whole of the education system in the country.

### 3.1 Is there a single legislation and policy framework covering all learners in all educational settings?

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Yes.

#### 3.1a Description of the single legislation and policy framework

The provision of free education to all citizens and at all levels of the state education system is a constitutional principle of the Greek state. Specifically, the Greek constitution (Article 16 paragraph 2) sets out that:

Education aims at the moral, intellectual, professional and physical training of all Greeks, the development of national and religious consciousness and the creation of free and responsible citizens (European Agency, [Country information](#)).

Law 3699/2008 (Article 1) (GG 199 A/2008): The Greek state undertakes to preserve and invariably enhance the compulsory nature of special education for learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs as an integral part of a free and compulsory education system. It also undertakes to ensure their equal and full participation in society, independent living, self-sufficiency and autonomy, by fully protecting their rights to education as well as to social and professional inclusion (European Agency, [CPRA](#)).

#### 3.1b Overview of the general education legislation and policy framework guiding the whole system

Not applicable.

#### 3.1c Overview of the specific education legislation and policy framework impacting on the inclusion of learners who are vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

No information.

### 3.2 Is there a single curriculum framework covering all learners in all educational settings?

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Yes.

#### 3.2a Description of the single curriculum framework

Single type of all-day primary schools administer a compulsory programme of subjects for all learners at all grades as well as an all-day schooling programme (non-compulsory) ([Eurydice](#)).



Primary education curriculum is drawn up by the Institute for Educational Policy (IEP). The latter is responsible for delivering opinions or recommendations on issues related to primary education programmes, school textbooks and other teaching material.

The curriculum is implemented at all schools across the country.

The current primary education national curriculum is modeled on the basis of the Cross Thematic Curriculum Framework for Compulsory Education (DEPPS) (Ministerial Decisions [21072β/Γ2/28-2-2003](#) and [21072α/Γ2/28-2-2003](#)).

The cross-thematic approach defines the structure of teaching. It aims at a balanced horizontal and vertical distribution of educational material. It promotes cognitive subjects interconnection, as well as comprehensive analysis of key concepts.

In addition, the innovative 'Flexible Zone of Interdisciplinary and Creative Activities' is part of DEPPS. According to [Law 4547/2018](#), the support structure of school units and educational work moved towards an interactive and dynamic relationship between the school and support structures.

According to [law 4547/2018](#), the support structure of school units and educational work moved towards an interactive and dynamic relationship between the school and support structures. [Law 4823/2021](#) replaces the institution of Educational Co-ordinators by the institution of Education Consultants. The Educational Co-ordinators continue to perform their duties until their abolition with the selection and placement of Education Consultants, Regional Quality Supervisors of Education and Quality of Education Supervisors. Educational goals, pedagogical practices, types of exams and formative assessment are formed by school units and groups of schools with the co-operation of:

- Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counseling and Support Centers (KEDASY)
- Environmental and Sustainability Education Centres (KEPEA)
- Regional Councils of Supervisors (ESL).

[Eurydice](#)

### **3.2b Overview of the general curriculum framework**

Not applicable.

### **3.2c Overview of specific curriculum framework(s) for different groups of learners who are vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education**

The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs implements special programmes and supports alternative educational structures, aiming at providing education which meets the needs of people with different educational, social and cultural backgrounds ([Eurydice](#)).

#### *Pre-primary education*

[Presidential Decree 301/1996](#) established a general special education detailed curriculum framework. However, depending on the special educational needs of learners, special education school units (SMEAE) may use the tailored detailed curriculum of general education or even a mixed system.



[Ministerial Decision 85317/Δ3/29-05-2019](#) defines the timetable of special education *nipiagogeia*. This includes organised inter-disciplinary and experiential activities, individualised educational programmes (EPE), free or structured play and breakfast. The aim is the development of the communicative, cognitive, social and emotional skills of learners. The compulsory timetable of special education *nipiagogeia* is 25 teaching hours per week. However, all special education pre-primary schools may operate all day ([Eurydice](#)).

#### *Primary education*

The curriculum is issued on the basis of [Ministerial Decision 85317/Δ3/29-05-2019](#). According to the latter, ‘the school teachers’ board decides upon the implementation of the appropriate detailed curriculum for each grade and level’.

For the selection of the suitable detailed curriculum, the special educational needs of learners are taken into consideration. It is decided whether to use the special education detailed curriculum framework (PAPEA) or the cross-thematic framework of curriculum (DEPPS) and the detailed curriculum (APS) of primary school or even a combination of the pedagogical principles and educational goals mentioned above ([Eurydice](#)).

#### *Minority primary schools*

In Greece, minority education concerns the demarcated Muslim minority of Thrace. This includes exclusively the residents of Thrace in the population registers, that is, Greek citizens, who are Muslims, descendants of the non-exchange populations (Greece–Turkey) under the Treaty of Lausanne.

The same treaty established the minority educational system. The latter is accompanied by subsequent educational protocols and defined by the Greek legislation.

The curriculum of these schools is bilingual. Time is distributed equally between the Greek and Turkish language. These two languages are both languages of instruction, as well as taught subjects.

The bilingual curriculum is in accordance with the curricula of the public schools of the country. However, particular emphasis is placed on the preservation, development and promotion of the cultural and linguistic background of the minority.

The detailed curriculum and timetable of primary minority education is a mix of the detailed curriculum and timetable of general education and that of minority education. In particular, [Ministerial Decision 103672/Ζ2/Α.Σ.781/4-12-2006](#) reformulated the curriculum of minority schools.

Learners’ assessment is carried out for both courses taught in Greek and courses taught in Turkish, according to the provisions governing the assessment of learners in mainstream primary schools. The same rules also apply for the progression of learners ([Eurydice](#)).

#### *Intercultural Schools*

Intercultural schools follow the same curricula as mainstream public schools, however, the curricula are adapted to the particular educational, social and cultural needs of its learners (Law 2413/1996, Article 34).



### **3.3 Is there a single legislation and policy framework for all teacher education and professional development?**

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Yes.

#### **3.3a Description of the single legislation and policy framework for teacher education and professional development**

Teacher training is distinguished between mandatory and optional. The mandatory training forms are listed below ([Presidential Decree 250/92](#)):

- Induction training has a duration of at least 100 teaching hours for candidates to be appointed as primary and secondary education teachers.
- Periodic training in two training courses per academic year, lasts up to three months for permanent teachers.
- Short-term specific training programmes lasting from 10 to 100 hours for all teachers and 200 hours for teachers serving in special education units ([Eurydice](#)).

#### **3.3b Overview of the general legislation and policy framework for teacher education and professional development**

Not applicable.

#### **3.3c Overview of specific legislation and policy framework for teacher education and professional development and what and who this specific framework focuses on**

In-service training is provided in the form of various educational programmes implemented by educational bodies on approval of the Ministry of Education.

##### *The Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support*

The responsibilities of the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support include:

The planning and implementation of training actions, in collaboration with the regional education quality supervisors and the training consultants of the education directorates of the headquarters of the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support, after the approval of the regional education quality supervisor, for the benefit of the members of the school community.

##### *The regional education quality supervisor*

The regional education quality supervisor, among other things, organises and implements training programmes or seminars and general educational activities at the level of the



regional directorate of primary and secondary education for teachers and members of the special teaching staff and special support staff.

#### *The Institute of Educational Policy*

The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) is the operational scientific body that supports the Ministry of Education and its supervised entities in ensuring equal access to education for all learners. It deals with matters concerning:

- primary, secondary and post-secondary education;
- the transition from secondary to tertiary education;
- teacher training;
- tackling school drop-out (defined by Law 4547, article 53).

In order to fulfil its mission, IEP is responsible, among other things, for:

- training primary, secondary and post-secondary education teachers;
- systematically reviewing matters related to planning, implementing and developing the educational policy on teacher training and other relevant actions;
- designing a national strategy for teacher training and monitoring its implementation.

The IEP has implemented teacher training programmes for several years. There are teacher training seminars on new accessible educational material, distant learning education, and on differentiated instruction for both regular education teachers as well as for special education teachers, counsellors and professionals working at the evaluation and support services. A 'Training on Supporting Learners with Differentiated Teaching Practices' programme involves the development of a register of teacher trainers. The goal is to train 22,000 mainstream teachers in both primary and secondary education.

### **3.4 Is there a single legislation and policy framework to ensure support for all learners throughout their school careers?**

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Yes.

#### **3.4a Description of the single legislation and policy framework that ensures support for all throughout their school careers**

##### *Transition between grades/levels of education*

In many schools, at the initiative of school principals and teachers, transition programmes from one educational level to another for all learners are implemented through organised learner visits to the next level of education. Presidential Decree 79/2017 (GG 109A), article 14, paragraph 3, provides for co-operation between kindergarten and primary school to ensure the smooth transition of learners from one school level to another. Specifically, after the end or before the beginning of the school year, the kindergarten teachers' board holds pedagogical meetings with the primary school principal and the teachers who will teach in the first grade of primary school. In these meetings, staff





inform each other of issues related to teaching and learning in kindergarten and primary school, and the education and progress of kindergarten learners who will attend primary school.

Transition programmes for learners in the sixth grade of special elementary school are implemented in co-operation with their parents and guardians, in accordance with Article 10 of Ministerial Decision 79942/DG4/2019/FEK2005B. The relevant Centre for Interdisciplinary Evaluation, Counseling and Support (KEDASY) ensures their smooth transition to the appropriate secondary education framework recommended by the KEDASY.

It should be noted that issues related to the transition of learners to the next educational levels are now determined in detail in article 7 of Law 4823/2021. According to this, the planning of actions for the smooth transition of learners to the next educational level falls within the responsibilities of the regional board of supervisors. Additional issues of transition fall within the responsibilities of the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support and the Interdisciplinary Support Committees (European Agency, [Country information](#)).

### **3.4b Overview of the general legislation and policy framework that ensures support for the majority of learners throughout their school careers**

Not applicable.

### **3.4c Overview of the specific legislation and policy framework that ensures support for learners who are vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education throughout their school careers**

The currently in force institutional framework for the special education of individuals with disabilities and special educational needs is laid down mainly in [Law 3699/2008](#), as in force, and the subsequent complementary laws [4115/2013](#) and [4186/2013](#), [4368/2016](#), [4415/2016](#), [4452/2017](#), [4547/2018](#), [4589/2019](#), [4638/2019](#), and Law [4713/2020](#), Law 4823/2021 ([Eurydice](#)).

Pursuant to [Law 4763/2020](#), a key policy of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs is planning, co-ordinating, supervising and assessing policies, acts and programmes in the field of vocational education and training, lifelong learning and youth, without discriminations and exclusions aiming at:

- providing to the country's human resources the current qualifications adapted to the real needs of the labour market;
- increasing employment with quality job placements, better organising the competitiveness of the Greek economy;
- reinforcing citizens' personal development and their upskilling;
- ensuring rights and equal opportunities for all young people that will lead to their unhampered inclusion to the educative, social and economic life of the country ([Eurydice](#)).

Circular F6/18466/Δ1/18-02-2022/



The circular in question refers to the 'Enrolment of learners in kindergartens for school year 2022/2023'.

It is designated that learners belonging to vulnerable social groups are:

- families of moving populations;
- learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs.

Circular F618474/Δ1/18-02-2022

The circular in question refers to the 'Enrolment of learners in primary schools for the school year 2022/2023'.

In part 'E' of the circular, special reference is made to enrolments of learners who belong to vulnerable social groups. Into this particular category fall the following learners:

- with disabilities and/or special educational needs;
- Roma children;
- juvenile seekers of international protection or juvenile children of seekers of international protection.

Evidence for specific learner groups:

*Learners with disability and/or special educational needs*

Law 3699/2008, as amended, Article 3

Article 3 of the law defines learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN) as those who have significant difficulties in learning for the whole or some period of their school life, due to sensory, intellectual, cognitive or developmental problems, mental health and neuropsychological disorders which, according to their interdisciplinary assessment/diagnosis, affect the process of their school adjustment and learning.

Learners with disabilities and special educational needs include especially those with intellectual disabilities, sensory visual disabilities (blind, visually impaired), sensory hearing disabilities (deaf, hard of hearing), motor disabilities, chronic non-curable diseases, speech and language disorders, special learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity, developmental disorders (autism spectrum), mental disorders and multiple disabilities.

The category of learners with disabilities and special educational needs does not include learners with low school performance that is causally associated with external factors, such as linguistic or cultural factors.

Learners with complex cognitive, emotional and social difficulties, delinquent behaviour due to abuse, parental neglect and abandonment or due to domestic violence, belong to people with special educational needs.

Learners with special educational needs refers also to learners who have one or more intellectual abilities and talents developed to a degree that far exceeds the expectations for their age group.... The remaining provisions of this law do not apply to these category of learners.



*Learners who attend school in areas with low educational quotient, high school drop-out and limited access to tertiary education, as well as low socio-economic quotients, such as low component well-being quotient and high risk poverty quotient:*

Law 3879/2010 (Article 26§ 1a) (GG 163 A/2010)

1. α) In accordance with the decision of the Minister of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, Educational Priority Zones (EPZ) are laid down, including primary and secondary school units in areas with low educational quotient, high school drop-out and limited access to tertiary education, as well as low socio-economic quotients, such as low component well-being quotient and high risk poverty quotient. Equal integration to the educational system is pivotal to EPZ, realised through support activities for improved learning outcomes, such as reception classes, learning support classes, summer courses and classes to maintain their mother tongue.

Following the above law, a presidential decree 1403/2017 was issued in 2017, regulating issues of the function of the education priority zone and reception classes EPZ in primary education school units.

In particular, in article 3, the Presidential Decree determines that:

A. Establishment of the EPZ reception classes for learners with limited knowledge of the Greek Language (Roma, foreigners, repatriated immigrants, refugees, vulnerable social groups, etc.) in the context of intercultural education, a flexible plan of institutional and learning intervention is formed, allowing the school unit to choose the form of supplementary learning support. The actual educational needs of learners and capabilities of the school unit are weighed so as to help them adjust and fully integrate in regular classes they are registered in, according to the applicable legislation.

The institutional format is as follows:

- Reception classes 1 EPZ
- Reception classes 2 EPZ

A yearly circular is issued for the application of the above.

***The education of migrant and repatriated learners (European Agency, [CPRA](#), p. 8)***

Law 2413/1996 (Articles 34–37) and Article 14 (paragraph 24) of Law 2817/2000. 1403/2017 article 3.

***The education of refugee children (European Agency, [CPRA](#), p. 10)***

Article 1, 139654/CD4/2017 Common Ministerial Decision KYA (Government Gazette 2985B):

1. For the educational provision to children of third country citizens, reception centres for refugee education which belong to mainstream education operate as follows:



α) In school units of regional directorates of primary and secondary education, within whose exist reception centres and/or any accommodation utilised by the Greek state or the UN High Commission and other international bodies for the accommodation of third country citizens (hereinafter, accommodation facilities). (...)

b) In particular, for the education of 4 to 5-year-old children who are staying in accommodation facilities, refugee reception and education centres operate as branches of adjoining kindergardens within the accommodation facilities.(...)

c) In particular cases, for the education of children aged 6–12 (primary school) and 13–15 ( lower secondary school) , refugee reception and education centres can operate as branches of adjoining school units within the accommodation facilities. (...)

2. The education foreseen by the present Ministerial Decision concerns all children of third country citizens who are staying in accommodation facilities.

Concerning the subcategories of refugee children and their education, the following are applicable:

Law 4547/2018 (article 71) και (article 72, 74, as amended in article 46 of Law 4559/2018).

### **Reception and education centres for refugee children**

#### Article 71

Scope of application:

Education foreseen in the present Chapter is provided to minors falling into one of the following categories:

- refugee children: of third country or stateless citizens who meet the presuppositions of application of article 1A of the Geneva Convention (Legislative Decree 3989/1959,A 201);
- children whose parent-citizen is deprived of a passport: offspring whose third country parent-citizens exhibit proof of inability to possess passports or any travel document, due to adverse conditions in their country of origin, their permanent or temporary place of residence;
- children whose parents are entitled to international protection: children whose non-national or stateless parents have been granted refugee status or are adjunct protection beneficiaries;
- children whose parent is the beneficiary of adjunct protection: children of non-national or stateless parents, who, with reservation of article 17 Presidential Decree 141/2013 (A'226), do not meet the presuppositions of being recognised as refugees, however, in the event of returning to their country of origin or permanent place of stay, their health and physical integrity would be jeopardised according to article 15 of the Presidential Decree 141/2013;



- minors separated from their family or parted minors: a minor who arrives in Greece without being escorted by a person exercising parental care according to Greek legislature or other person to whom parental care has been assigned, according to law, but is escorted by an adult carer;
- unaccompanied minors: means a minor who arrives in Greece unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them by Greek Law as parent, carer or unaccompanied by an adult next of kin and effectively taken into their care, for as long as their care has not by law been appointed to another person. Under the same categorisation falls the minor who seizes to be accompanied on entrance to Greece;
- minors in peril of persecution: every minor found outside their country of origin or latest place of residence due to justified fear of persecution for their race, religion, ethnicity or membership in a particular social group and therefore unable to ensure protection from their country, or, for fear of which, do not wish to place themselves under its protection.

#### Article 72

#### **Modes of refugee children education**

1. Education of minors who fall into the scope of application of article 71, is provided by school units of primary and secondary education, integrated in the mainstream educational system under the conditions and presuppositions of the applicable legislation.
2. By exception, taking into consideration the particular needs of the refugee population ensued from mobility, arrival time and residence timespan in accommodation facilities, as well as the learning population quota, refugee reception and education centres can be established, operating in the context of mainstream educational system and applying individualised curricula of limited duration.
3. The above established refugee reception and education centres operate:
  - a. in primary and secondary education school units of the regional directorates of primary and secondary education within whose boundaries exist refugee accommodation facilities or any other form of accommodation, such as guesthouses, apartments and hotel rooms employed by the Greek state, the UN High Commission or other international bodies to cater for refugee stay (hereinafter, 'accommodation facilities');
  - b. refugee accommodation centres as branches of adjoining kindergartens where children aged 4 to 5 stay.

#### *Education of Roma learners*

Circular with protocol 180644/C1/26-11-2013 of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs is valid.

According to the above:



The Ministry of Education and Religion holds the basic principle of promoting measures which aim to ensure equal opportunities in education for all learners and drop-out prevention.

In this context, according to the laws and international conventions and declarations laid out by the constitution, the Greek state and its institutions are under the obligation to take all necessary measures which ensure equal access to education for all children. In particular, access to education by new generation Roma children constitutes a core mechanism in combating social exclusion and an essential prerequisite for equal participation in the social, economic and political life of the country.

The Ministry of Education and Religion promotes actions and programmes to all school units of primary and secondary education, which aim to enable learners, educators and parents to an expedient educational process against school and social exclusion and school drop-out.

In particular, as concerns Roma children, school enrolments, learnership and vaccination, it should be remembered that applicable is all the content mentioned in Circulars Protocol No 116184/C1/10-09-2008, F.3/960/102679/C1/20-08-2010 and F.6/451/115136/C1/16-09-2010 of the Ministry of Education and Religion with the following notifications: (...)

*Learners with educational, social, cultural particularities (who hence attend Intercultural schools)*

According to Law 2413/1996 (Article 34):

1. The aim of intercultural education is the organisation and operation of primary and secondary school units for the provision of education to learners with educational, social, cultural particularities.
2. Intercultural schools follow the same curricula as mainstream public schools, which are adapted to the particular educational, social and cultural needs of its learners.

### **3.5 Is there a single legislation and policy framework to ensure support for all learners at times of transition between phases of education and into adult life?**

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Yes.

#### **3.5a Description of the single legislation and policy framework that ensures support for all learners at times of transition between phases of education and into adult life**

Data relevant to issues of transitions between different educational levels are analytically mentioned in section 3.4a above.

As regards the transition to adulthood, Law 4823/2021 foresees that:

In each group of neighbouring schools, one Office of Counselling and Orientation is established, which is staffed with one teacher of any branch,



specialising in counselling and orientation and serving in an organic post in a school unit of the group or is at the disposal of the relevant regional service council.

### **3.5b Overview of the general legislation and policy framework that ensures support for the majority of learners at times of transition between phases of education and into adult life**

Not applicable.

### **3.5c Overview of the specific legislation and policy framework that ensures support for learners who are vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education at times of transition between phases of education and into adult life**

During the last years, the link between vocational education and the labour market is strengthened, as a new legislative framework gives the right to the graduates of the Unified Special Vocational High School (ENEEGYL) to enroll in the 'post-secondary year – apprenticeship class' (Law 4763/2020).

The graduates from General Vocational Schools (EPAL) as well as the ones from the Unified Special Vocational Lower and Upper Secondary Schools (ENEEGY-L) are entitled to enrol in the 'The Post-secondary Year – Apprenticeship Class', on condition that they are not employed or trained, following the ENEEGY-L teachers board recommendation and the assessment report of the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support. In the Post-secondary Year – Apprenticeship Class, the learners attend:

- a workshop specialty course which is taught once a week in the general vocational schools and on the particular day of the workshop schedule;
- an on-the-job training course for 32 hours a week, shared out in four days. The learners who participate in the apprenticeship programme receive insurance along with a monthly apprentice salary which equals 95% of the minimum wage of unskilled workers (under 25 years old).

The Post-secondary Year – Apprenticeship Class leads to an officially recognised certification. On successful completion, the participants may acquire a higher-level qualification (Level 5) included in the National Qualification Framework, in case they successfully sit certification examinations organised by the Greek Organisation for Certification of Vocational Qualifications (EOPPEP).

The above development along with many other initiatives that have to do with post-secondary education and lifelong learning are laid out in the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Strategic Action Plan for the Equal Access of Persons with Disabilities to Education. In the same context, for example, a legislative framework has been introduced, which unequivocally states that an indispensable prerequisite for the conversion and licensing of the Lifelong Learning Centres is abiding by the accessibility specifications for persons with disabilities.





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## Evaluative commentary

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This section provides a qualified, evidenced-based reflection on the **challenges, opportunities and consequences** of the legislative and policy framework for inclusive education in practice. It specifically considers the main challenges and opportunities for effectively translating policy into regional, local and school level practice.

A positive aspect for school units – and for inclusive education in its broader term – is the development of different systems of support that seem to be interconnected (i.e. Interdisciplinary Support Committee EDY, the School Network of Education and Support – SDEY, the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support – KEDASYS; Law 4823/2021). This support system, with the appropriate collaboration, can be more responsive to the wide range of needs and demands of the school units. Also, with the new Law there seems to be a hierarchical network of supervisors/advisors among regional, local and school level– its function remains to be seen (i.e. Regional Education Quality Supervisor, Regional Board of Supervisors, Education Quality Supervisor, Joint Meeting of Education Quality Supervisors, Advisors of Education – Law 4823/2021).

The degree of implementation and effectiveness of the above policies demands a clearly defined framework of co-operation and effective ways of evaluating and monitoring the quality of provision(s). For an effective and responsive educational system, there is a need at local, municipal, regional and national level(s) for a valid and reliable monitoring system with the aim to gather reliable data for different aspects of education that can be used as a basis upon which policies and strategies can be developed resulting into practical applications (Kassotakis, 2021). Policies also should take into serious consideration the influence of the geographical location and socio-economic and other socio-demographic characteristics of remote – from the centre – areas within which different schools operate (i.e. remote islands, mountainous areas, etc.) (Vlachou, 2001).

Further, through successive educational reforms, since 2000, educational policy-makers have tried to utilise international scientific and pedagogical experience to provide Greek teachers and learners with a refreshing air of freedom and innovativeness. Schoolbooks were thoroughly updated, experiential, group and project-based learning were introduced, and cross-thematic approaches to school subjects were extensively implemented.

However, an apparent and long-established centralisation, administrative bureaucracy and curricula inflexibility remained rather strong if one takes into account that the quantity of knowledge that had to be disseminated by the teacher and assimilated by the learners was increased, the assessment procedures became more complicated and demanding, and the teacher training programmes were short-term and rather superficial (Ifanti, 2007; Koutrouba, 2013). The conflict between policy–instructional expectations and real in-class life seems today to hinder or undermine Greek teachers’ efforts to address effectively learners’ learning and socio-affective needs and behavioural reactions (Kassotakis, 2021).

The promotion of more inclusive practices will be supported by changing the focus of policies from a medical-centric character of the services. Emphasis should be placed on pedagogical assessment in order to identify the needs and strengths of learners with





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disabilities/SEN and consequently on the development of appropriate pedagogical, curricular and instructional programmes.



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## SECTION 4. SYSTEM GOVERNANCE

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This section provides information on aspects of governance across and between different system levels, bodies and stakeholders in the country.

### 4.1 Shared responsibilities across and between central and local government

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As regards school education, management and governance fall under:

- The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (central level)
- The regional directorates of primary and secondary education (regional level)
- The primary directorates of education and the secondary directorates of education (prefecture level)
- School units.

**At central level,** the Minister of Education is supported by collective and advisory bodies and institutions. They take the key decisions relating to the long-term objectives and operation of the education system. For instance, the following issues are regulated centrally:

- Definition of curricula content
- Learner textbooks authorship and distribution
- Allocation of teaching time
- Teacher education and initial teacher training
- Allocation of teachers and other school staff
- Teacher salaries and school financing.

**At regional level,** the regional education directorates exercise administrative control. They refer directly to the Minister of Education. The regional education directorate is responsible for the administration and the scientific and pedagogical guidance of education in the region. It supervises the implementation of the national education policy. Yet, it tailors it to match the specific requirements of the region. It also links the regional educational services with the central education authorities.

**At local level,** the educational policy is implemented and specified by the:

- directorates of primary and secondary education under the competence of the regional directorate of education;
- school units under the competence of the relevant directorate of education.

The administrative bodies at school level are:

- The school head
- The deputy school head



- The school teachers' board.

They are also supported by:

- The school committee
- The municipal committee of education
- Parents' associations, etc.

**At local level**, the recent reforms re-define the role of education institutions. They give more autonomy to the school unit along with the ability to plan, organise and assess its work.

The Greek education system remains a fairly centralised system. The essential competences for educational policy and administration are all centralised. The Minister of Education and Religious Affairs is responsible for them.

The [Institute of Educational Policy](#) (IEP) was founded in 2011. It is a private law entity and operates under the supervision of the Minister of Education. It acts in the public interest with the aim to ensure free access to education for all children. It is also a scientific and research co-ordinating body. It provides constant scientific and technical support in the planning and implementation of educational policies to the Ministry of Education and its supervised bodies. It focuses on:

- Primary and secondary education
- Education after the end of upper secondary school
- The transition from secondary to higher education
- Training of teachers
- Tackling learner inequalities, school drop-out and early school-leaving.

IEP assists the Ministry of Education in matters related to the assessment of the educational work as well as the evaluation of school units and teachers ([Eurydice](#)).

At local level (prefecture), the responsibility for the management of school education lies with the directorates of primary and secondary education, which have their offices in the capital of the prefecture and are governed by the respective regional education directorate. A director is the head of education directorates. directors of primary and secondary education have the overall responsibility for the administration and control of the operation of the schools in their area of competence.

At prefecture level, the following councils operate:

- Regional Service Councils for Primary Education (PYSPE)
- Regional Service Councils for Secondary Education (PYSDE).

These councils are staffed by the regional directors of primary and secondary education upon recommendation of the relevant directors of primary and secondary education and are in charge of teachers' professional status issues.

Other decentralised services of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs that are subject to the relevant directorate of primary/secondary education are:

- the school units of primary and secondary education;



- [the Natural Sciences Laboratory Centres](#) (EKFE).

For schools within the district of a specific municipality, the following structures are in place:

- The Municipal Education Committee is formed in every municipality and consists of representatives from the municipality, the parents' association, school heads, representatives from the productive groups and school teachers' unions. The committee makes proposals to the mayor and the municipal council on issues regarding the optimal organisation of schools in their area, the allocation of appropriations for operational expenses in schools, the establishment, abolition or merging of schools, the construction, repair and maintenance of school buildings.
- [School Committees](#) are municipal or community legal entities. Each committee covers one or more state schools of primary or secondary education, depending on the local needs as estimated by local authorities. Participation in school committees' administration is mandatory for the school head/heads, a representative from the parents' association/associations, should there be any, as well as a secondary learner representative. School Committees are assigned:
  - the management of the appropriations allocated to cover the operational expenses of the relevant schools;
  - the adoption of measures to support the administrative management of school units.

The **municipalities** are also responsible for state infant/child care and child care centres. These operate as legal entities of public law under a standard regulation of operation determined centrally ([Joint Ministerial Decision 41087/29-11-2017](#), Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). The provisions of this regulation are the minimum conditions of operation of all municipal infant/child care and child care centres. They are funded by the municipalities they belong to and the money paid by the parents.

At **school level** (pre-primary, primary and secondary education), a decentralisation of powers and strengthening of the role of the school is noticed.

**School units** are administered by the school head, the deputy school head and the school teachers' board.

The **school head** is located at the top of the school community and carries administrative and scientific-pedagogical responsibility. They are responsible for the school's smooth operation, the co-ordination of school life, compliance with the laws, circulars, official mandates and implementation of the decisions taken by the school teachers' board. They are also responsible, in co-operation with the school teachers' board, for planning and assessing the educational work of the school, as well as preparing and implementing integrated action plans to improve it.

The **deputy school head** replaces the school head in all functions and helps them in their daily work. They assume some of the school head's responsibilities, so that the school head can deal with the school's educational work without distractions ([Eurydice](#)).



## 4.2 Specific areas for shared responsibilities across and between central and local government

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### Policy development, implementation and co-ordination

[The Institute of Educational Policy](#) (IEP) is a strategic, scientific body which supports the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, as well as the bodies supervised by it on issues related to education and particularly on:

- Pre-primary, school and post-school education levels
- The transition from secondary education to tertiary education
- Teacher training
- Tackling school drop-out and early school-leaving.

The target of IEP is to assure the right to education for all children (Law 4547/2018 which amended [Law 3966/2011](#); [Eurydice](#)).

According to current legislation, the Institute of Educational Policy co-operates with the individual Directorates of the Ministry of Education and the Quality Assurance Authority in primary and secondary education, for various issues of educational policy planning.

Pursuant to Law 4823/2021, other bodies responsible for policy development are the following:

- The Regional Education Quality Supervisor
- The Quality Assurance Authority in Primary and Secondary Education.

### Identification of needs / referral for services

#### *Services of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs*

The decentralised services of the [Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs](#) (the Regional Educational Directorates, Sustainability Educational Centres (KEAs), Natural Sciences Training Workshops (EKFE), Workshop Centres) organise and support the provision of primary and secondary education and the work of teachers. Consecutively, the Ministry of Education is the central body for educational policy-making, through its individual bodies and services it:

- conducts research and studies;
- assigns the elaboration of evaluation studies to expert committees;
- participates in research and co-operates with bodies in Greece and abroad, international networks or organisations, such as OECD, EUROSTAT, the Hellenic Statistical Authority, etc.;
- develops indicator systems that provide information on significant educational parameters, that are being utilised in decision making and planning of education ([Eurydice](#)).



## **Data collection and sharing**

Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs ([Eurydice](#)).

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

Pursuant to Law 4823/2021 on issues of assessment, the following are involved hereafter:

- principals or heads of the school unit;
- education counsellors of school units within their pedagogical responsibility;
- education quality supervisors;
- regional education quality supervisors .

Pursuant to Law 4823/2021:

At the beginning of each school year until 15 October, the education staff prepares a report on the action planning of their work, taking into account the priorities of the educational policy, as well as their own initiatives. The planning can be modified during the school year if it is deemed appropriate or required by operating conditions of the educational unit.

At the end of each school year and until 31 August, the educational staff prepares a report of their activities, whereby they evaluate the implementation of their planning; identify the points that were modified in relation to the original design, the reasons which led to a re-design, as well as the results and conclusions of their actions.

## **Quality assurance and accountability**

The Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (ADIPPDE) – its mission is to ensure high-quality educational work in primary and secondary education. In the context of its mission, ADIPPDE:

- evaluates the quality of the educational system;
- supports the Ministry of Education in improving the design of the national strategy for primary and secondary education aiming at the learners' successful transition to post-secondary education, career and lifelong learning (Laws [4142/2013](#), [4547/2018](#); [Eurydice](#)).

In addition to the Quality Assurance Authority in Primary and Secondary Education, Articles 6, 7 and 8 of Law 4823/2021 define the positions of education quality supervisors, regional quality supervisors as well as regional councils of quality supervisors ([Eurydice](#)).

## **Funding**

No information.

## **Other(s)**

### *Organising interdisciplinary support to special education*

Law 4115/2013 (GG 24/2013) has introduced a new way of organising interdisciplinary support to special education. The dominant support structures to further facilitate



inclusion and joint education in mainstream schools of learners with special educational needs are:

- the Diagnostic Educational Evaluation and Support Committee (EDEAY) operating at mainstream school level; currently Interdisciplinary Support Committee (EDY, Law 4823/2021);
- the School Network of Education and Support (SDEY);
- the Centres for Interdisciplinary Evaluation, Counselling and Support (KEDASYs).

Interdisciplinary Support Committees (EDYs) operate in the school unit of general or vocational education. They aim to develop interdisciplinary practices of the educational evaluation of learners, counselling and pedagogical support. The purpose of EDY, in particular, is:

- the investigation and identification of educational needs, the type of difficulties and possible educational, psycho-social and other barriers to equal access of learners to learning and the implementation of pedagogical, educational and other support measures for all learners in the school community, including learners with disabilities or special educational needs;
- the implementation of individual or group actions to enhance the cognitive and psycho-social skills of learners, pedagogical and counselling psycho-social support to teachers and parents or guardians of learners and in general, the implementation of targeted empowerment interventions of all school members.

An EDY is established by a decision of the regional director of education which is issued after a suggestion of the directors of primary and secondary education in collaboration with the heads of the respective KEDASY, and consists of:

- the school's head teacher;
- a special education teacher working at a pull-out programme in the school or a teacher specialised in special education, or a teacher of parallel support who serves in the school unit;
- a psychologist of the school network to which the mainstream school belongs;
- a social worker of the school network to which the mainstream school belongs. (Ministerial Decision 134960/D3/2021 (5009, t b, 2021); European Agency, [CPRA](#)).

### **4.3 Formal and informal collaboration across ministries**

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The education policy is defined at central level by the government, which also sets out the general policy to be followed at different policy areas. The Minister of Education is responsible for shaping the education policy and for monitoring its implementation, as well as for administering all the sectors, services and levels of the education system. The Minister prepares the bills and presidential decrees regulating the educational system and issues the relevant ministerial decisions through the administrative services and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs advisors.



The Parliament assumes legislative work and enforces parliamentary control. The Standing Committee on Cultural and Educational Affairs, competent on matters of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Sports, develops and examines bills or law proposals. It may also exercise legislative work and parliamentary control.

In order to perform their duties, the Minister may be assisted by the Alternate Minister or the Deputy Minister(s), provided that responsibilities between them are distinct.

The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs includes four separate General Secretariats which are run by General Secretaries:

- The General Secretariat for Primary, Secondary and Special Education
- The General Secretariat for Higher Education
- The General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth
- The General Secretariat for Religious Affairs.

In shaping policy, the Ministry's cabinet may be supported by collective consultative/advisory bodies which are set up at national level. These bodies provide policy advice for school and higher education, lifelong learning, science and the arts.

In this framework, the Council for the National Policy on Education may be set up and operate as an advisory body for the Minister of Education. Its members are former Ministers of Education. The president of the council is the current Minister of Education.

The national quality assurance bodies are also an important component of governance at central level. These bodies are responsible for setting quality standards, performing evaluation, and shaping and implementing policies and standards to improve the quality of education. They are independent administrative agencies supervised by the Minister of Education, who exercises control of legality. Each year, they submit annual activity reports to the Minister of Education. For higher and school education respectively, the following structures exist:

- The [Hellenic Authority for Higher Education](#) (HAHE): its mission is to ensure high quality in higher education. It is the continuation of the Hellenic Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (HQA), which was established and has been operating since 2006. The Authority is managed by its president and supreme council. HAHE, in the context of its mission:
  - contributes to the formation and implementation of the national strategy for higher education and the distribution of financing for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs);
  - evaluates and accredits the operational quality of HEIs. The Authority is a member of the [European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education](#) (ENQA) ([Law 4653/2020](#)).
- The Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (ADIPPDE): its mission is to ensure high-quality educational work in primary and secondary education. In the context of its mission, ADIPPDE:





- evaluates the quality of the educational system;
- supports the Ministry of Education in improving the design of the national strategy for primary and secondary education aiming at the learners' successful transition to post-secondary education, career and lifelong learning (Laws [4142/2013](#), [4547/2018](#)).

At the same time, the following bodies that are supervised by the Ministry of Education play an essential role in shaping and implementing the educational policy:

- The [Institute of Educational Policy](#) (IEP), an executive scientific and research body that supports the Ministry of Education in matters regarding primary and secondary education, teacher training, higher education, post upper secondary education, tackling learner inequalities, school drop-out and early school-leaving, with the objective to assure the right to education for all children. IEP assists the Ministry of Education in matters related to the assessment of the educational work as well as the evaluation of school units and teachers (Laws [3966/2011](#), [4763/2020](#)).
- The [Computer Technology Institute and Press DIOPHANTUS](#) (CTI) is a research and technological institution, aiming at promoting research and the effective application of communication technologies (ICT) in the field of education. Particular emphasis is placed on the development and application of conventional and digital media in education and lifelong learning, the publication of printed (school books) and electronic educational material, the administration and management of the Greek school network as well as the support of the Ministry's and all the educational units electronic infrastructure (Law 3966/2011).
- The [National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance](#) (EOPPEP) develops and implements an integrated national certification system of non-formal education (initial, continuing vocational training and general adult education). It also supports scientifically the vocational guidance and counselling services in Greece. EOPPEP operates as the national co-ordination point (NCP) for the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the national reference point for quality assurance. It represents Greece in the European network for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training ([EQAVET](#)). (Laws [4115/2013](#), [4763/2020](#)).
- The [Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation](#) (INEVIDIM), that aims at implementing actions, programmes and projects on lifelong learning and youth, with emphasis on supporting innovation. It also manages issues related to learner welfare (Law 4115/2013).

Finally, the planning of the educational policy at central level is also significantly influenced by the academic and educational community, scientific associations and trade unions, society and social expression media, as well as the educational unit itself; the latter provides central authorities with valuable information on its operation and the services offered ([Eurydice](#)).

According to Law 4547/2018, a competence of KEDASY is to support the overall educational work of all school units on issues of preventing school drop-out and creating a safe and supportive inclusive school culture that favours the psycho-social health and



emotional well-being of learners. It also implements first- or second-instance prevention and mental health promotion programmes and strengthens the communication and co-operation of the school unit with families and psychological and social support services. In this context, there is a mechanism that links KEDASY with the schools of their area of competence and ensures collaboration and dialogue among all interested parties (TPL4I – Policy mapping grid).

Schools are supported by KEDASYS and EDYS in their efforts to involve a wider range of partners and foster formal and informal networks. Article 6, 3699/2008 (GG 199/A/2008), proposes:

- within their competences, the KEDASY co-operate with the health and welfare providers of each municipality;
- the implementation of early intervention programmes for learners with visual disabilities, in collaboration with other medical and non-medical services and authorities;
- the necessary ergonomic arrangements for better access and attendance at school.

If a KEDASY diagnoses child abuse or neglect, it collaborates with medical, social and psychological services and the judicial authorities.

Article 3c of Ministerial Decision 17812/C6/2014 (GG 315/B/2014) – as well as Ministerial Decision 134960/De/21 (GG 5009/B/2021), which refers to the ‘Legal establishment of EDEAY, currently called EDY, and definition of the special duties of the members of such co-ordinators’ – describes the support that EDY provides to schools in order to foster formal networks. It also states that in case of obvious indications of mental health or child abuse or parental neglect, it co-operates with Medical and Education Centres (IPD) or the medical or psychological public services of the relevant area, with social services and the competent judicial authorities. Paragraphs 1c and 1g, article 3, Ministerial Decision 134960/De/21 (GG 5009/B/2021) states that:

EDYS implement collaborative interdisciplinary treatment of learners’ difficulties in the classroom with the means and resources available in the school unit, at home and in the community, and suggests, with the consent of parents or guardians for learners who need support, their referral to the competent public services... Co-ordinate and monitor actions of social support of the learners and their parents or guardians and co-operate with the social services of the municipality and other competent entities (European Agency, [CPRA](#)).

### **Informal collaboration**

There are informal collaborative mainly teachers’ training actions and/or activities organised by PEKES or KEDASY or school units with university departments, mental health centres, scientific laboratories and or associations, [National Portal for Lifelong Counselling](#) Careers centres, e-twinning projects, UNICEF, Citizen’s ombudsman for the Rights of the Child, municipalities, environmental education centres, creation of communities of learning, etc.



## 4.4 Specific mechanisms for formal and informal collaboration that impact on inclusive education

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### Development of a shared vision for inclusive education

Given its administrative background, the Ministry delivers policies and initiatives aimed at constantly providing quality of education for all learners, including those with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN). In this context, inclusive education is among the priorities of the Greek educational system. Its recognition as the key to achieving the right to education has strengthened in Greece over the last decade. This is reflected in several national laws and ministerial decisions issued by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (European Agency, [Country information](#)).

### Policy development, implementation and co-ordination

The strategic structure of the National Strategic Reference Framework currently implements seven discrete actions for the 2020/2021 academic year under the operational programme 'Development of Human Resources in Education and Lifelong Learning', which are funded by the European Social Fund and the Greek public sector. The planning includes bolstering the inclusion of learners from vulnerable social groups in primary schools, supplementary tutoring in secondary education, programmes to support learners with disabilities or SEN, the development of support structures for learners with disabilities, a programme of individualised support, the establishment of a new, uniform programme for primary schools and the bolstering of pre-primary education (European Agency, [CPRA](#)).

### Identification of needs / referral for services

Training programmes have been offered by the IEP, which is part of the Greek Ministry of Education and the official advisor on primary and secondary education matters of the Minister of Education. It develops the national curricula, authors the majority of the primary and secondary education textbooks, certifies any educational material, conducts pedagogical research and actively participates in the training of primary and secondary school teachers. Awareness-raising is among the main duties of KEDDY and EDEAY (European Agency, [CPRA](#)).

### Data collection and sharing

(Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs; Eurydice).

### Monitoring and evaluation

Pursuant to Law 4823/2021, the following collaborate on issues of assessment:

- principals or heads of the school unit;
- education counsellors of school units within their pedagogical responsibility;
- education quality supervisors;
- regional education quality supervisors ([Eurydice](#)).



## **Quality assurance and accountability**

Interdisciplinary Support Committees (EDYs) operate in the school unit of general or vocational education. They aim to develop interdisciplinary practices of educational evaluation of learners, counselling and pedagogical support. The purpose of EDY, in particular, is:

- the investigation and identification of educational needs, the type of difficulties and possible educational, psycho-social and other barriers to equal access of learners to learning and the implementation of pedagogical, educational and other support measures for all learners in the school community, including learners with disabilities or special educational needs;
- the implementation of individual or group actions to enhance the cognitive and psycho-social skills of learners, pedagogical and counselling psycho-social support to teachers and parents or guardians of learners and in general, the implementation of targeted empowerment interventions of all school members.

An EDY is established by a decision of the regional director of education which is issued after a suggestion of the directors of primary and secondary education in collaboration with the heads of the respective KEDASY, and consists of:

- the school's head teacher;
- a special education teacher working at a pull-out programme in the school or a teacher specialised in special education, or a teacher of parallel support who serves in the school unit;
- a psychologist of the school network to which the mainstream school belongs;
- a social worker of the school network to which the mainstream school belongs (Ministerial Decision 134960/D3/2021 (5009,t b, 2021)).

Pursuant to Law 4823/2021, the following collaborate on issues of quality assurance and accountability:

- the Institute of Educational Policy;
- the Quality Assurance Authority in Primary and Secondary Education;
- the regional education quality supervisor , for various issues of educational policy planning.

## **Funding**

Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs

## **Other(s)**

Support structures to further facilitate inclusion and joint education in mainstream schools:

Law 4115/2013 (GG 24/2013) has introduced a new way of organising interdisciplinary support for special education. The dominant support structures to further facilitate



inclusion and joint education in mainstream schools of learners with special educational needs are:

- the Diagnostic Educational Evaluation and Support Committee (EDEAY) operating at mainstream school level; currently Interdisciplinary Support Committee (EDY, Law 4823/2021);
- the School Network of Education and Support (SDEY);
- the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASYs) (European Agency, [CPRA](#)).

## Evaluative commentary

This section provides a qualified, evidenced-based reflection on the **challenges, opportunities and consequences** of system governance for the implementation of inclusive education in practice. It specifically considers the impact of levels of decentralisation/centralisation in the country on inclusive education in practice.

Education in Greece is mainly centralised and governed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (ΥΠΑΙΘ) at all levels. The Ministry exercises control over public schools, formulates and implements legislation, administers the budget, co-ordinates national level university entrance examinations, sets up the national curriculum, appoints public school teaching staff, and co-ordinates other services. Regional education directorates, on the other hand, supervise the implementation of the national education policy and refer directly to the Minister of Education. They have relatively little autonomy in matching the specific requirements of the region with the support of the local directorates of primary and secondary education which function under the competence of the regional directorate of education, while schools/school units (under the competence of the relevant directorate of education) must implement the centrally regulated policies.

Thus, even though through successive educational reforms educational policy-makers have tried to utilise international scientific and pedagogical experiences (i.e. textbooks were thoroughly updated, experiential, group and project-based learning were introduced, cross-thematic approaches to school subjects were extensively implemented, etc.) to provide Greek teachers and learners with a refreshing air of freedom and innovativeness, still the apparent and long-established centralisation and administrative bureaucracy has enforced the ideology and every-day policy-practices of a 'one size fits' all approach.

Curricula inflexibility have remained rather strong, academic criteria of success remain rigid, the assessment procedures have become more complicated and demanding, while an individualistic deficit approach to disability, needs and difference remains the foci of analysis and concern. These factors create resistance to change for the promotion of more inclusive learning communities (Koutrouba, Markarian and Sardianou, 2018; [OECD country profile 2020](#)). Currently, however, a new Act (4823/2021) was introduced (it has not fully come into force yet) for the upgrading of the education system with an emphasis on creating a pyramid of advisory and monitoring systems, and an aim to promote in some way the autonomy of the school unit.



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## SECTION 5. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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This section provides information on the general and specific quality assurance and accountability frameworks and mechanisms informing the country's education system.

### 5.1 School inspection processes and structures for all forms of educational provision

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In Greece, the use of data to support system improvement is an emerging practice (see Law 4823/2021). The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP, 2011) carries out focused evaluation studies at national and regional level. The Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (ADIPPDE, 2013) assesses educational quality, evaluates implementation processes and reports on system priorities to MofERA. Schools must regularly submit learner, teacher and school data to the MySchool database (Diophantus, 2013). Greece participates in some large-scale international studies such as PISA and the Survey of Adult Skills, but there is no national standardised assessment scheme to provide regular information about learners' learning outcomes. Until recently, Greece had no formal internal or external school evaluation processes.

In PISA 2015, school leaders' reports indicated that schools in Greece are less likely than average to conduct self-evaluations (81%, compared to 93%) and to receive external inspections (21%, compared to 75%). External evaluation has not been implemented, but several mechanisms for school self-evaluation have been introduced and tested since 2010. Mandatory internal evaluation was introduced in all pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in 2013, after a pilot phase from 2011–13, but was subsequently suspended in 2015, following opposition from teacher unions.

In 2018, Greece approved legislation for a new mandatory internal evaluation procedure. Whereas previous measures had been top-down, this legislation encouraged teachers to collectively evaluate the school according to a set of broad themes and then form a school development plan. Educational co-ordinators based in the Regional Centres for Educational Planning (PEKEs) provide formative feedback and support. PEKEs also synthesise individual school plans delivering a regional report to the IEP. Currently, a new legislation (Law 4823/2021) has been introduced aiming to establish a new assessment and inspection structure and process.

Teacher appraisal does not exist in Greece. A mechanism was introduced in 2013, linking appraisal and professional development, but it was subsequently frozen, then formally abolished in 2018 due to the majority of schools' refusal to take part and opposition from teacher unions. Greek teachers may receive informal feedback on their practice: while school head teachers do not have the right to observe teaching they can do so on invitation. In PISA 2015, 14% of 15-year-olds in Greece were in schools whose principal reported regular teacher classroom observation. Furthermore, 16% were in schools whose principals reported that standardised tests are used to make judgements about teachers' effectiveness.



In terms of learner assessment, the evaluation of learners' learning is performed by schools. The Panhellenic examination for university entrance is a trusted measure of learner outcomes among parents. School-level standardised assessments are employed at the end of each school year; these appear to have a largely summative focus ([OECD country profile 2020](#)).

## 5.2 Other quality assurance processes for all forms of educational provision

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Quality assurance in early childhood and school education is carried out through school unit internal and external evaluation procedures (Law 4692/2020).

### Planning and evaluation of the educational work

Quality assurance procedures in primary and secondary education include internal evaluation and external evaluation procedures which are carried out on an annual basis.

In particular and in accordance with Law 4692/2020:

- The educational work, the school group actions and research procedures for the respective year are planned in the beginning of the school year during the assembly of the teachers' board in every school unit.
- The teacher's board in collaboration with the co-ordinator of the educational work who has the pedagogical responsibility of the school unit, defines the school unit's operation areas, where the planned actions will focus. Under the supervision of the school unit's principal, groups for actions of common interest are formed. Groups consist of two to five teachers and focus mainly on upgrading their educational work but also their professional development.

Co-operation and support of the groups is carried out by the principal of the school unit and the educational work co-ordinator who has the pedagogical responsibility of the school unit or the educational work co-ordinator of the corresponding area of specialty. The educational work co-ordinator can organise relevant, in-school, training activities and provide the necessary support.

First, the principal convenes the teachers' board in regular meetings, held at least once every two months. The aim of the meetings is to thoroughly discuss the implementation of the initial planning, the actions and research procedures designed, and to evaluate their apparent effectiveness. If necessary, re-planning, redesigning and adjustments are put in place, making use of the educational work co-ordinator's remarks. At the end of the school year, the principal convenes a special meeting along with the teachers' board to evaluate both the school unit, as an administrative and educational structure, and its educational work. The report drafted is included in the minutes of the meeting and its main points are uploaded on the school unit's website. The report is also reproduced on the special electronic application of the Institute of Educational Policy.

Next, educational work co-ordinators are informed on the content of the report on the annual educational work and planning for professional development actions, as well as on the schools' educational work annual report. Based on the existing infrastructure and each





school unit's specific characteristics, co-ordinators make comments as well as proposals for support and improvement. Proposals referring to programming reports are taken into account during the current school year, while proposals referring to the internal evaluation reports are taken into account for the next school year planning. Comments and proposals for each school unit are communicated to the relevant school's teacher board as well as to the relevant PEKEs through the special electronic application. Moreover, a summary of the comments and proposals of the educational work co-ordinators are posted on the relevant PEKEs' website.

Then, and no later than the end of the school year, the PEKEs – after taking into account each school's annual reports as well as the co-ordinator's relevant comments and proposals – prepare a comprehensive external evaluation report for the relevant regional directorate of education's school units concerning their planning and educational work. The annual report is posted in due time on its website and the special electronic application.

ADIPPDE, during the drafting of its annual report, takes into account the above special electronic application content at local, regional and national level and focuses mainly on the external evaluation reports of PEKEs in order to:

- submit to the Minister of Education measures for the improvement and efficient organisation of the planning procedure and the school's internal and external evaluation;
- draft reports with general remarks, especially regarding the needs, difficulties, trends and achievements,.

Finally, IEP uses the above special electronic application's content at local, regional and national level and, if necessary and in collaboration with ADIPPDE, drafts a proposal to the Minister of Education.

Specific issues related to the application of this law are determined by a decision of the Minister of Education, following ADIPPDE's and IEP's relevant proposals.

As regards to model and experimental schools, before the start of the school year, the principal of the school unit along with the deputy principal and the teachers' board and under the guidance of scientific supervisory board, draft an action plan on the implementation of research programmes and educational goals which is submitted electronically. At the end of the school year, the same officials prepare an internal evaluation report which evaluates the achievements of the educational objectives included in the action plan.

This internal evaluation report evaluates the performance of the school as a whole and formulates suggestions for improvement for the next school year. The internal evaluation reports are the basis for the external evaluation which is carried out by the steering committee of model and experimental schools, in collaboration with IEP and Higher Institutions (4692/2020; [Eurydice](#)).





## 5.3 Evaluation mechanisms used to monitor outcomes at different system levels

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### **General outcomes (academic, social, well-being, etc.) for all learners**

An integrated and holistic quality assurance system has been developed in pre-primary (4 to 6-year-olds), primary and secondary general and vocational education with the establishment of measures and forms of internal and external evaluation which take place on three different levels:

- the level of the educational system;
- the level of educational administrative staff;
- the level of educational unit.

According to Law 4823/2021, the evaluation of executives and teachers is institutionalised with the introduction of an institutionalised, integrated effective framework for monitoring and controlling the evaluation process ([Eurydice](#)).

### **Specific outcomes (academic, social, well-being, etc.) for learners vulnerable to exclusion**

No information.

### **Outcomes for schools (professional development, staff and personal well-being, etc.)**

[Law 4692/2020](#) establishes the internal (self-evaluation) and external evaluation for both primary (kindergartens/learners aged 4–6 and primary schools) and secondary education schools (gymnasiums, general and vocational lyceums). The purpose of the internal and external evaluation process is the continuous improvement of the educational work's delivered at school level.

Issues of internal and external evaluation process are also included in Law 4823/2021.

### **Outcomes for parents and families (support, participation, family well-being, etc.)**

Not present.

### **Other(s)**

[Law 4547/2018](#) establishes a system of evaluation for teachers who serve as officials in positions of education. The purpose is to improve:

- performance;
- the quality of public education.

There are also teachers who serve on:

- the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs;
- the Institute of Educational Policy;
- other bodies.



The teachers perform administrative duties and are evaluated according to the provisions of the system for the evaluation of civil servants (Law 4369/2016).

Law 4692/2020 establishes teaching and instructive work evaluation, as well as overall contribution evaluation for teachers who serve at model and experimental schools. Also, internal and external evaluation is carried out in model and experimental schools, in accordance with procedures described in the aforementioned law, to assure and continuously improve the quality of educational work and educational results.

Issues of internal and external evaluation process are also included in Law 4823/2021 ([Eurydice](#)).

## **5.4 Evaluation mechanisms used to monitor the effectiveness of processes at different system levels**

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### **Effectiveness of teaching and learning processes**

The central bodies of educational planning in primary and secondary education (Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Institute of Educational Policy, Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education) are implementing evaluation studies to examine selected aspects of development of the education system. Issues such as primary and secondary education funding, learners' performance in various subjects, graduates' integration into employment, and school drop-out rates, constitute indicative examples of such targeted evaluation studies that will enable an in-depth examination of issues of special interest. As far as educational policy priorities are concerned, the country implements similar studies at regional and national level; moreover, Greece participates in similar studies under the auspices of the OECD and other European and international networks and organisations ([Eurydice](#)).

### **Effectiveness of school management processes**

In the framework of their operation, various services falling under the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs have developed information systems for data collection from schools (such as data on human resources in terms of teaching staff and learner population and flow, building infrastructure, etc.). Such data are utilised either in standard operations of the Ministry (transfers, secondments, appointments), or for monitoring education and updating the conventional indicators of education and social development (e.g. OECD indicators).

In the context of upgrading and modernising its information technology infrastructure, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs has proceeded to the setting up of a new information technology system ([MySchool](#)) addressed to schools and its decentralised administrative structures.

The new system replaces and integrates formerly existing information technology systems (e-School, e-DataCentre, Survey, Integrated Information System for Personnel Management – OPSYD, etc.) in a single digital environment ([Eurydice](#)).



### **Effectiveness of teacher professional development processes**

The work of permanently appointed teachers is evaluated on a four-year basis by the education scientific consultant, in terms of general and special teaching of their school subject/subjects, and by the director of the school unit, in terms of the pedagogical climate and classroom management; also, their work is evaluated every two years by the principal or head of the school unit and the education pedagogical consultant, in terms of their service consistency and adequacy ([Eurydice](#)).

### **Efficiency and effectiveness of funding mechanisms**

Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Institute of Educational Policy, Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education – See above ‘Effectiveness of teaching and learning processes’.

### **Effectiveness of (vertical) co-operation between stakeholders at different system levels**

The provisions of Law 4369/2016 are those applied for the evaluation of the decentralised bodies of the Ministry of Education, as well as for the evaluation of bodies under the supervision of the Ministry, with administrative competences in issues of primary and secondary education.

Concerning quality assurance in vocational education, a programme of study/curriculum quality framework has already been developed and is in force ([Eurydice](#)).

### **Effectiveness of (horizontal) co-operation between ministries and ministerial departments**

No information.

## **5.5 Specific monitoring mechanisms relating to learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education**

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The teachers’ assembly is informed if there is a problem. It then informs and discusses the issue with parents. They refer the issue to EDY which consists of the head of the school unit (president), psychologist, social worker and the special education teacher. The class teacher also participates. In schools, EDYs have the responsibility for the preparation and implementation of the short-term intervention programme, the specification of the main axes of the Individualised Education Programme of the learners as they are described by KEDASY in the evaluation reports, in specific short- and long-term objectives, as well as the support and monitoring of the educational and psycho-social process of the learners. Whenever an EDY does not exist, the short-term programme is undertaken by the educational support team.

The learner educational support team is formed by the teachers’ assembly. It is supported in its work by KEDASY and consists of:

- the school principal;
- the teacher in charge of communication with KEDASY;
- the teacher in charge of the class.



The contact person with KEDASY is the special education teacher or another teacher who has been trained in issues relevant to special education. The learner educational support team is informed about the issue. The classroom teacher informs and discusses the issue with the parents, and prepares a descriptive report for the learner which is completed by the other members of the teacher assembly. A short-term intervention programme is organised, specifying the learning objectives and parents are informed about the support of the programme at home.

The results of the intervention are recorded. If the results of the intervention are positive, the procedure is complete. If the results are not positive, the school unit contacts KEDASY. KEDASYS are interconnected with the school units: each teacher or member of the special teaching staff of KEDASY, by decision of the association of teaching staff, undertakes under their responsibility a unit of school units and acts as a contact and reference person of these units.

In addition, the KEDASY teacher is responsible for: learner referrals, conducting evaluations and interventions, the formulation of needs at the level of support of the school community, conducting training and awareness actions, the implementation of vocational guidance programmes, and proposes the axes of the short-term programme (P.D. 79/ΦΕΚ τΑ'109/01.08.2017, N. 4559/ΦΕΚ τΑ'142/03.08.2018, article 23; N. 4547/ΦΕΚ τΑ'142/03.08.2018; YA Ap. 158733/ΓΔ4 /ΦΕΚ τΒ'4299/27.09.2018).

## **5.6 Specific evaluation mechanisms relating to learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education**

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According to Law 4823/2021, the monitoring of the operation of the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support is assigned to a special committee of the Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education.

## **5.7 Specific accountability mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education**

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Accountability mechanisms include:

- the introduction of a series of new support structures;
- the introduction of the Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASY), which aim to:
  - identify institutional (and not just individual) barriers to learning at all levels;
  - provide psycho-social support to all learners, including learners with disabilities;
  - build capacity of mainstream schools so that they respond more effectively to all learners' diverse needs.
- the establishment of School Networks of Educational Support (SDEY) and Interdisciplinary Support Committee (EDY) with article 39, Law 4115/2013 and Law 4823/2021;



- the extension of the role of special schools as support centres and the re-organisation and renaming of the abovementioned networks and committees to ‘School Networks of Educational Support’ (SDEY) and ‘Interdisciplinary Support Committees’ (EDY).

Special classes were redefined as ‘inclusion classes’ with Article 82 of Law 4368/2016. However, they still operate as pull-out programmes (European Agency, [Country information](#)).

## Evaluative commentary

This section provides a qualified, evidenced-based reflection on the **challenges, opportunities and consequences** of quality assurance and accountability for inclusive education in practice. It specifically considers the implications of how different stakeholders across the education system are accountable for ensuring the effective implementation of policy for inclusive education in practice.

As it has already been reported, the Greek education system is highly centralised. The government sets out the general strategic goals of the system and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (MofERA) shapes education policy, monitors its implementation, and administers the education system. MofERA has responsibility for the entire education system from pre-primary to adult education, although higher education institutions have greater autonomy. Other central bodies which shape education policy include:

- The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (*Εθνική Αρχή Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης*, HAHE, 2020) leads quality assurance in higher education, replacing the former Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (2005).
- The Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (*Αρχή Διασφάλισης της Ποιότητας στην Πρωτοβάθμια και Δευτεροβάθμια Εκπαίδευση*, ADIPPDE, 2013) aims to ensure high-quality educational work in primary and secondary education.
- The Institute of Educational Policy (*Ινστιτούτο Εκπαιδευτικής Πολιτικής*, IEP, 2011), took over the work of the Pedagogical Institute and other bodies responsible for educational research and teacher professional development. IEP also provides on-going technical support for policy planning and implementation.
- The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (*ΕΟΠΠΕΡ, Εθνικός Οργανισμός Πιστοποίησης Προσόντων και Επαγγελματικού Προσανατολισμού*, 2011) aims to promote better quality and more efficient and reliable lifelong learning services in Greece.
- The Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (*Ίδρυμα Νεολαίας και Δια Βίου Μάθησης*, 2011), implements actions, programmes and projects on lifelong learning and youth, and learner welfare.

Other education stakeholders include the 13 regional primary and secondary education directorates and the local directorates of education. Teacher unions, including the Primary School Teachers’ Union (DOE) and the Federation of Secondary School Teachers (OLME),



formally participate in central and local education administrative boards and selection boards for school leaders.

Within the above framework, parents have a limited role in the system.

The Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (ADIPPDE, 2013) is an administratively autonomous body, supervised by MofERA. It aims to ensure quality in primary and secondary education, through monitoring and evaluation, and to support MofERA with national education strategy. ADIPPDE assesses educational quality, evaluates implementation processes and reports on system priorities to MofERA. Schools must regularly submit learner, teacher and school data to the MySchool database (Diophantus, 2013). Greece participates in some large-scale international studies such as PISA and the Survey of Adult Skills, but there is no national standardised assessment scheme to provide regular information about learners' learning outcomes and/or inclusive education outcomes.

Following initial resourcing challenges, in 2018 efforts to strengthen ADIPPDE included defining a new role based on three action lines:

1. conducting ex-post evaluation in primary and secondary education;
2. supervising schools' strategic planning;
3. formulating and standardising school self-evaluation and other evaluation processes.

A governing council, including academics and school representatives, was also introduced for a four-year term. ADIPPDE publishes annual reports on selected aspects of system evaluation offering policy recommendations. ADIPPDE works as an indicator of the nascent culture of accountability and improvement-focused use of data. However, with on-going changes to school evaluation, ADIPPDE's role will need to be re-examined.

As part of a wider e-governance drive, MySchool (Diophantus, 2013) is the Greek education information system established to centralise educational data and enhance system-level governance. MySchool collates data about learners, teachers, schools and curriculum for pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, both in the public and private sectors. In this way, it provides everyday administrative support to educational actors at school, as well as at local, regional and central levels. It also aims to support their decision-making through various tools, such as data processing tools, reporting tools and Business Intelligence mechanisms. Furthermore, the database is used to tackle key thematic concerns such as early school-leaving. For example, since 2016, relevant datasets regarding early school-leaving have been regularly provided to the Observatory of Learner Drop-out within the IEP, to produce accurate indicators on learner drop-out. Using this data, IEP publishes annual reports. According to Eurostat, Greece has dramatically decreased the rate of early school-leaving since 2009 ([OECD country profile 2020](#)).

Greece has been making efforts to reduce the high-stakes nature and summative focus of learner assessment and has started introducing measures for upgrading the quality assurance authority and expanding its role (Law 4823/2021). However, greater stakeholder involvement and government accountability mechanisms could promote better trust in it. In fact, greater school autonomy, balanced by enhanced local capacity and accountability, could help improve schools' efficiency and responsiveness. The



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government has made efforts in this direction including regional support bodies for schools and school networks (Law 4823/2021). Additionally, continuing to build an evaluation and assessment system that provides constructive accountability and improvement-focused feedback at system, school and learner level is also important, as are the nascent measures to empower local- and school-level actors ([OECD country profile 2020](#)).



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## **SECTION 6. STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION, CO-OPERATION AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

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This section provides information on the structures, mechanisms and opportunities for stakeholder collaboration and co-operation in the country.

### **6.1 Does the legislation and policy framework specify learner voices are used to inform the development of learning and teaching environments?**

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No.

#### **6.1a Description of the legislation and policy framework around the use of learner voice**

Not applicable.

#### **6.1b Explanation**

Even though the issue of rights in the area of disability, as well as for other socially vulnerable children, has become a priority, the educational system is still highly centralised and subject-orientated. More emphasis is given to adults (i.e. experts, parents' or teachers' associations) rather than children's voices.

### **6.2 Does the legislation and policy framework ensure curriculum development processes take account of all learners and their communities?**

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Yes.

#### **6.2a Description of how the legislation and policy framework around curriculum development processes take account of all learners and their communities**

The most recent initiative is **Ergastiria Dexiotiton: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Lab**, a GENE global education awardee. 'Skills Lab' has been a compulsory 'course' in all Greek schools, from pre-primary to lower secondary education, after a successful one-year pilot implementation. It adopts the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDCs) and has been designed under four thematic pillars: well-being, environment, human rights/social empathy, and creativity. These aim to promote and implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals with particular emphasis on Goal 4: 'Inclusive and Quality Education'. Through collaborative learning methodologies, learners are given a voice, deliberate upon important real-life issues, such as the concept of justice in pluralistic and intercultural democratic societies, gender equality, bullying, global citizenship, the rights of all persons to dignity and respect, etc., and design action plans to combat anti-social and anti-democratic practices, developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. 'Skills Lab'





is a broad-spectrum educational initiative that aims, among others, to raise awareness of social and human rights and create a school ethos as a shield against any form of violence.

### **6.3 Does the legislation and policy framework support the active involvement of different stakeholders in ensuring inclusive learning environments?**

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#### **Parents and families**

Yes, with participation in the design and implementation of learner's transition programmes. The consent of the parents or guardians is mandatory for KEDASY to issue an assessment report for a learner. Compilation of a co-operation protocol between a school unit that operates EDY and parents/guardians: there is a detailed description of the co-operation protocol between a school unit that operates EDY and parents/guardians, configuration of IEP by KEDASY with the co-operation of parents/guardians, compilation of a co-operation protocol between KEDASY and parents/guardians.: appeal of the family to a secondary committee, if parents disagree with the report of KEDASY.

Safeguarding learner and family personal data. Parental consent for referral of a learner to support services. Consent of parents for the learner to be referred to a pull out programme (Law 4823/2021; ΦΕΚ 136/3-8-2021 and Rules of operation for EDY ΦΕΚ Β' 5009/27-10-21).

#### **School-leaders/leadership teams, teachers and specialist staff**

Yes. Co-operation of EDY with members of the educational community. Collaborative interdisciplinary approach to learner difficulties in the classroom. Co-operation between EDY and the teachers' assembly. Preparation of the IEP and interdisciplinary support. Design and implementation of learner transition programmes. Members of EDY staffing (Law 4823/2021; ΦΕΚ 136/3-8-2021; Rules of operation for EDY ΦΕΚ Β' 5009/27-10-21).

#### **Stakeholders in the local communities**

Yes. In Law 4823/2021 and, mainly, in the Rules of Operation of EDY, the co-operation of the school community with the social services and the community in general is described. The involvement of these services is not exactly clear, but the ultimate aim of such co-operation is the comprehensive support of learners and families, and the smooth participation of children in education.

#### **Local-level decision-/policy-makers**

No.

#### **Non-governmental organisations, disabled people's organisations or other organisations representing vulnerable groups**

Yes. There is no explicit reference to co-operation with NGOs.

In practice, many KEDASY and many schools co-operate giving priority to evaluation and support processes for learners who come from refugee structures, from the 'Smile of the Child', and from institutions such as 'The Mother'.



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For personal data, the professional confidentiality of all employees in KEDASY and EDY applies.

Also, the exchange of information is done by confidential correspondence and the reference to Law 4823/202 that only after the consent of the parent/guardian that will be included in the co-operation protocol will KEDASY be able to notify the evaluation report to the school unit.

Reference to the preservation of confidentiality is also made in the protocol of co-operation of EDY with the families.

## **6.4 Does the legislation and policy framework ensure that curriculum development processes involve the participation and contribution of different stakeholders?**

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No.

### **6.4a Description of the legislation and policy framework ensuring the involvement of stakeholders in curriculum development processes**

Not applicable.

### **6.4b Explanation**

No information.

## **6.5 Does the legislation and policy framework support the development of learning communities in local/regional areas?**

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No.

### **6.5a Description of the legislation and policy framework that supports the development of learning communities**

Not applicable.

### **6.5b Explanation**

In the legislative decision 449/2007, school–family collaboration is defined, but without any proposals for collaboration policies between structures involved in the educational procedure. The policies for collaboration presuppose the training and preparation of school staff for the reinforcement of collaboration by means of in-service training, organisation of conferences, comprisal of a collaboration period with the family in the school programme, creation of centres for the reinforcement and support of parents within the schools, home visits and creation of action research groups aiming at the improvement of the conditions for collaboration. A functional collaboration also presupposes the improvement of conditions for communication between social services, health centres and school (Refer to Sideri, 2007, p. 3; European Agency, [CPRA](#)).



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## Evaluative commentary

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This section provides a qualified, evidenced-based reflection on the **challenges, opportunities and consequences** of stakeholder collaboration, co-operation and effective communication for the implementation of inclusive education in practice. It specifically considers how effectively different stakeholders across the education system are supported to increase their personal and collective ability to be inclusive in practice.

During the last decade, efforts have been made to improve collaboration and co-operation between different support systems and mechanisms related to the school community. For instance, in an effort to streamline the school network and improve efficiency, Greece passed legislation restructuring school support bodies (2018), introducing four decentralised support bodies to work with schools. At the regional level, Regional Centres for Educational Planning (PEKEs) focus on supporting schools with strategic planning and self-evaluation, pedagogical guidance and teacher training. At the local level, Centres for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Counselling and Support (KEDASY) and Sustainability Education Centres (KPE) were established. The former aim to support inclusion-related measures and career guidance, while the latter strengthen links between schools and their local environments in the interest of building sustainable communities. At school level, School Networks of Educational Support (SDEY) foster more collaboration and networking between schools, aiming to ensure equal access for all. Following initial implementation, the role of educational co-ordinators has been under review due to concerns that, by being fewer in number and no longer school-based, their impact has been limited and thus, the education school-based advisors have again been introduced. (Law 4823/2021). This support system, with the appropriate collaboration, can be more responsive to the wide range of needs and demands of the school units ([OECD country profile 2020](#)).

Also with the new Law, there seems to be a hierarchical network of supervisors/advisors among regional, local and school level (i.e. Regional Education Quality Supervisor, Regional Board of Supervisors, Education Quality Supervisor, Joint Meeting of Education Quality Supervisors, Advisors of Education) – how well they function remains to be seen (Law 4823/2021).

The degree of implementation and effectiveness of the above policies demands a clearly defined framework of co-operation and effective ways of evaluating and monitoring the quality of provision(s). Despite the above efforts, collaboration with different stakeholders as well as collaboration among the same stakeholders (i.e. among general education teachers or between general and special education teachers) remains a great challenge within the Greek education system, since a strong tradition of ‘teaching with closed doors’ prevails. Stronger collaboration with social partners (i.e. parents) is still needed in both stated, written and enacted policies.



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## SECTION 7. FINAL COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

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Progress has been made in both written and stated policies towards inclusive education and a number of activities/actions have taken place in relation to social, religious, gender, ethnic, cultural/multicultural and disability issues. Many schools have become more culturally diverse as a result of social transformation and as an outcome of globalisation, mass migration and multiculturalism, while the vast majority of learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs are at least physically placed in mainstream education.

However, mainstream education does not necessarily mean inclusive education. A deeper analysis of written, stated and enacted policy practices indicate that the educational system in Greece leans heavily towards a more traditional integrationist rather than inclusionist approach, with a strong emphasis on a medical individualistic approach to special educational needs. For instance, the renaming of ‘special classes’ to ‘inclusive classes’ was one of the ways that the education policy responded to the impetus of inclusion (Law 2817/2000). In the same legislation that introduced the name of ‘inclusive classes’, a complex bureaucratic assessment and evaluation process for the identification of learners with a disability was put in place. This process reinforced the dominance of the ‘medical model’ in the education system by requiring learners to be ‘labelled’ with one of the recognised categories of disability before educational provision in the form of resources, additional support and instructional differentiation could become available.

Furthermore, the notion of inclusive education has changed terminology in Greek language (from ‘*entaxi*’ to ‘*symperilipsi*’) based on the assumption that in this way it will broaden its scope, aiming to refer not only to learners with disabilities and/or special educational needs but also to learners who are socially disadvantaged and are at risk of exclusion from regular education (i.e. immigrant learner, refugees, Roma, D/SENs). This change in terminology has created a number of ideological and educational misunderstandings since the previous notion of ‘*entaxi*’ included all the inclusive principles and rationale(s) as well. Thus, there is a need for a clear definition of ‘*entaxis*’/‘inclusive education’ to be adopted throughout all the legislative frameworks based on the definition provided by General Comment Number 4 (GC4, United Nations, 2016), according to which:

inclusion is a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all learners of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences (United Nations, 2016, paragraph 11).

Based on this definition, specific measures, policies and services should be developed in a systemic, systematic and consistent way. As it is, in all legislative frameworks a number of political and educational ambiguities and confusions stem from the fact that legislation uses concepts and the language derived from disability studies and inclusive education to describe more traditional structures of special education or structures that are closer to



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an integrationist rather than an inclusionist approach (for instance, 'inclusive classes' continue in most cases to perform their role as 'withdrawn' rooms).