

**MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN FUNDS**

**EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
1957 - 2007**

Commemorative Edition



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GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN FUNDS**

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SINCE 1957

**EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
50 years investing in people**



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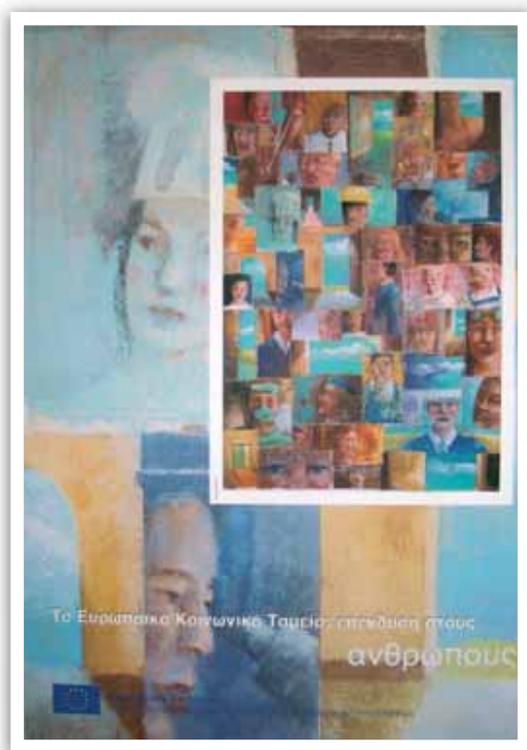
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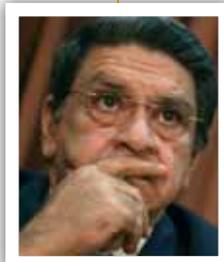


EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

1957 - 2007

Commemorative Edition

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Forward by the Minister of Employment and Social Protection

The European Social Fund (ESF) holds a prominent position among the leading economic and social institutions of the European Union.

Since 1957 when it was established by the Treaty of Rome, the ESF has charted a remarkably successful path to become the linchpin of European Union policies on Employment and Economic Cohesion.

Preventing and combating unemployment, developing human resources, fostering social integration in the labour market, promoting equal opportunities for men and women, as well as sustainable development and economic and social cohesion are the objectives-visions which the European Social Fund systematically and methodically pursues through its diverse actions.

Today, with globalisation and new technologies bringing about spectacular changes to the labour market, the European Social Fund is called upon to play an even more important role.

The comparative advantage of Economies, on a global scale, is the specialised knowledge and skills of their employees.

The creation of more and better jobs whilst ensuring more qualitative opportunities at all stages of the economic cycle, in a nutshell: the effective investment in human resources is what henceforth will determine the course of the European Social Fund.

I should like to stress that the European Social Fund is meeting these challenges with enormous success, not only in the case of Greece but with respect to all European citizens.

I am certain that ESF will continue on this splendid path.

The completion of the first 50 years of operation of the European Social Fund opens a new cycle of actions and operations which I am sure will respond even more effectively to the needs of European Society.

A society with real sensitivities, at the side of citizens and their needs, with the ultimate objective of implementing the positions enshrined in the Lisbon Agenda. In a way this enables the European Union to become the most competitive economy on a global scale, whilst at the same time preserving its friendly and human face.

Vassilios N. Maghinias

Minister of Employment and Social Protection



Forward by the EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

European Social Fund - ESF: Working for more and better jobs

Helping people to find a job and improve their skills - for 50 years this has been the main aim of the European Social Fund (ESF). It has more than stood the test of time, showing a capacity to adapt to changing social and employment conditions and often be ahead of them. Over the last 50 years the Fund has helped millions and millions of people in Europe.

In the coming years the ESF will further strengthen the main asset we have in Europe, our people. There are very concrete arguments for investment in human capital: One additional year of average school attainment raises productivity and salary levels by almost 10%. To respond to the challenges of globalisation, Europe needs a well-educated, skilled and adaptable workforce. As a member of the Eurozone and a developed economy, Greece relies on its people and their innovative capacity to create more and better jobs.

The ESF has invested successfully in Greece and its people. With the ESF, Greece has modernised its education system and public employment services.

Greece has always been proactive in proposing to concentrate ESF interventions in new policy areas such as institutional capacity. Based on this experience, institutional capacity is now one of the key priorities in the new programming period, and Greece is continuing to use the ESF to improve public services for its citizens across all domains of policies and levels of governance. All this alongside ESF investment in lifelong learning, to keep everyone up-to-date with the skills and knowledge needed in a competitive economy.

We have the tools to succeed in creating more and better jobs - the challenge we are facing now is not one of intent, it is one of implementation.

Vladimír Špidla

**Commissioner for Employment,
Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities**

INTRODUCTION

In the 50 years since the establishment of the European Social Fund (ESF), Greece has had the opportunity to initiate and manage three Community Support Frameworks through the planning and development of a series of major infrastructures.

During the 2000-2006 Programming Period, Greece placed particular emphasis on upgrading the country's human resources.

For the Greek Community and the National Economy, Human Capital constitutes an added value. Its development is the vehicle for achieving economic vigour, **improved competitiveness** and the **desired social cohesion**.

In the New Programming Period (2007-2013), the actions of the European Social Fund will be of decisive importance for the country's development strategy. In the framework of the National Plan, efforts are being made to achieve better targeting of the interventions towards the **optimum utilisation of the entire human capital in the country**.

The planning of interventions in the new period is based on a multifaceted, cohesive framework of actions aimed at strengthening the country's social fabric.

The expanded target-setting of the European Social Fund takes into account specific strategic choices, which serve the country's developmental vision in a comprehensive manner and translate into innovative interventions in Public Administration, Education, Health and Employment.

The ESF will serve as an extremely useful tool for meeting the challenges facing the Greek education system. The adoption of knowledge transference methods that address present-day educational needs and the decentralisation of the education process, both at an administrative and an operational level, are a top priority in the planning period for 2007-2013 .

The country is called upon to prepare tomorrow's professionals, by upgrading the quality of initial education and training and by modernising the education system. At the same time, it must support workers throughout their working lives, by strengthening lifelong learning and connecting education and training with the labour market.

The role of education is important and in terms of its contribution to strengthening social cohesion. The social activation of vulnerable social groups that tend to become isolated helps prevent their social exclusion. By participating in the learning process, they not only acquire valuable skills for their future vocational rehabilitation, but also the general knowledge which makes them privy to the cultural characteristics of the broader social environment they live in.

All the actions to be implemented during the New Programming Period attempt to secure the conditions of full employment for the country's labour force, as well as to improve the quality of work and productivity. At the same time, they seek to strengthen the adaptability of businesses and the labour force, so that they can successfully adjust to the changing conditions of international competition and keep abreast of technological and production progress.

Special emphasis is being placed on strengthening employment among **women, young people** and the **elderly**, as well as promoting equal access to employment and reducing the social exclusion of vulnerable groups and people with disabilities.

The pioneering and rationally organised approach to working life, on a life-cycle basis, constitutes the added value of planning for the optimum use of the financing instrument available to our country. The various actions will upgrade the quality of initial education, modernise the education system for pupils, support young people starting out and citizens at all stages of their professional careers, prevent the depreciation of experienced elderly workers and the exclusion of vulnerable social groups.

The Greek State is seeking to ensure a **society of equal opportunities** for all its citizens. Through an integrated programme, it supports those having difficulty in keeping up with the consequences of the changes in the international division of labour that are also affecting Greece. National planning, with documented monitoring of the levels of Social Exclusion and its causes, provides for interventions that will effectively utilise the available resources and resolve the real problems of those in need.

The underlying philosophy of Health policies is the provision of protection and the combating of exclusion from employment and social life of vulnerable groups in the population. People with special needs frequently have complex health problems (physical disability, mental illness) that are often exacerbated within institutionalised care environments.

Among the innovative interventions planned by the State, of decisive importance is the upgrade of Public Administration Services, in order to deal with any shortages within the support system and the work force. Through these initiatives, the State mechanisms are called upon to respond more effectively to the citizens' needs, whilst contributing to and promoting the implementation of social policy in a more substantial way.

The interventions of the European Social Fund in the New Programming Period dare to utilise *innovative solutions*, which transcend the confines of a limited state and seek to *empower Social Partners, private initiatives, Local Government and the Greek Society in general*.

The resources of the ESF can become a valuable financing tool only if the relevant actions are based on the necessary institutional and regulatory interventions. ESF planning for the period 2007-2013 breaks new ground, for it is not confined to a list of actions, but clearly highlights the major structural problems and proposes systemic interventions for their resolution. The objective is to achieve more effective management and utilisation of the resources invested, in order to generate results that remain in the Greek society long after Community assistance has ended.

The successful implementation of the programmes will be measured by the extent of improvement to the employability of Greek citizens, the degree to which quality and productive work is the option of choice for everyone and by the creation of *more and better jobs*. It will also be judged by how far it has strengthened the cohesion of our society, by creating the appropriate conditions so that all citizens can fully realise their potential and be proud to participate in a society that offers equal opportunities.

We are now ready to implement a *far-reaching plan*, aimed at creating a labour force worthy of our country's ambitions and our society's expectations.

Constantinos Tsoutsoplides

**General Secretary for the Management of European Funds
Ministry of Employment and Social Protection**



The end of the Second World War led to a new vision of a united and powerful Europe, which was both imperative and attainable. Those who had resisted totalitarianism during the war were determined to put an end to international rivalry and hatred in Europe and create the conditions for lasting peace among old enemies.

Between 1945 and 1950, a small group of pioneering statesmen and politicians – including Konrad Adenauer, Winston Churchill, Alcide De Gasperi and Robert Schuman – set about persuading their peoples to move toward a new organisation of Western Europe, based on their shared interests and founded upon treaties guaranteeing respect for the rule of law and equality for all countries.

Taking up an idea advocated by Jean Monnet, on 9 May 1950, Schuman proposed the establishment of a European Coal and Steel Community. The decision to place coal and steel production under the joint control of a so-called 'High Authority' was of enormous symbolic significance, for the raw materials of war were being turned into instruments of reconciliation and peace.

This noble and courageous undertaking was crowned with success, as it marked the beginning of peaceful co-operation among the member states of the European Communities for more than half a century and laid the foundations for the creation of a United Europe.

The founding treaty of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in April 1951, the object of which was to place sectors of the economy under the control of a supranational authority and gradually lead to broader unification, was signed by six countries: France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

The success of this co-operation also provided the incentive for the establishment of a further two Communities, namely the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC), the founding treaties of which were signed in Rome, in March 1957.



KONRAD ADENAUER
[1876 – 1967]

The first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. An advocate of a united Europe since before the Second World War, he integrated Germany with the Euro-Atlantic Alliance.



SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL
[1874 – 1965]

British Prime Minister. The driving force behind the anti-Nazi coalition and a staunch supporter of pan-Europeanism. One of the first to support the idea of a 'United States of Europe'.



ALCIDE DE GASPERI
[1881 – 1954]

Minister for Foreign Affairs and later Prime Minister of Italy, who time and again promoted initiatives for the integration of Western Europe and supported the Schuman Plan for the foundation of the ECSC.



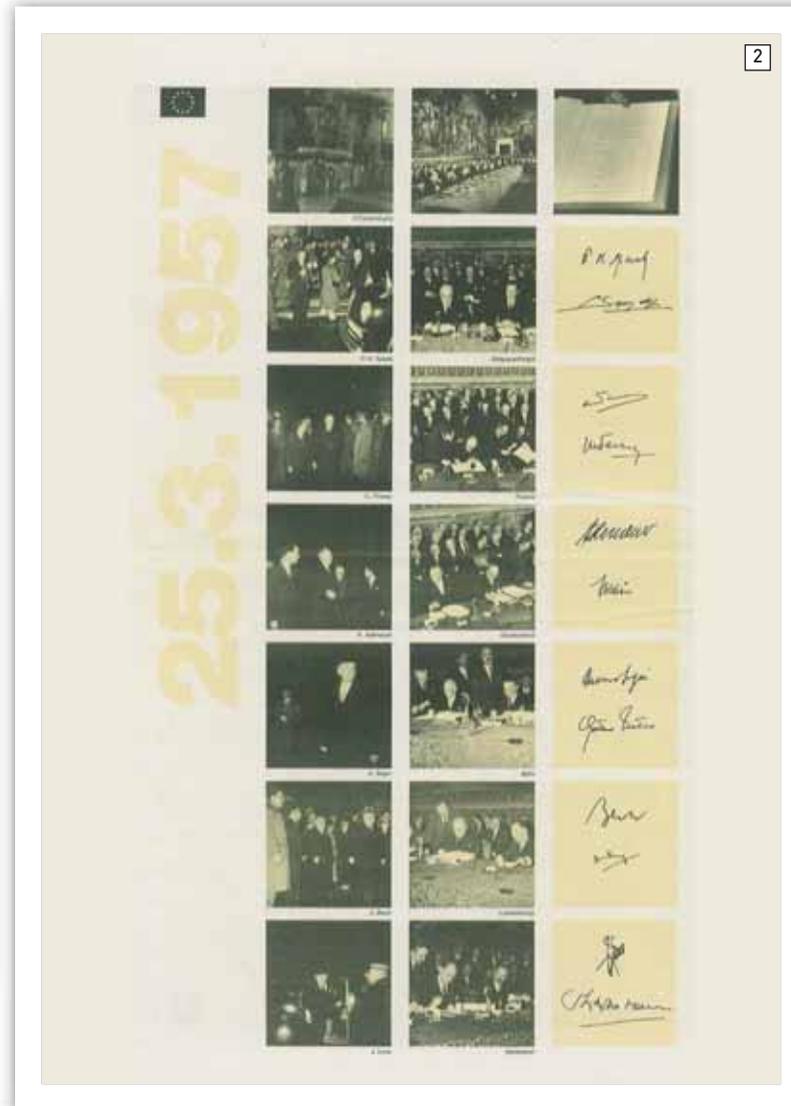
JEAN MONNET
[1888 – 1979]

French economic advisor and politician who dedicated himself to the cause of European integration. Considered by many to be the 'architect' of the European Union. Although never elected to public office, he was the main inspiration behind the famous 'Schuman declaration' which led to the creation of the ECSC.

In the Treaty of Rome that established the European Economic Community (EEC), further to the objective of unifying the economies of Europe, provision was also made for efforts to eliminate the social inequalities in the European Society by **setting up the European Social Fund (ESF)**. The aim of the ESF was to facilitate the creation of jobs and make it easier for workers to move from one type of employment or geographical region to another. Since then, the European family of the first six states has been growing.



In 1973, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined the Communities. This first enlargement, bringing the number of member states from six to nine, coincided not only with the enhancement of the Community's role, the implementa-





3

1 The signing of the founding treaty of the EEC.

2-3 International press reports on the establishment of the EEC.

tion of new social, environmental, and regional policies, but also with the establishment of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in 1975.

In 1981, Greece acceded to the European Communities, becoming the 10th member state.

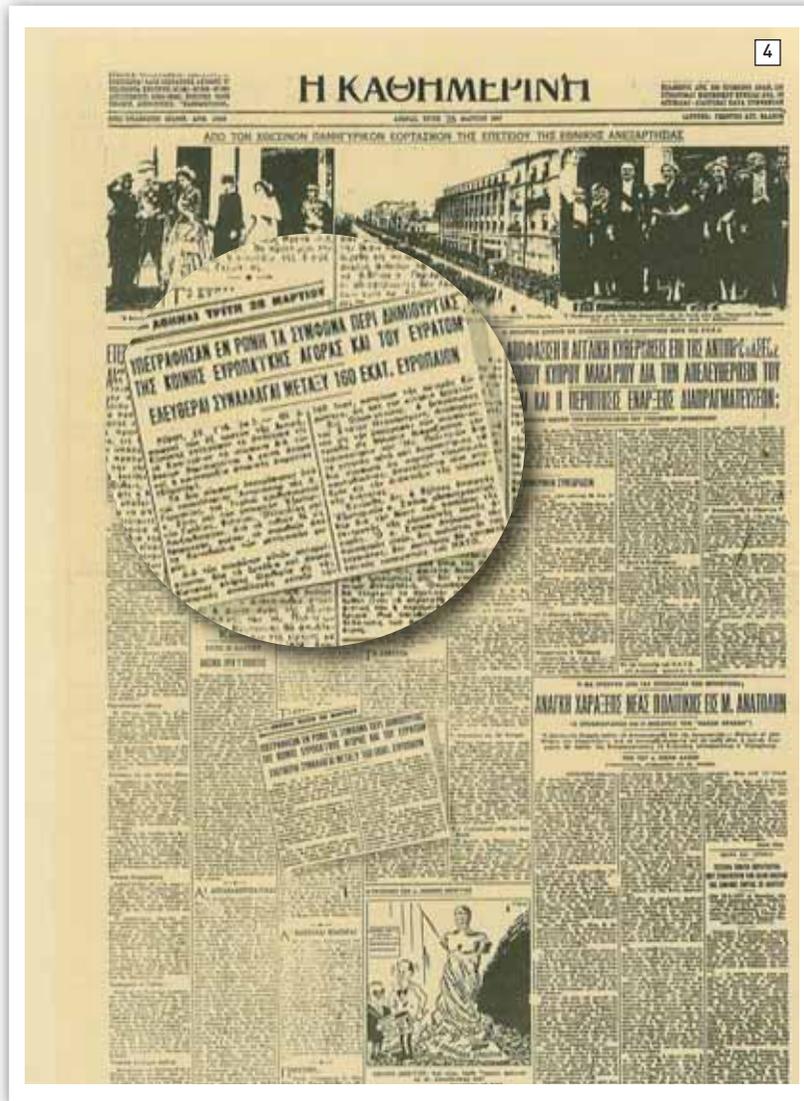
In 1986, Spain and Portugal followed suit. The new enlargement of EEC made it all the more necessary to introduce the first 'structural programmes', named the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (IMP), whose aim was to redress inequalities in the economic growth of the 12 member states.

In Greece, the implementation of the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes began in 1986 and was completed in 1993. In all, seven IMPs were implemented in Crete, Macedonia and Thrace, Western Greece and the Peloponnese, the Aegean islands, Central Greece, Attica and one in the sector of information technology.

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the countries of central and eastern Europe decided that their future lay within the family of European nations. This new dynamic change in the continent's geopolitical situation led three more countries – Austria, Finland and Sweden – to join the European Union in 1995.

The 15-member, strong European Union entered a period of further enlargement on an unprecedented scale. The former Peoples' Republics of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, one of the republics of former Yugoslavia, Slovenia, and two Mediterranean countries, Cyprus and Malta, joined the European Union in May 2004. Finally, in 2007, Bulgaria and Romania became members.

Today, the European Union of 27 member states is more than a simple confederation of countries, without it being a federal state. In reality, it is



The Single European Act (1986)

The Single European Act (SEA), the first major revision of the Treaty of Rome which established the European Communities, was signed in February 1986 and came into force on 1 January 1987. The main objectives of this revision were:

- the gradual completion of the internal market (up to 31.12.1992), in which the free movement of goods, people, services and capital is ensured,
- greater economic and social cohesion, to reduce the gap among the various regions and aid those lagging behind,
- legislation to enable more extensive co-operation in the political sphere.

The SEA also extended the actions of the Communities to new areas, such as the protection of the environment and research and technological development, whilst at the same time increasing the participation of the European Parliament in the legislative process.

The Treaty of Maastricht (1992)

The Treaty of Maastricht, which was signed in February 1992 and came into force on 1 November 1993, formally established the European Union (EU). With this treaty, the 12 member states adopted sweeping changes in the structure and nature of the European Communities of the time, in order to deepen economic and political integration. The main points of the treaty may be summarised as follows:

- the creation of an Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) with a common currency, the euro (€),
- the addition of two new 'pillars', namely common foreign and security policies, along with co-operation on judicial and home affairs.

On an institutional level, the treaty introduced the concept of 'European citizenship', reinforcing the powers of the European Parliament to remedy the democratic deficit, and created the Committee of the Regions, the Court of First Instance and the European Central Bank.

The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997)

The Treaty of Amsterdam was signed in October 1997 and came into force on 1 May 1999. It introduced new amendments to the Treaties of the European Union. This treaty regulated issues pertaining to:

- the deepening of European integration and the evolution of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU),
- the furthering of co-operation among the member states, to formulate a common European policy in most sectors.

This treaty also included plans for the reform of EU institutions, the strengthening of Europe's voice in the world and the allocation of more resources for employment and citizens' rights.

The Treaty of Nice (2001)

The EU treaties were again revised by virtue of the Treaty of Nice, which was signed in February 2001.

The main objective of the Treaty of Nice was to prepare the Union for enlargement, by adopting the necessary institutional reforms for receiving the new members, without affecting the smooth, efficient operation of the EU and its course towards integration.

These reforms related primarily to the powers and composition of the Union's decision-making institutions, the decision-making process itself and the role of the European Court of Justice.

something new and quite unique. The Union's political system has been evolving for over 50 years and is based on a body of Treaties, from those signed in Paris (1951) and Rome (1957) to the more recent treaties of Maastricht (1992), Amsterdam (1997) and Nice (2001). Under the terms of these treaties, the member states of the Union delegate some of their national sovereignty to the common institutions which represent not only their national but also their collective interests. Moreover, these treaties introduce a large number of legislative acts, which have a direct impact on the daily lives of citizens within the European Union.

The EU has brought freedom, peace and prosperity to half a billion people. In the 50 years since the last world war, Europe has achieved

a state of peaceful co-existence and is no longer divided into East and West.

Indeed, the European Union has helped create conditions of prosperity and peace on a continent ravaged by the two most destructive wars and subsequently divided by the cold war and the Berlin wall.

The challenge now facing the European Union is adapting to the world of the 21st century. However, during these past 50 years of European unification, it has demonstrated that it is capable of meeting the challenges of History and remains a 'Europe of results'.



4-5 Greek press reports regarding the establishment of the EEC.

Greece's accession to the European Economic Community

Greece had aspired to the European vision since the founding of the European Community. In June 1959, the country submitted an application for its association with the European Economic Community (EEC), which at the time was still in its infancy. This application led to the signing of an Association Agreement between Greece and the EEC, in June 1961.

In effect, this agreement was the first step in Greece's accession to the European Community, which however was put on hold due to the imposition of a military dictatorship in the country, in April 1967, and resumed following the restoration of democracy in July 1974.



The objective of the Greek government, and in particular its prime minister at the time, Konstantinos Karamanlis, was to secure the country's integration in the European Community as a full member, since this would ensure:

- ▣ the stabilisation of its democratic political system,
- ▣ the strengthening of its geopolitical position in the region and in the international arena
- ▣ the development and modernisation of the Greek economy and society, and
- ▣ its active participation in the processes of European integration.

6 Representatives of EEC member states following the signing of the Association Agreement between Greece and the EEC.
9 July, 1961



7 Prime Minister K. Karamanlis signs the Treaty of the Accession of Greece to the EEC. Sitting on his right, Foreign Minister G. Rallis and on his left, Minister-without-portfolio G. Kontogeorgis.
28 May, 1979

8 View of the Zappeion Hall at the time of the signing ceremony for the Treaty of the Accession of Greece to the EEC.
28 May, 1979



9 Prime Minister K. Karamanlis delivers a speech during the signing ceremony for the Treaty of Accession of Greece to the EEC. Among the dignitaries is French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.
28 May, 1979



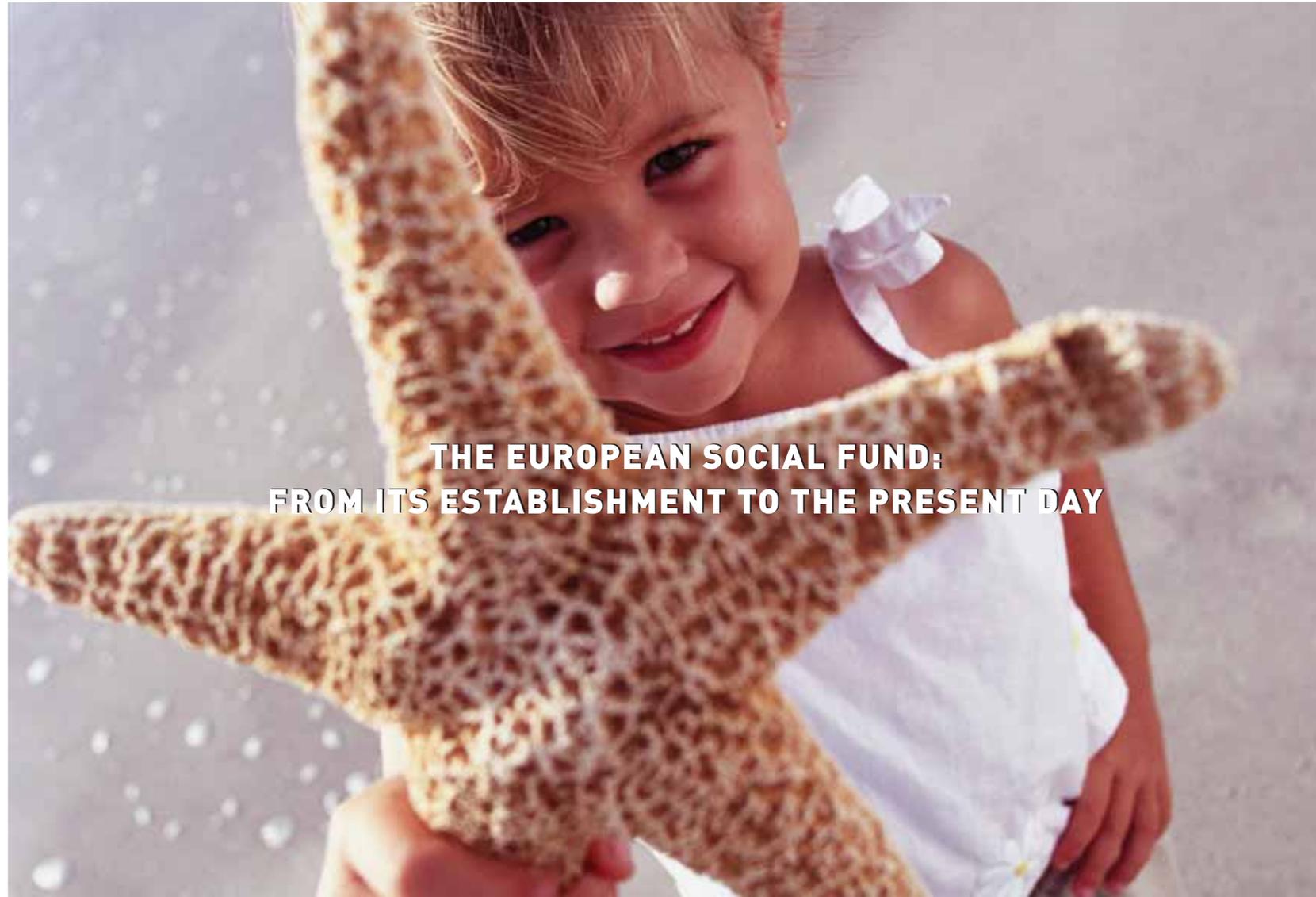
10 Ratification of the Treaty of the Accession. Government Gazette, 27 July, 1979.



The application for full membership was submitted on 12 June 1975. Accession negotiations began in July 1976 and were completed in May 1979, with the signing of the Act of Accession at the Zappeion Hall, in Athens.

Greece's Act of Accession to the European Community was ratified by the Hellenic Parliament on 28 June 1979 and came into force on 1 January 1981.

The European route taken by Greece, from 1981 to this day, has resulted in a gradual transformation not only of the development framework of the Greek economy but also of the country's social fabric.



**THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND:
FROM ITS ESTABLISHMENT TO THE PRESENT DAY**

T 1957-1976: A Fund for Workers

To facilitate its mission, since its founding in 1957, the European Union of the six member states had formulated a social policy that provided for the creation of the European Social Fund (ESF). The aim of the ESF, the longest running fund of the European Union, was to improve employment opportunities for workers in Europe, by increasing their geographical and occupational mobility within the Community and further developing their skills.

At that time, which coincided with the period of industrial restructuring in Europe, unemployment was at very low levels. It was a wide-spread belief that, to the extent that unemployment did exist, it could be contained by a policy for the training and mobility of workers and would provide them with the ability to move freely within the Community.

The primary objective of the Fund was to

assist workers moving from one region to another in search of employment, as well as those in need of new skills in sectors undergoing modernisation or changes in production methods.

Initially, no provision was made for training in the public sector or for the self-employed.

During its first period of operation, the ESF had two main weaknesses: the first related to difficulties with the redistribution of its resources, since the more developed countries were receiving a greater share relative to the less developed ones. The second was that the system of retrospective grants precluded any Community influence on national labour market policies. The ESF therefore embarked on an effort to respond to economic and social developments in Europe, so as to adapt its targets and policies and thus be able to constantly enhance the effectiveness of its interventions, for the benefit of European citizens.



The first reform of the ESF was adopted in 1971, with the aim of extending and strengthening it as an instrument with a greater Community focus. The Fund which emerged had substantially greater resources and its interventions centered on addressing the balance of labour supply and demand within the Community. The new structure placed emphasis not only on specific categories of workers but also on boosting employment in the less favoured regions. This phase also saw the introduction of a number of new interventions, such as the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, and the opening up of ESF aid to the private sector and actions that promote innovation in training.

1977-1987: Young people and the unemployed at the forefront

Twenty years later, in 1977, the spectre of unemployment began to loom over Europe. In response, the ESF focused its interventions and resources on creating jobs mainly for unemployed young people, women who were either unemployed or wishing to return to work, migrants and their families. During the same period, and in conjunction with the European Regional Development Fund which was established in 1975, the ESF aspired to become one of the principal tools for European regional development in the social domain.

In 1983, the European Union comprised 10 member states, Greece being one of them. The phenomenon of youth unemployment now required a dynamic response. The ESF's underlying philosophy was again revised and its interventions were extended to boost vocational training. This philosophy combines vocational training and work experience schemes for young people, vocational training for underqualified young people, particularly for jobs requiring qualifications in new technologies, as well as the training of instructors. Emphasis was also placed on employment schemes in priority regions, and the modernisation of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

In Greece the ESF contributed to the creation of Vocational Training Centres and centres for the rehabilitation of people with mental disabilities, whilst also promoting the reform of the psychiatric system.



1988-1999: The ESF - one of the Structural Funds

In 1988, after 30 years of operation, the ESF entered a new era marked by the first extensive revision of the Treaty of Rome, which was carried out via the Single European Act of 1986. This revision was aimed at completing the single market, as the member states undertook a commitment to achieve the greatest possible economic and social cohesion and become a true 'European Union'.

This reform radically changed the role of the ESF which, along with the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), became one of the Structural Funds.

The interventions of the Structural Funds and the allocation of their resources were built on four basic principles:

- ▣ Development of the less prosperous regions, through the support of human resources and concentrating on those facing the risk of unemployment.
- ▣ Introduction of development programmes for each member state, known as Community Support Frameworks (CSFs) and formulated following negotiations with the Community authorities.
- ▣ Establishment of the principle of additionality with regards to the national development programming of each member state, which should ensure compatibility with the various Community strategies, for example in the fields of competition and the environment.
- ▣ Introduction of Community Initiatives and innovative actions and studies, which relate to new approaches and focus on vocational training and employment policies.

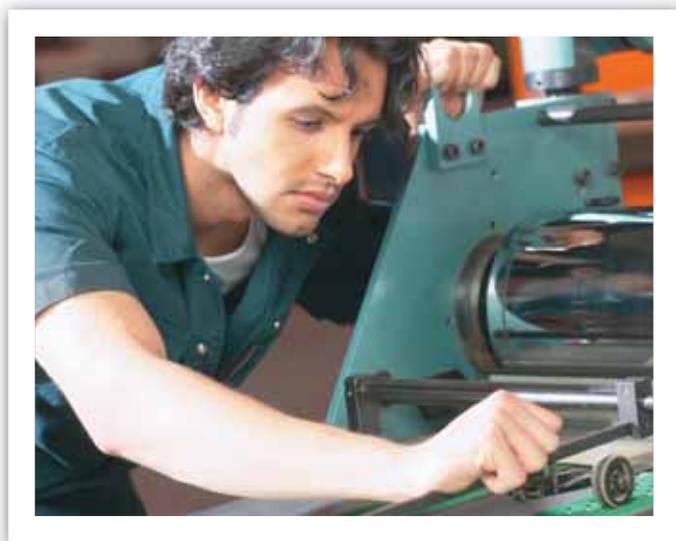
Since then, the ESF has oriented its objectives, interventions and funds toward developing human resources, thereby contributing to the strengthening of social and economic development and cohesion within the European Union.





From 1988 to 1993, the ESF extended its funding eligibility rules to include the training of public servants, the training of young people as apprentices after compulsory education, and the acquisition of work experience. It also supported self-employment, along with counselling and vocational guidance. At the same time, the ESF facilitated the transfer of knowledge relating to the modernisation of production systems among member states.

In parallel to the above, new approaches are introduced through the Human Resource Initiatives «EUROFORM», «NOW» and «HORIZON», which are aimed at developing new skills and increasing employment opportunities for the single market, promoting equal opportunities for women in the labour market, and improving job prospects for people with special needs or at risk of exclusion from employment for other reasons.



The period 1994-1999 was marked by further changes for the ESF, with greater efforts being made to facilitate the integration of those at risk of exclusion from the labour market, as well as to help workers adapt to developments in industry and to changes in production systems. In addition, the scope of the Fund was enlarged, with eligibility and interventions extended to strengthen research and development in the social field.

Finally, the «ADAPT» and «EMPLOYMENT» Community Initiatives were implemented and aimed at helping workers adjust to the new conditions.



2000-2007: The citizen is the main focus of Europe's developmental process

The rapid technological developments and economic globalisation which marked the end of the 20th century are guiding the European Union toward new, dynamic choices regarding its social policy for the future. The ESF henceforth becomes the principal tool for social development, as confirmed by the statement in Lisbon, in March 2000, that "people are Europe's main asset and should be the focal point of the Union's policies".

The strategic choices that it is called upon to serve are aimed at making the European citizen more competitive, more dynamic, informed, with a broad knowledge basis, flexible and secure in new conditions of labour and employment, capable of adapting to the state of the economy today.





Against this background, the ESF has set new, qualitative targets for the 2000-2006 period and the focus of its actions has been on reducing national, regional and local employment disparities.

Its interventions and resources are directed toward creating more and better jobs for all, with emphasis placed on the quality of employment, ensuring ready access to training and life-long learning, particularly in the field of technologies, so that any skills deficits will be dealt with. At the same time, efforts are stepped up to ensure the social inclusion of minority groups, to combat all forms of discrimination and nurture an entrepreneurial culture in the employment of men and women.

Equal opportunities for all are promoted through the «EQUAL» Community Initiative.

In 2007, on the 50th anniversary of its creation, the ESF is setting priorities which further strengthen its mission and role in the member states. The objective is to achieve more effective utilisation of resources and invest in sectors with long-term benefits for the citizens of Europe.

The priorities are now aimed at improving the adaptability of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs, facilitating the access of individuals to employment and encouraging the continued participation of older workers in the labour market.

Special emphasis is being placed on enhancing human capital, particularly through reforms in the education and training systems of the member states with the aim to creating new employment options, as well as reinforcing the social inclusion of social vulnerable people, leading to their sustainable integration in employment, and combating all forms of discrimination in the labour market.

With these objectives and their effective implementation in the future, we can fulfil the aspiration of the human capital becoming the driving force for social cohesion and development in Europe for the coming decades.





Since joining the European Union as a full member in 1981, Greece has made considerable efforts in maximising its economic and social prosperity and be in par



with the other member states, mainly by focusing on rapid development and the standard of living, a fact which defined its subsequent route and adjustment to the various European policies. A key prerequisite for the success of this undertaking was



the utilisation of the human factor and the upgrading of its productivity through adaptability to continuous developments and increased knowledge and skills.



In order to gradually eliminate any disparities, particularly in relation to the countries of Northern Europe, Greece – along with other countries of the European South – received assistance in the form of Community funds, to strengthen its economic sectors and develop its human capital.



For this purpose, the first interventions in the country were through the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (IMP, 1986-1993), as part of attaining the goal of the internal market set by the Single European Act in 1986.

Following the radical reform of the Structural Funds in 1988, a milestone in the course of development for each EU member state, the Community Support Frameworks (CSFs) were introduced. The CSFs are essentially development programmes that are co-financed by the Community and the member state, the objectives and actions of which are also jointly decided.

With the EU's social orientation now consolidated and with the aim of achieving even greater economic and social cohesion, the Community Support Frameworks have, and continue to constitute a major component of Greece's economic and social development.



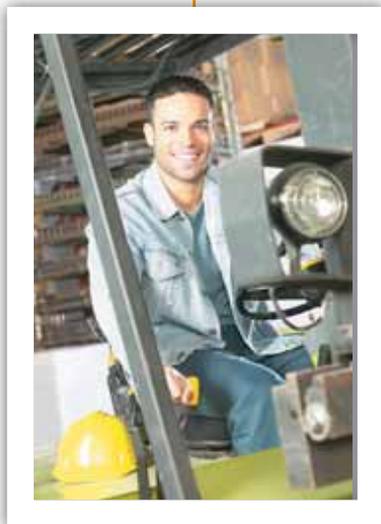
1st Community Support Framework (1989-1993)

The first Community Support Framework was implemented from 1989 to 1993. During this period, funding was in line with the targets of the Structural Funds and resources were allocated throughout the country.

The interventions of the ESF were aimed at combating long-term unemployment and facilitating the entry into the labour market of young people under the age of 25. In this period, the ESF funded vocational training programmes addressed to both the employed and the unemployed, as well as subsidising programmes for the creation of new jobs.

The objective was to enhance the knowledge and skills of the employed and unemployed in order to facilitate their access to the labour market, in the sectors of telecommunications, research, tourism, transport, energy, banks-insurance, secondary education and health. The relevant interventions also had a strong regional dimension, with many of the actions being carried out in the country's 13 regions.

The population groups that benefited were primarily people with disabilities, immigrants and repatriates. Assistance was also provided to these groups via the Community Initiatives, implemented to foster the transfer



of know-how from other European countries, namely:

- ▣ «EUROFORM» to promote new qualifications in vocational training,
- ▣ «NOW» to improve the employment opportunities and social integration of women, and
- ▣ «HORIZON» to help the people with special needs, repatriates and other vulnerable groups gain access to the labour market.

The human resources interventions of the first Community Support Framework accounted for approximately 25% of its total available funds. The strategy applied in the social sector in Greece during this period was characterised chiefly by the large dispersion of funds to projects all over the country.

2nd Community Support Framework (1994-1999)

The second Community Support Framework began in 1994 and was completed in 1999, with efforts directed toward preparing the country for entry to the Economic and Monetary Union which would follow. As in the previous period, Community funding was allocated to projects throughout the country.

The ESF interventions were expanded relative to the period 1989-1993 endeavouring to further develop the country's human resources in more sectors and branches of the economy, and co-funded actions in the sectors of education, health, public administration, research, communications, tourism and industry.

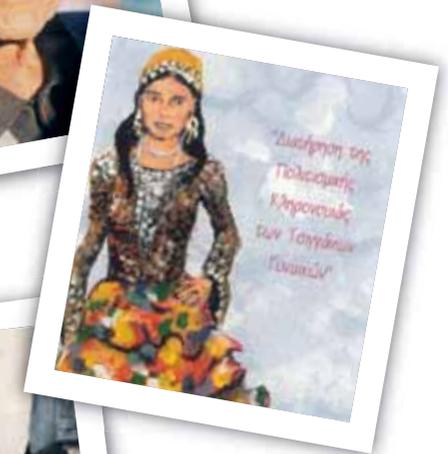


These actions were aimed at tackling the underlying structural problems of the secondary and tertiary education system and enhancing the qualifications of the labour force through lifelong training, at boosting employment and assisting socially vulnerable groups to enter in the labour market.

In particular, in order to stimulate employment in all the above sectors, a centre for the accreditation of training centers (EKEPIS) was established along with Employment Promotion Centres (KPA), to provide information and support to the unemployed and businesses at a local level. In addition, funds were used to set up day-care centres for infants and pre-schoolers, Creative Activity Centres for children of school age and Social Welfare Centres for the care of the elderly.

The social groups targeted by the ESF interventions included the unemployed, people employed in the private and public sectors, schoolchildren, students, people with special needs, immigrants and other vulnerable groups of the population. The «ADAPT» and «EMPLOYMENT» Community Initiatives also played an important role in developing the country's human resources during this period.

Some 20% of the 2nd Community Support Framework funds were allocated for the above interventions through 9 Sectoral and 13 Regional Operational Programmes. In this programming period, emphasis was placed on major infrastructure projects of national importance, whilst priority continued to be given to the promotion of economic development through strengthening of competitiveness, improvement of employment opportunities, the creation of better living conditions in urban areas and the upgrading of the environment.



3rd Community Support Framework (2000-2006)

During the period 2000-2006, Greece was given considerable assistance from the EU Structural Funds, through the third Community Support Framework, Community Initiatives and the Cohesion Fund.

The purpose of the respective funds was to create conditions for long-term development, achieve real convergence with the economies of the other member states, redress key deficiencies in economic and social life and further develop human resources.

The third CSF (2000-2006) became the most important instrument for achieving the strategic goal of boosting employment and competitiveness in Europe, as set by the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000.

The interventions of the ESF, which accounted for 20% approximately of the framework funds, were delivered through 6 Sectoral and 13 Regional Operational Programmes.

The Community Initiative «EQUAL» also made significant interventions, in order to combat inequalities in the employment sector and discrimination.



The projects of the third programming period were aimed at all Greek citizens. Among those who benefited were the unemployed, young people, women, schoolchildren and students, as well as employees in the private and public sectors and in Local Government Organisations. Particular emphasis was placed on socially vulnerable individuals and their support agencies.

The sectors on which the ESF focused its interventions in this period are set out below. Although the period has not yet been completed, it is estimated that the programmes, which were and continue to be implemented in the period have made a significant contribution to the country's human capital and sustainable growth.

Enhancement of knowledge and skills for all

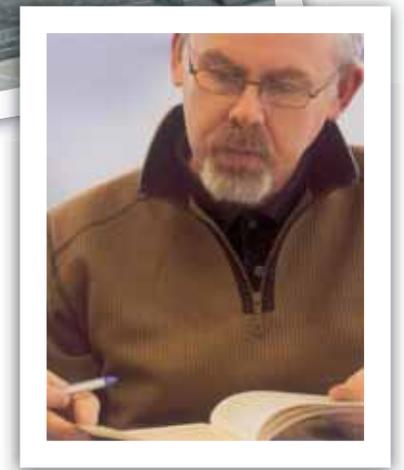
Priority was given to building a robust and competitive economy, based on human resources with multiple abilities and skills, as well as on businesses capable of contributing to economic development.

The strategic target for success was to provide citizens with a high standard of education and training, which would facilitate access to better jobs, whilst at the same time promoting productivity and quality in the labour market.

Initial vocational education and ongoing training play a decisive role in the adjustment of the labour force to the new conditions of work as influenced by new technologies, since they are aimed at enhancing the qualifications and skills of both the unemployed and the employed. In this setting, it is of paramount importance to determine and recognise formal and informal forms of learning, whilst ensuring quality in education and vocational training and developing lifelong learning. Education policies are being formulated along these lines so that citizens can acquire the skills required to adapt to the social, economic and cultural changes taking place in modern society.

Vocational training and lifelong learning interventions, covering a broad spectrum of actions, are planned and carried out throughout Greece, co-financed by the European Social Fund.

One of the first priorities was to provide vocational education that creates suitable conditions for removing barriers to entry to the labour market for young people. Emphasis was placed on effective career orientation to strengthen young people's



connection with the labour market, upgrading the quality and expanding the scope of the education provided, improving conditions for the entry to the education system of individuals belonging to socially vulnerable groups, and strengthening environmental education with the support of appropriate structures.

At the same time, actions were undertaken to improve the skills of the unemployed, and those employed in the public and private sectors, while also combating digital illiteracy. This is being achieved through the implementation of vocational training programmes that meet the real needs of the labour market and help match supply to demand and vice versa. The main interventions include vocational training programmes in basic and advanced Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills.

The possibilities offered by training schemes under the 'Information Society' operational



programme, in conjunction with the application of flexible forms of vocational education such as e-learning, facilitate the access to training of socially excluded groups of the population and those living in remote regions.

In addition, continuous vocational training actions are focusing on upgrading the skills of the labour force in the sectors of health, welfare and mental health, covering a wide range of specialisms of the employed or newly-employed. Moreover, in the area of mental health, programmes are being implemented for personnel who provide care to the mentally impaired with the aim of de-institutionalising and reintegrating the latter into the workforce.

Meanwhile, the main objective of the lifelong learning schemes is to develop the skills of the labour force employed in the sectors of manufacturing, services and tourism, in order to modernise businesses and improve their competitiveness. For the same purpose, programmes are being implemented to enhance skills in areas relating to technological and organisational modernisation, as well as to quality, innovation and environmental protection.

Promoting female employment and entrepreneurship

Equality between men and women is today an integral part of social policy and is recognised as a key factor for economic development and social cohesion. In order to achieve this objective, Greece has incorporated gender mainstreaming and the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men in the programmes being co-funded by the ESF.

A strategic target of the interventions of the European Social Fund and the Greek State is to raise employment among women to 50% – i.e. the European average – in order to attain equal gender representation in economic development, improve women's access to the labour market and reconcile women's family with their working lives.

The actions being implemented by businesses to ensure gender equality in their internal operation are expected to improve women's access to the labour market. The main objective of these actions is

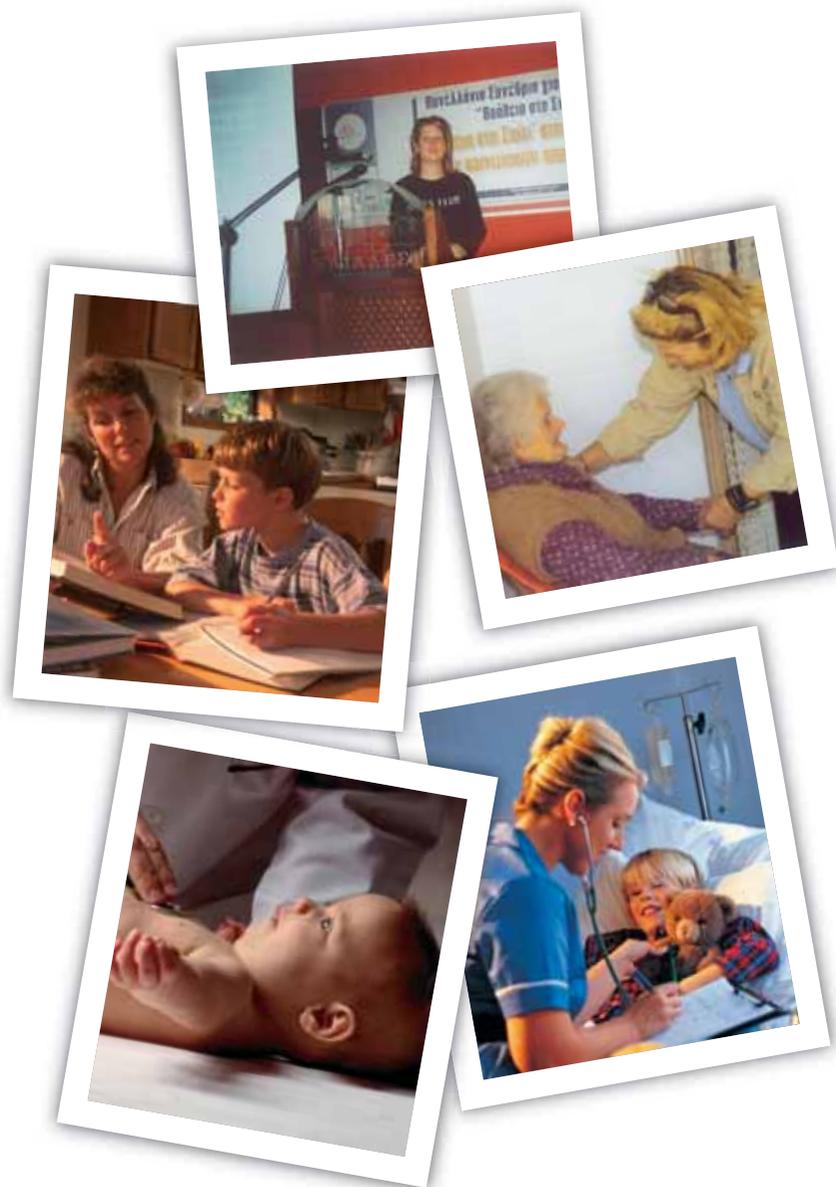


to promote equality in the workplace, whilst ensuring equal participation of men and women in positions of responsibility and the professional advancement of women in senior management positions.

At a regional level, innovative measures are also taken to strengthen and prepare women for labour market access, as well as to support them in undertaking entrepreneurial activities.

To reconcile the family and working lives of women, an extensive infrastructure has been created which focuses firstly on the operation of social services such as child-minding and care for the elderly, as well as all-day nurseries and primary schools. These facilities have released women so that they can return to work. At the same time, the specialist positions for the manning of these facilities – such as nurses, social workers, kindergarten teachers, etc. – are mainly directed to women.

Provision has also been made for a series of actions to assist women at risk of exclusion or already excluded from the labour market, which are aimed at improving their access to and participation in it.



The means for achieving this objective include the provision of specialised information, career orientation and psycho-social support.

At the same time, female employment is being promoted through subsidies to companies to hire unemployed women, as well as grants to enable women to start up their own business and/or acquire work experience.

To ensure the target for increasing female employment is met, gender mainstreaming has been incorporated in all actions implemented in context of the 3rd Community Support Framework. Relevant actions are being implemented in the following areas:

- ▣ research with programmes to strengthen human research resources,
- ▣ the information society with special actions for women such as distance learning
- ▣ the acquisition of work experience (stage), and
- ▣ vocational training and employment, with the introduction of a compulsory 60% rate of participation in favour of women in all actions.

Towards a society free of discrimination

The promotion of equal opportunities for all, with particular emphasis on individuals at risk of social exclusion, constitutes a strategic objective of the interventions of the European Social Fund and the Greek State, and is aimed at securing the social and economic integration of these individuals.

To achieve this target, provision has been made for individuals from different cultural backgrounds, repatriates, immigrants, refugees, prisoners, former prisoners and young offenders. Measures also cover the long-term unemployed in regions or market sectors with a high unemployment rate, women at risk of social exclusion, former drug addicts or those in the process of rehabilitation and HIV seropositive individuals. Particular provision has been made for the mentally handicapped, people with kinetic or multiple disabilities, as well as those suffering from mental illnesses, who are not living in care institutions.

For these groups, a set of measures have been designed to provide advisory and psycho-social support, develop their work and social skills, offer specialised vocational guidance, teach job search techniques, furnish information on matters of an institutional, labour and legal nature and boost entrepreneurship. In implementing these measures, emphasis has been placed on raising awareness in local communities.



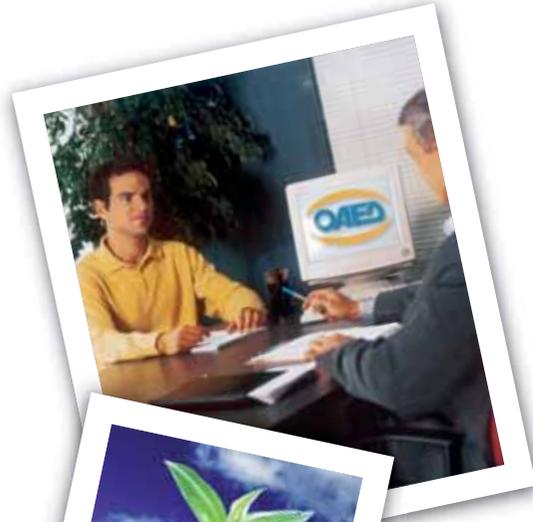
Individuals belonging to these vulnerable groups can participate at a rate of up to 10% in programmes for the training of the unemployed, in order to improve and adapt their skills to the new conditions and needs of the labour market.

Before participating in any other programme, unemployed immigrants, repatriates and refugees attend special Greek language courses leading to certificates, since a poor command of the language and – by extension – inadequate communication skills, raises a barrier to their social integration.

Through the operation of the social and support services network, which has been developed locally, advisory and support services are provided at the first-tier level. They are the first link in a chain of actions which include connecting the welfare services with the National Health System, the mental health and social care services, as well as with the structures in place for moving people into employment.

Provision has also been made for open structures for prevention and therapy, which promote social solidarity and reinforce actions aimed at reintegrating individuals with mental impairments and disorders in the social fabric, through the creation of special psychiatric departments operating within General Hospitals, mental health centres, mobile mental health units and Medical Pedagogical Centres. Other facilities that have been set up include day centres for autistic children, units specialising in Alzheimer's disease, daytime centres for Alzheimer's and cancer sufferers, short-stay hostels for the mentally ill and limited liability social co-operatives (KOISPE).





Local development – Local employment initiatives

Particular importance has been attached to boosting employment at a local level, in regions with special social and economic problems such as high unemployment, a high percentage of immigrants, economic refugees, Roma or repatriates. Interventions have been planned of an integrated, and at the same time specialised nature, depending on the particularities of each region or sector, given that this strategy gives rise to considerable possibilities for the strengthening of local employment.

The ultimate beneficiaries of these interventions are socially vulnerable groups such as immigrants, people with special needs, drug addicts and former addicts, former prisoners and repatriates.

In addition, areas with special employment problems resulting from the decline of traditional market sectors, de-industrialisation and restructuring receive assistance through local development initiatives.

The aim of the interventions is to improve and increase employment, ensure the social integration of special population groups and promote equal opportunities, so as to ultimately achieve development at a local level. These interventions involve a large number of actions such as:

The Advisory, which relate to actions or services that provide information, guidance and support to individuals or social groups in order to increase employability, facilitate access to the labour market and develop entrepreneurship.

Accompanying Services, which focus only on individuals belonging to socially vulnerable groups.

Actions to Inform and Raise the Awareness of the public and targeted audiences about the objectives, content, ultimate beneficiaries and expected results of the integrated intervention, in order to familiarise and activate them.

Networking, which concerns the creation of networks of individuals or groups, through which the parties involved can more effectively promote their services or positions and demands. Networking may relate to the collaboration itself and/or electronic connectivity.

Socio-Medical Centres for the Roma population. These centres are set up in areas with Roma encampments, serving primary health care needs and facilitating the social integration of the Greek Roma.

Certification of Greek language learning and training with a view to improving skills.

The actions promoting employment, implemented by the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), for the strengthening of employment through funding to hire the unemployed, funding for starting a business and / or acquiring work experience (stage).



The Community Initiative EQUAL

As an initiative of the European Social Fund, EQUAL is part of the general strategy for combating inequalities in the labour market, fighting discrimination, creating more and better jobs and ensuring that everyone has access to these jobs.

The initiative targets all population groups that suffer or are at risk of discrimination, inequality and exclusion from the labour market. The groups which directly benefit are young people, women, the disabled, the employed with insufficient education, repatriates, immigrants, refugees, prisoners, former prisoners, young offenders, Roma, Pomaks, former drug addicts, victims of trafficking and asylum seekers.

Each EQUAL project comprises a package of multi-level interventions, such as training, information and advisory support, awareness raising, assistance and transition into employment, which are implemented in one or more regions of the country.

The main principles of the initiative are partnership, transnationality, empowerment, gender mainstreaming and innovation. This approach served as an example to be emulated and as such has been incorporated in ESF Regulations for the 4th Programming Period.



50 years on ...

The strategic objective set by European heads of states and governments in 2005, for "A social Europe in the global economy: jobs and opportunities for all", sets the basis for the vision of a future Europe.

This objective raises the bar, as all the forces of Europe, and the European Social Fund in particular, are called upon to meet the present-day challenges of low employment rates, unemployment, poverty, inequalities and discrimination, and to increase the confidence of the citizens of Europe in their own abilities. The European Social Fund has introduced a high degree of innovation to its planning, as it is no longer confined to a mere list of actions, but includes systemic solutions for tackling these major structural problems.

The interventions carried out in Greece during the past 25 years have considerably strengthened the country's social



cohesion and the convergence of its economy with those of the other European Union member states. However, the economic and social conditions now being shaped in Europe necessitate continuous adjustment of individuals and the country's socio-economic structures.

To this end, not only must the benefits already gained be preserved and consolidated, but fresh impetus should also be given to those factors which further improve social welfare and bolster economic development.

The successful route towards full and productive employment, equal opportunities for all, a society free of discrimination and the establishment of a European social model is an undertaking that requires the mobilisation and contribution of all the forces of society. In this way, Greece will continue on the path of progress which began 25 years ago. A route that only through investment in human capital will secure the social and economic prosperity that every European citizen deserves and demands.



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