

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

REPORT

Implementation of the

**MADRID INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING
and its
REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

(MIPAA/RIS)

Third Review and Appraisal Cycle

2012-2016

MAY 2017

**MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL SECURITY AND
SOCIAL SOLIDARITY**

Introduction

In 2002, during the second International Conference on ageing in Madrid, the International Plan of Action on Ageing – MIPAA was adopted in order to respond to opportunities and challenges of population ageing in the 21st century and to promote the development of a society of all ages.

During the regional conference in Berlin, in 2002, the Regional Implementation Strategy-RIS for UNECE was adopted, which provides a framework of commitments in order to support member states to respond adequately to challenges and opportunities of population ageing and achieve a society of all ages.

Every five years, the countries of the UNECE region analyze the current status concerning the implementation of the Plan of Action MIPAA / RIS and the actions that are necessary to be taken for further progress.

The present report is the third overview of MIPAA / RIS with information on policies and legislation regarding the implementation of four main goals set out in the Declaration of Ministers in Vienna in 2012.

The report consists of two parts. The first part describes the ageing status at national level, the social, economic and political situation and the methodology used to prepare the report. The second part describes the national actions taken in order to implement the main goals of the Plan of Action MIPAA / RIS during the last five years (2012-2016). The present report therefore does not contain an exhaustive overview of policies on the elderly in Greece.

Part I

General Information

1. *Country:* Greece
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- Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs

1.1 National ageing situation

1.1.1 Demographic indicators

The population of Europe and Greece is ageing gradually according to Table 1 while the median age in Greece in 2016 was 43.9 years according to Eurostat.

Table 1: Median age of the total population

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU 28	40.4	40.7	41.0	41.3	41.6	41.9	42.2	42.4	42.6
Greece	40.3	40.7	41.1	41.5	42.0	42.5	42.9	43.4	43.9

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (Median age of population, pjanind)

The share of the total population aged 65 years and more, according to Table 2, is also progressively increasing in Europe and Greece. Elderly people aged 65 and more in Greece in 2016 correspond to 21.3% of the total population, which is higher by almost 2 percentage points than the European average (EU28).

Table 2: Elderly aged 65 and more (% of the total population)

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU 28	17.1	17.3	17.5	17.6	17.9	18.2	18.5	18.9	19.2
Greece	18.7	18.8	19.0	19.3	19.7	20.1	20.5	20.9	21.3

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (Proportion of population aged 65 years and more, pjanind)

According to Table 3 the old dependency ratio, i.e. persons aged 65 and more compared to working-age population, is also continuously increasing.

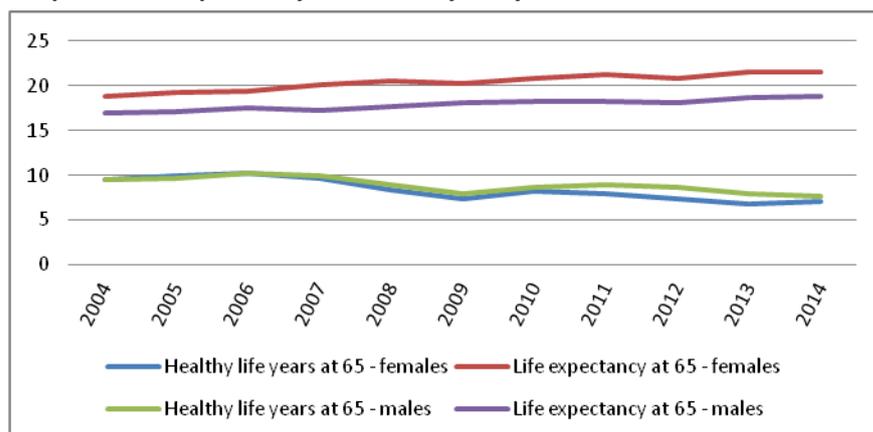
Table 3: Old Dependency ratio (population aged 65+ / population aged 15-64)

Year	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016
EU 28	23.5	24.4	25.2	26.1	27.5	29.3
Greece	26.2	27.1	27.9	28.6	30.7	33.1

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (Old dependency ratio 1st variant, pjanind)

While life expectancy at 65 for men and women in Greece in the last decade is gradually increasing, according to graph 1, healthy life years at 65 during the same period in Greece were reduced.

Graph 1: Life expectancy and healthy life years at 65



Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (Life expectancy & healthy life years at 65, hlth_hlye)

1.1.2 Social and Economic Indicators

A. General

According to Tables 4 and 5, employment rate in Greece for persons aged 25-54 and 55-64 respectively declined over the last years and it is lower than the respective EU average (EU28). In particular, employment rate is much lower for women.

Table 4: Employment rate, aged 25-54, % of the total population

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU28 (men)	86,7	86,8	84,6	84,0	83,9	83,3	82,6	83,2	83,8	84,6
Greece (men)	90,1	90,1	88,3	85,3	79,9	73,9	71,4	71,8	73,7	76,0
EU28 (women)	71,3	72,1	71,5	71,4	71,4	71,3	71,1	71,7	72,3	73,0
Greece (women)	60,9	62,0	62,3	61,1	57,8	53,9	51,4	53,1	55,4	55,9

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (Employment by sex and age - annual data, lfsi_emp_a)

Table 5: Employment rate, aged 55-64 ετών, % of the total population

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU28 (men)	53,7	54,8	54,6	54,5	54,9	56,2	57,4	58,8	60,2	62,0
Greece (men)	59,1	59,2	57,8	56,5	52,3	47,7	46,0	44,0	44,9	46,2
EU28 (women)	35,8	36,7	37,7	38,5	40,0	41,7	43,3	45,2	46,9	48,9
Greece (women)	27,0	27,5	27,8	29,1	27,5	26,1	26,0	25,0	24,7	27,2

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (Employment by sex and age - annual data, lfsi_emp_a)

Moreover, unemployment in Greece as a percentage of the active population has increased over the last years.

Table 6: Unemployment rate, persons aged 25-74, % of active population

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU28 (Total)	6,1	5,9	7,6	8,3	8,3	9,1	9,5	9	8,3	7,5
Greece (Total)	7,2	6,6	8,4	11,2	15,9	22,3	25,4	24,8	23,4	22,2
EU28 (men)	5,5	5,5	7,5	8,2	8,1	8,9	9,4	8,8	8,1	7,2
Greece (men)	4,4	4,2	6	8,9	13,5	19,8	22,5	22,1	20,4	18,5
EU28 (women)	6,8	6,5	7,7	8,3	8,5	9,2	9,6	9,2	8,5	7,8
Greece (women)	11,2	10,1	11,6	14,4	19,2	25,5	29	28,2	27,2	26,8

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (Unemployment by sex and age - annual average, une_rt_a)

According to Table 7, the risk of poverty in Greece for persons aged 65 and more is reduced compared to the remaining population categories. Moreover, according to Table 8, the risk of poverty in this category is continuously decreasing. However, the risk of poverty in Greece for persons aged 65+ is clearly higher than the EU average (EU28). Women are in a worse position than men.

Table 7: Population (%) at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2015

Age groups	Total population	Women	Men
Total	35,7	36,6	34,8
0-17	37,8	37,5	37,9
18-64	39,4	40,7	38,2
65+	22,8	24,7	20,4

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, ilc_peps01)

Table 8: At risk of poverty, aged 65 and more, % of total population

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU28 (men)	:	:	16,4	16,9	16,2	15,3	14,7	14,6
Greece (men)	24,6	24,9	22,9	26,5	21,2	21,6	21	20,4
EU28 (women)	:	:	22,9	23,2	21,5	20,6	20,3	19,6
Greece (women)	30,9	28,4	29,8	31,5	25,4	24,3	24,7	24,7

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, ilc_peps01)

The percentage of the population in Greece aged over 65 in material deprivation (and mainly women) increases over time. The percentage of the elderly in material deprivation is more than double in Greece than in the EU (EU28), according to Table 9.

Table 9: Material deprivation rate (%) men / women over 65

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
EU28 (Men)	:	:	5,4	5,7	5,9	5,7	5,0	4,5
Greece (Men)	11,1	10,0	9,8	11,0	11,8	12,1	13,8	13,7
EU28 (Women)	:	:	7,7	8,5	8,6	7,9	7,3	6,3
Greece (Women)	17,7	13,8	14,4	14,7	16,3	15,0	16,9	16,5

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (Material deprivation rate, EU-SILC survey, ilc_sip8)

B. Discrimination in the labour market.

In order to investigate discrimination against members of vulnerable social groups (EKO) in the domestic labour market, the National Center for Social Research (EKKE) in cooperation with the OAED (public employment service), carried out a quantitative field study (2012), based on a sample of 1280 individuals that belong to vulnerable social groups across the country through semi structured personal interviews.

The concept of discrimination in the labour market is closely linked to the equality of opportunities and related to ensuring equitable access to occupation, recruitment, placement and promotion at any job and any level of hierarchy, to vocational information and counselling, life-long learning and vocational training, decent terms and safe working conditions and finally, equal pay for equal work.

The following conclusions were drawn by the findings of the said study:

- Persons of vulnerable social groups of the population (EKO) face discrimination problems to a greater extent in the Greek labour market, according to the answers to the questionnaire given by them (self esteem) as well as by the members of the control group.
- Workers of Vulnerable Social Groups of the population (EKO) are often subject to inappropriate behaviours and unequal treatment in the workplace. Such behaviours or treatment, which are manifested in the workplace and are expressed by employers, managers, co-workers or even third parties, constitute forms of discrimination in the labour market.

In particular, regarding discrimination on the grounds of age the research showed that employment is the main area of discrimination between young and old persons.

Employment rates of both categories are much lower than those of the population in general. Those two groups together with women and the remaining «vulnerable population groups are considered to be outside the labour market.

The vast majority of the sample believes that discrimination in the Greek labour market exists to a high or very high extent regarding recruitment for vacant posts. This is what the long-term unemployed aged over 45 with low skills believe.

The recent Eurobarometer survey shows the same results. According to data of the Eurobarometer survey (2015) carried out among 28 EU Member States, discrimination on the grounds of age is considered widespread for persons over 55 (42%) compared to persons under 30 (19%).

Data concerning Greece suggest that 46% of Greek respondents believe that discrimination on the grounds of age over 55 is quite widespread, while 21% believe that being under 30 years old is ground for discrimination. In particular, regarding access to employment, 60% of the respondents when asked “when a company wants to hire someone and has the choice between two candidates with equal skills and qualifications, which of the following criteria may, in your opinion, put one candidate at a disadvantage” reply “being over 55”.

1.1.3 Description of the social, economic and political situation

Since the beginning of the decade Greece is experiencing major economic crisis which has greatly affected the economic and social situation of the country.

Since May 2010, Greece has received financial support from the countries of the Eurozone and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in order to face financial difficulties and challenges. In August 2015 the third assistance program was launched in the context of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM).

During the years of economic crisis:

- The Greek economy is in deep and prolonged recession and it is expected to return to growth in 2016-2017.
- Greece’s real GDP was reduced by 26%.
- Unemployment is at high levels, however, there has been a trend downward from 2014 onwards.
- Recession has led many people to poverty while income inequality has increased.
- Nominal social expenditure is reduced yet, it is still high as a percentage of the GDP due to a significant reduction in the GDP.
- Although pensions have fallen in the recent years, the income of pensioners is protected, especially of low-income pensioners, compared to the active population left outside the labour market.
- Significant reforms in various areas have been designed and implemented.

1.2 Method

In order to evaluate the implementation of MIPAA in Greece, stakeholders were asked to contribute in the preparation of the report by providing in writing material about the actions and priorities undertaken since 2012 for the implementation or the progress made in achieving the goals of the Vienna Declaration.

Part II

Part II describes the relevant and important actions that foster and facilitate active and healthy ageing. These are grouped under four policy goals, according to the Declaration of Vienna in 2012.

Goal 1: Longer working life is encouraged and ability to work is maintained

Goal 2-Participation, non-discrimination and social inclusion of older persons are promoted

Goal 3-Dignity, health and independency in older age are promoted and safeguarded

Goal 4-Intergenerational solidarity is maintained and enhanced

In this report no separate reference to the fourth goal «Intergenerational solidarity is maintained and enhanced» shall be made due to the fact that this goal was considered to be inherent in other goals, hence, its relevant aspects were included in the other three goals.

The remaining three goals shall be developed separately, yet, there may be some overlap in certain issues.

2.1 Longer working life is encouraged and ability to work is maintained - Goal 1

A. Social Security System

- Raising pensionable ages

Since 2012 Greece has made extensive reforms to its Social Security System. One of the main objectives of these reforms is to encourage longer working life.

To this end, the social security reform established a rise in pensionable ages since 1.1.2013 (Law 4093/2012 and 4336/2015).

More specifically, from 01.01.2022, all insured persons must have 40 years of insurance and reached the age of 62 or 15 years of insurance and reached the age of 67 to be entitled to full old age pension or 62 to be entitled to reduced pension. The more favourable age limits have been gradually increasing since 13.08.2016 so that they have reached the above mentioned age limits on 01.01.2022.

Moreover, a previous regulation is still in force (Law 3863/2010, article 11 para.3), according to which, from 1.1.2021, the pensionable age shall be linked to the life expectancy of the country's population based on the relevant indicators set by the Hellenic Statistical Authority and Eurostat.

- **New unified calculation method for retirement benefits**

By virtue of Law 4387/2016 a full reform of the Greek pension system has taken place which will be presented in detail in Goal 2. In Goal 1 reference is made to the points of the reform that serve as an incentive for staying longer in the work force. By virtue of the above mentioned law, a unified method of calculation is established concerning the contributory portion of the main pension for all insured persons irrespective of the fund they are insured with, based on the average labour income and same replacement rates for all. Moreover, replacement rates have been defined in such a manner that they serve as incentive for staying longer in employment. More specifically, replacement rates for each year of paid social security contributions within each year of service scale shall increase (from the initial 0,77% to the final 2,00%) by adding insurance periods to each worker's total insurance time. Especially from the 39th year onwards, the yearly replacement rate is 2%.

Regarding supplementary pension as well as lump sum benefits, under the Unified Supplementary Insurance and Lump Sum Benefits Fund-(ETEAEF), social security contributions paid from 1.1.2014 onwards for each insured person shall be kept in individual accounts while the respective benefits shall be calculated based on the notional defined contribution system (NDC).

Moreover, pensioners who work as salaried or self-employed person and are subject to compulsory insurance may receive their main and supplementary pensions reduced by 60% during the period that they work encouraging thus younger persons to enter into the labour market.

Moreover, the main pension amount of pensioners who undertake work is increased by yearly replacement rate 0,075% for each year of contributions paid after their retirement. In this case the increase in main pension is calculated based on the above mentioned yearly replacement rate for each one percentage point (1%) of contributions paid.

Self-employed persons with 40 years of contributions paid may pay 50% of their social security contributions (in this case they will not receive pension for contributions paid over 40 years), and this is an incentive for the elderly to continue to work.

B. Extension of working life- Employment

The Europe 2020 strategy aims at achieving a smart and sustainable inclusive growth, with high employment, productivity and social cohesion rates. This strategy has set certain goals that should be achieved in the EU until 2020, i.e., 75 % employment rate for all citizens aged between 20-64 and at least 20 million less people at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Active ageing policy is an important part of the Europe 2020 strategy aiming inter alia at creating more job opportunities for the elderly citizens of the European Union.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity taking into account the objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy, is implementing a wide package of policies in order to achieve active ageing by increasing employment rates of older people, i.e., policies to boost labour demand for

these people, policies to boost labour supply for this age group and continuing vocational training and life long learning policies for older workers or unemployed persons.

The most important measures planned and implemented during the period **2012-2016** by the Ministry of Labour are the following:

I. Incentives to enterprises to recruit unemployed persons of older age

Older people are valuable in the labour market since they have professional knowledge and experience and thus, their reintegration into the economically active population is essential. However, due to the fact that sometimes the labour cost is higher for older workers, financial incentives are provided to enterprises in order to employ older persons.

In light of the above, employment programs are implemented by subsidizing enterprises to employ unemployed persons of older age.

In particular:

a. Subsidization program for enterprises of Local Self-Government Agencies of A' and B' degree (municipalities and regions) to employ 5.000 unemployed persons aged 55-64¹

This program aims at employing 5.000 unemployed persons aged 55 to 64 in order to fight against unemployment of persons belonging to this age category. They will be employed in posts of local self-government agencies, covering also social needs and meet the requirements for their pension entitlements.

Beneficiaries entitled to participate in the program were former workers aged 55-64 whose contract of employment was terminated, as well as long-term unemployed aged 55-64. The program was targeted to enterprises of local self-government agencies of first and second degree (Municipalities and Regions), by subsidizing the enterprise for each day of full-time employment with the amount of 25 €. The total duration of the program was twenty seven (27) months, i.e, the job was subsidized for twenty four (24) months and the enterprise committed to maintain the subsidized posts for three (3) more months.

b. Subsidization programs for enterprises of the private sector to create new jobs targeted to various groups of unemployed persons including **older aged persons** facilitating thus their transition from unemployment to employment.

-Subsidization program for enterprises in order to recruit 11.000 unemployed persons aged 25-66²

Enterprises are subsidized for every person included into the program from the date of their recruitment. The subsidy amount for each day of full time employment for the unemployed

¹ Decision No 4589/182/8.11.2011 of the Ministers of Labour, Economy and Finance, (O.G. B'2639)/ article 74 para. 5 of Law 3863/2010 (O.G. A' 115) as amended by Law 3996/2011 (A'170).

²JMD No. 31172/490/19.9.14 (O.G. 2482 B'/17.9.14) as amended by JMD No. 36919/569/10.11.14 (O.G. 3051 B'/12.11.14)

beneficiaries is 18€ daily but not more than 25 days in a month (days of social insurance coverage). The subsidy amount covers part of their wage costs. The total duration of the program is twelve (12) months. In order to avoid replacing workers, enterprises that have not made any staff reductions during the quarter preceding the application date are eligible to be included in the program and cover two posts maximum.

- Subsidization program for enterprises in order to recruit 10.000 unemployed persons aged 30-66³

All enterprises and employers in general of the private sector engaged in an economic activity may participate in the program.

The beneficiaries are unemployed persons aged 30 to 66, who have filled the form of individualized approach and have agreed with the Public Employment Service (PES) on a personal action plan.

Enterprises that have not made any staff reductions due to termination of employment contracts during the quarter preceding the application date are eligible to be included in the program.

The subsidy amount for each day of full time employment for the beneficiary is 18€ daily but not more than 25 days of social insurance coverage in a month. The total duration of the program is twelve (12) months.

The program is co-financed by the European Union (European Social Fund) and the Greek State.

-«Subsidization program for enterprises in order to recruit for full-time employment 15.000 unemployed persons over 50»⁴

This program aims at creating 15.000 new full-time jobs, by recruiting highly disadvantaged unemployed persons aged over 50. Highly disadvantaged are considered persons registered with the OAED (public employment service) for a period of more than 12 months.

The program is targeted to private enterprises, cooperatives, Social Cooperative Enterprises and employers in general regularly engaged in an economic activity in the country.

For an enterprise to be eligible to participate in the program, the created job should represent a clear increase in the number of workers compared to the average of the last 12 months preceding the application date. The enterprise commits itself to maintain the staff throughout the program duration.

The subsidy amount is set at **50% of the monthly wage and non-wage costs of the beneficiary⁵**, but not exceeding 500 euros on a monthly basis. The subsidy duration in order to recruit highly disadvantaged unemployed persons (long-term unemployed) is nine (9) months, with the possibility of extension for 9 more months. After the subsidization the enterprise commits itself to maintain its staff for 3 more months.

³JMD No. 5023/119/17.2.14 (O.G. 440 B' /24.2.14)

⁴ Decision 357/07/09-02-2016(ΦΕΚ 455B'). The program was designed (OAED Governor Decision 75/3/17-01-2017 -ΦΕΚ 342 B') and refers: a) to the recruitment of 5000 disadvantaged and highly disadvantaged unemployed persons aged 50 and more in enterprises employing more than twenty (20) full-time workers, b) the recruitment of 10.000 unemployed persons aged over 50 for 12 months in enterprises employing up to 20 full-time workers

⁵ Beneficiaries are **unemployed persons over 50**, who are disadvantaged or highly disadvantaged. Disadvantaged are considered persons registered with the OAED for a period of more than 6 months. Highly disadvantaged are considered persons registered with the OAED for a period of more than 12 months.

c. Community employment programs 2016 where additional points are awarded to citizens aged over 45

Community Employment Programs in municipalities showing high unemployment rates refer to the creation of full-time jobs of eight (8) months duration with full social security coverage and are mainly targeted to the long-term unemployed. The goal of this action is two-fold, on the one hand, to immediately address unemployment of highly affected population groups and on the other, to upgrade the skills of participants and help them re-integrate into the labour market through counseling and training.

Regarding the criteria based on which points are awarded in the said programs, the increased unemployment rates of older persons are taken into account and therefore, the system awards more points to unemployed beneficiaries over 45.

II. Training and life-long learning

Upgrading workers' skills is a key element in improving their employment perspectives. Especially older persons will be more likely to find a job or retain their jobs and extend their working lives. To this end, training programs are implemented for older age groups of the labour force. In particular:

Training, certification and guaranteed employment program for unemployed persons in cutting-edge industries of the Greek economy

The program is targeted to 23.000 unemployed persons aged 29-64 with the aim to improve their CV in order to be able to claim a job in 60 areas of specialization of 10 most dynamic industries of the Greek economy.

The program is implemented through training and traineeship of the unemployed in enterprises as well as certification of their qualifications. All beneficiaries shall receive training and traineeship allowance totaling 2.600 euros, while for 50% of the beneficiaries the program provides for guaranteed six months' employment in the context of a future action.

Structural Adjustment Programs for Enterprises and Workers

Taking into account the impact of economic crisis on enterprises and their workers, the «**Structural Adjustment Program for Enterprises and Workers in the Economic Crisis**» was implemented. The program's actions were included in the Priority Thematic Axis 2 «Enhancing the Adaptability of Human Resources and Enterprises», of the Operational Program «Human Resources Development» 2007-2013. Through Counseling and Training actions the program's objectives have been achieved to a great extent, i.e., improving sustainability of enterprises by developing mechanisms and structures of flexible adaptation to the constantly changing external conditions and upgrading skills and qualifications of their human resources in order to respond to the new conditions created by the economic crisis and the integration of new technologies.

Moreover, the OAED (public employment service) manages the **Account for Employment and Vocational Training (LAEK)**, through which actions for the adaptability of workers and enterprises are financed. The resources of the Account come from part of employers' contributions paid by enterprises to the respective Social Security Fund (IKA-ETAM). Each year the managing committee

of LAEK prepares the annual resource management and distribution plan concerning training programs. Thus, enterprises may recover such employers' contributions in order to implement training programs for their staff.

The implementation of the above mentioned actions and initiatives contribute to improving skills and employment prospects of older persons leading thus to active ageing by means of their equal participation in the economic and professional life.

C. Education

Lifelong learning centers of Municipalities

The program focuses on Education and Lifelong Learning of persons of all ages aiming at creating a positive attitude towards learning, enhancing equal access to education, creative use of leisure time, enhancing access to the labour market and finally, connecting or reconnecting adults, who due to any reason did not completed their compulsory education, to the education process.

In the context of the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic origin, religion and/or beliefs, disability, sex and age, education programs provided by Lifelong Learning Centers are targeted to all adults, employed or unemployed, irrespective of sex, level of educational attainment, country of origin, religion, place of residence, young persons, students etc. The only requirement is their interest in knowledge and active participation.

The development of separate sections for vulnerable social groups (ROMA, prisoners, members of the Muslim minority, immigrants - repatriates, persons with disabilities) aims at their integration into the modern society on equal footing.

Lifelong learning centers operate in municipalities that wish to establish them. Adult General Education programs are implemented through actions at national and/or local level.

National programs selected by the Municipalities reflect the national and European policies on issues concerning adults' lifelong learning, in the following thematic areas:

- Economy – Entrepreneurship
- Quality of life – Environment
- New technologies
- Language and Communication
- Social Skills and Actions
- Civilization and Art
- Programs for Vulnerable Social Groups such as :
 - Preventive Medicine for the Third Age,
 - New Technologies for the third age
 - Sports for the Third Age

Local programs are proposed by Municipalities based on their needs and the promotion of economic, social, cultural and individual development of citizens.

The Lifelong Learning Centers program is included in the «Education and Lifelong Learning» Operational Program of the Minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and is co-financed by the European Union (European Social Fund) and by National Resources.

2.2 Participation, non-discrimination and social inclusion of older persons are promoted - Goal 2

A. Reforming the Social Security System

By virtue of Law 4387/2016 Greece carried out full reform of the Social Security System aiming at a Unified System that will ensure *decent living standards and social protection on equal footing and social justice, redistribution and solidarity between generations.*

The previous Social Security System was characterized by extensive overregulation which created large social inequalities since similar cases of citizens were addressed in a different manner. Pension requirements (insurance years and age limits), replacement rates, minimum pensions, workers and employers' social security contributions, social resources (abolished or to be abolished) and state funding were different both between funds and well as insured persons in the same fund.

The administrative fragmentation of the social security system was impressive. The situation is reflected by the fact that in 1990, there were 327 bodies providing main and supplementary social security, other benefits and a limited number of social security services as well as state services providing pension and health care for public servants, both civil and military.

Equity and social justice are the two fundamental principles of the reform. Equity because for the first time same rules are established for all, old and new pensioners, workers of the private and the public sector, salaried and self-employed. Social justice because by establishing a national pension redistribution is achieved, social inequalities are mitigated and an adequate pension is ensured also for vulnerable social groups.

More specifically, the Reform:

- Ensures administrative effectiveness of the system and simplifies procedures by consolidating :

- main social security bodies into one National body entitled «Unified Social Security Institution» (EFKA), by virtue of Law 4387/2016, which will start operating on 1.1.2017 and will fully separate welfare and social security provisions.

- supplementary social security bodies till 1-9-2015 and lump sum benefits bodies from 01.01.2017, through their inclusion into the relevant sections of the Unified Supplementary Pension and Lump Sum Benefits Fund -ETEAEP.

- Simplifies the insurance method facilitating thus enterprises, while the reduction of bureaucracy in granting benefits will allow the easier and less time consuming access of insured persons, who are mainly elderly persons, to benefits.

- It establishes *full equity*, through the substantial consolidation of the existing social security system by establishing single rules for old and new insured persons and re-fixing of pension amounts for those who are already pensioners. Unified rules are necessary because all insured persons should be able to enjoy the same degree of *national/social solidarity* against the main risks in life. Exemptions are provided only for the protection of most

vulnerable social groups (i.e., persons with disabilities). With regard to contributions, unified contribution rates are calculated based on their real income. With regard to benefits, a unified calculation method is established concerning the contributory part of main pension for all insured persons irrespective of the fund they are insured with, based on the average labour income and same replacement rates for all. The contribution of the pension system to the country's fiscal consolidation is based on the *principle of equality in bearing a burden* (article 4, para. 5 of the Constitution). Pensioners should not bear a disproportionate part of the fiscal adjustment cost.

- It establishes national pension ensuring adequate income replacement for the long-term unemployed, those who work under atypical forms of employment or paid with low wages. Preventing poverty by *ensuring a decent standard of living for every old person* is one of the main social security objectives. The amount of National Pension was set at 384 euros based on 60% of median income in accordance with the rules of the European Union.

- It ensures *sustainability, intergenerational equality as well as equal distribution of sacrifices*. Restoring sustainability, i.e. maintaining the system's ability to provide pensions to current and future pensioners is not an end in itself but it also honours the contract between generations which forms the basis of every pay-as-you-go system. With the previous system the current generation of workers would have paid more than what shall receive. With this reform proportionality is fully restored. Only the weakest will receive more than what they have offered to the system through their contributions because of the national pension and of other special provisions for them.

Social justice, meaning a more equitable distribution of national wealth, is achieved by linking pensions to an increase in national wealth since any increase in GDP is taken into account when calculating increases.

- It ensures decent living standards for pensioners and maintains the standard of living as close as possible to that enjoyed during their working life. The Constitution (article 22 para. 5)⁶, ensures decent living standards for pensioners irrespective of budgetary priorities and expediency.

Furthermore :

- Pensioners meeting certain criteria relating to income, age and disability are granted the Social Solidarity Allowance (EKAS) which ranges from € 28,75 to € 115,00 on a monthly basis for 2017.

- Older persons who are not entitled to pension and meet certain criteria relating to income, property and residence in Greece may receive at the age of 67 the social solidarity allowance for uninsured over-aged persons which is set at € 360,00 on a monthly basis.

- In order to ensure the future funding of the social security system (from 2019 onwards) and in the context of intergenerational solidarity, the Intergenerational Solidarity Fund – AKAGE was created.

⁶ As interpreted by case law, (Council of State Plenary Decision 2287-2290/2015)

- In the context of the Greek social security system, the terms for inclusion in the system and the level of provisions under the same conditions, are the same for men and women.

- A framework of unified rules is provided for persons with disabilities: Unified mechanism-procedures in order to define disability (Disability Certification Centers KEPA), unified regulation to define the degree of disability (Regulation on Disability Degree Assessment -KEBA) and Consolidated and permanent list of arduous and unhealthy occupations - KBAE).

- The parties of a cohabitation agreement have the same rights as married couples with regard to social security, provisions, obligations or restrictions.

- By using the address below insureds -old and young- can easily be informed about the changes in the social security system. (<http://efka.gov.gr/mathe/asfalismenous.cfm>)

- The address below offers the possibility to citizens to apply on line for pension to the Unified Social Security Institution (EFKA):<https://apps.ika.gr/ePensionsEfka/>

B. National Strategy for Social Inclusion

The Ministry of Labour prepared in 2014 the framework of the National Strategy for Social Inclusion (ESKE). It subsequently specified its content and submitted to the European Committee in June 2015. The ESKE reflects the priorities of Greece to strengthen the Welfare State especially in times of economic crisis. Moreover, the Regional Strategies for Social Inclusion were prepared by the respective Regions.

The three pillars of ESKE based on which the needs shall be met in the field of poverty and social exclusion are the following:

Pillar 1. Fighting poverty

Pillar 2. Access to services

Pillar 3. Inclusive labour market

The beneficiaries of ESKE are individuals and families who are at risk or trapped in poverty and social exclusion. Older persons aged over 65 who do not receive pension or welfare benefits, whose individual or family annual income is below the subsistence level, constitute a group of high priority for ESKE.

ESKE promotes interventions and active measures in order to gradually restore the self-reliance and self-respect of beneficiaries. For those who are fit and available for work, restoration is achieved especially through their gradual re-integration into the labour market while for the rest, including older aged persons, through their social participation in and their connection with bodies that care for their needs. Finally, the ESKE priority policy 3.2: Access for the unemployed to activation services applies inter alia to older unemployed persons⁷.

⁷ The long-term unemployed with increased family responsibilities, young persons neither in employment nor in education or training and unemployed persons with disabilities are the remaining categories to which this priority applies.

C. National legislation on prohibition of discrimination

The recent adoption of Law 4443/2016, which replaced Law 3304/2005, transposes into Greek legislation Directive 2000/43/EC «Implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin», Directive 2000/78/EC «establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation irrespective of religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation» and Directive 2014/54/EU «on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of free movement of workers ».

The law improves and strengthens the current legislative framework implementing the principle of equal treatment and prohibiting discrimination in employment and occupation in general. To this end, a wide scope of application is developed concerning the principle of equal treatment introducing new grounds of discrimination while the Ombudsman is assigned the responsibility to monitor and implement the principle of equal treatment in the public, wider public and private sectors.

In particular, such an expansion is carried out a) by transposing Directive 2014/54/EU on measures facilitating the free movement of workers in the EU and eliminating discrimination against EU citizens b) by introducing grounds of discrimination such as colour, ethnic origin, descent, chronic illness, marital or social status and gender identity or characteristics.

The principle of equal treatment, according to the law, applies to all persons in the public and the private sector. In particular, discrimination is prohibited on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, descent, religion or other beliefs, disability or chronic illness, age, marital or social status, sexual orientation, gender identity or characteristics in employment and occupation.

Prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin and descent applies not only in employment and occupation but also in social protection, including social security and health care, social provisions, education, access to goods and services provided to the public including housing.

Moreover, the definitions concerning «discrimination by association», discrimination on the grounds of «presumed characteristics» and «multiple discrimination» are added to the concepts of direct and indirect discrimination and harassment.

Monitoring and promoting the implementation of the principle of equal treatment

By virtue of the present law the «Ombudsman» is assigned the responsibility to monitor and promote the implementation of the principle of equal treatment irrespective of race, colour, descent, ethnic or national origin, religion or other beliefs, disability or chronic illness, age, marital or social status, sexual orientation, gender identity or characteristics, for the public, wider public and private sectors.

An attempt is made to restart cooperation between jointly competent authorities and services with a view to promoting the principle of equal treatment in the country and reconnecting with the Civil Society. In light of the above, the Authorities have been defined

responsible for supervising and promoting the principle of equal treatment and the Bodies they will cooperate with.

Protecting the rights of persons with disabilities

With regard to the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in employment and occupation, disability as grounds for discrimination is added to «chronic illness» in order to bring our current legislation in line with the rights model for the protection of persons with disabilities as reflected in the Convention on the right of persons with disabilities and its Optional Protocol, ratified by Greece with the adoption of Law 4074/2012. According to the above law «seropositivity» is included in the protective network of disability or chronic illness⁸. In light of the above, denial of reasonable adjustments constitutes a ground for discrimination.

Protecting LGBT persons against discrimination.

With regard to the rights of LGBT persons, adding «family status» as grounds for discrimination aims at protecting workers – family members, against discrimination in employment and occupation, irrespective of the way a couple is united.

The term «gender identity» introduced as grounds for discrimination⁹ refers to «transgender persons» who have a gender identity that differs from their assigned sex. The term «gender characteristics» defines intersex persons who are born with physical sex anatomy that does not fit medical norms for male or female sex.

By virtue of the circular 50763/1047/4 -11-2016 issued by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity clarifications are made on the application of article 12 of Law 4356/2015 (A' 181) «Civil partnership, exercise of rights, criminal and other provisions» in employment. More specifically, in order to address, interpret and implement issues in a uniform manner and in accordance with the above mentioned provision, the parties to a civil partnership under Law 4356/15 (A' 181) shall be treated as married couples in terms of any right, provision, obligation or restriction, under the provisions of social security, welfare and labour law in general. As an example we would like to mention marriage allowance, marriage leave, criteria for the participation and classification in employment programs, etc».

⁸ Persons with seropositivity under Ministerial Decision F 21/2361 (O.G. B') 819/1993 belong to categories of persons with disabilities (See EEDA Report« Issues relating to the protection of the rights of persons with HIV/AIDS seropositivity, Athens 27-01-2011), According to ILO Recommendation 200 «Recommendation concerning HIV/AIDS and the world of work» dated 17th of June 2010, the following general principle applies: HIV/AIDS should be recognised and treated as a workplace issue, which should be included among the essential elements of the national (...)response (...),there should be no discrimination against or stigmatization of workers, jobseekers and job applicants, on the grounds of real or perceived HIV status, workers (...)should have access to and support in relation to HIV and AIDS and the workplace should play a role in facilitating access to these services.

⁹ Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Protection against discrimination on the grounds of age

The present law improves and enhances the legislative framework concerning cases of justified difference in treatment. In particular, the establishment of age limit as a condition for access to work and employment in general- including selection criteria and recruitment conditions - can only be accepted under certain circumstances and provided that specific justification is given. The difference in treatment on the grounds of age is justified only when the following conditions have been met: a) [when the difference in treatment] promotes the achievement of a legitimate aim; b) is reasonable and necessary; c) constitutes a substantial and determining precondition, due to the nature of specific professional activities or due to the framework, within which these activities are undertaken. The Court of Justice of the European Union has ruled that when an age limit is established for the proper work execution, a sufficient justification shall exist and it must be established that no alternative, less strict criterion -apart from the age - is available, for the execution of a specific professional activity.

Subsequently, the derogation from the principle of equal treatment on the grounds of age is based on the purposes of the policy for employment, labour market and professional training. The means for the achievement of these purposes are appropriate and necessary. Therefore, the means for the achievement of these purposes are, on the one hand, the appropriate for their achievement and on the other hand, do not go beyond what is necessary to their achievement.

The exception from the implementation of the principle of equal treatment on the grounds of disability or age is allowed when it is related to the nature of the specific job. Therefore, age and disability do not obstruct, in general, the candidates' appointment in jobs, but they constitute an obstacle on an individual basis, depending on the nature and the duties of the specific job.

Within the framework of combating discrimination on grounds of age, Greece -via an awareness raising campaign- honors the World Elderly Day, the 1st day of October each year. The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity issues a press release in order to inform and raise awareness about elderly people's problems and needs.

For that reason, during the years 2013 and 2014, conferences were held at the Hellenic Parliament, under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice and of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, with the active participation of the Civil Society, the Independent Administrative Authorities, the public sector, in order to address all issues concerning elderly people and especially the way the State encourages and supports active ageing, in close cooperation with local self-government agencies.

2.3 Dignity, health and independency in older age are promoted and safeguarded – Goal 3

A. Welfare Sector

Independent living – Deinstitutionalization

I. “Home care for pensioners” program

Article 138 § 2 of Law 4052/2012 (A’41) establishes *the home care program for old age, disability or survivors’ pensioners of main social security funds*. Since 1.1.2017, along with the integration of social security funds in EFKA (Unified Social Security Institution), which became the successor of these funds, the implementation of the specific program was included in EFKA’s goals.

The Program’s goal is to guarantee conditions of independent living for elderly and disabled pensioners to their place of residence, in order to:

- ensure their stay in a familiar natural and social environment.
- avoid the placement to a residential care institution and finally
- prevent social exclusion.

The program’s beneficiaries are old age, disability or survivors’ pensioners of main social security funds, and uninsured over-aged pensioners, who encounter temporary or permanent health or disability problems and meet the following selection criteria:

- a) They must have reached at least the age of 78 or been declared invalid with an invalidity degree of 67% and more, regardless of the age limit.
- b) They must live alone or with their spouse or other person meeting the requirements necessary for accessing the Program.
- c) The overall annual individual or familiar income must not exceed a specific limit.
- d) Their health status, due to illness (chronic or temporary), make them reliant on care, or unable to satisfy their daily needs.
- e) They are not entitled to receive a solidarity allowance from their insurance fund.

The services provided to the beneficiaries of the Program are the following:

- a) Social support services, such as assessment and prioritization of social needs, provision of individual and social information to beneficiaries on their rights and support within their contact with the competent security, health and social protection services, facilitation or escort of beneficiaries for their participation in religious, cultural, leisure or social activities.
- b) Nursing care services, monitoring medication treatment, drug prescription, first aid, visit to a doctor for prescription, etc.
- c) Domestic assistance services, such as hygiene maintenance and house cleaning, shopping, appearance and personal hygiene care, meals preparation, food and basic necessities supplies, bills payment etc.

The services are provided for ten hours on a monthly basis, with a frequency of at least two (2) visits per week and for thirty (30) minutes minimum duration per visit, in case of more than two (2) visits.

II. “Home Social Care” program

Article 127 of Law 4199/2013 (GG 216/A), Article 64 of Law 4277/2014 (GG 156/A) as supplemented by Article 14 of Law 4312/2014 (GG 260/A) establish the “Home Social Care” Program, which is implemented today in the framework of the “Home Assistance” Program by the Municipalities or their Legal Entities or other Legal Entities of Self-Government Agencies or Public Bodies Corporate.

The Program’s goal is to guarantee conditions of independent living for elderly and disabled at their place of residence, in order to ensure their stay in a familiar natural and social environment, instead of a residential care institution and consequently prevent social exclusion, and also to support uninsured and economically weak citizens who are in need of this and meet the necessary criteria.

The program’s beneficiaries are uninsured elderly and economically weak individuals and individuals with disabilities who need home assistance services, namely supportive and nursing services.

The selection criteria for the beneficiaries of the “Home Social Care” Program are the following:

- age (individuals over 65 years of age)
- marital status
- income
- health status
- temporary or permanent dependency

Priority is given:

- to those who live alone
- to individuals who cannot fully look after themselves
- to individuals with low income

Services provided:

- a) Combating the dependency of elderly persons and disabled ones via organization and systematic provision of social work, psychosocial support, nursing care, physiotherapy, ergo-therapy and domestic help services,
- b) informing beneficiaries on their rights and supporting them within their contact with the competent healthcare services,
- c) facilitating beneficiaries for their participation in cultural, entertainment/recreation, social and religious activities.

III. Housing assistance program:

The housing assistance benefit is granted as a rent to lonely uninsured and economically weak elderly people, aged 65 and over, provided that they do not own a residence and they live in a rented residence, they are economically weak, they do not have any income from any source within the country or abroad, nor real estate property so that they can cover their housing expenses. The above mentioned benefit does not exceed the 362€ monthly per beneficiary.

IV. Elderly Day Care Centers:

They constitute daily hospitality units for elderly people not fully capable of taking care of themselves (mobility difficulties, dementia etc), and whose relatives responsible for their care, are working or facing serious social and economic or health problems and so they are not able to respond to the role they have undertaken. These centers' goal is to ameliorate the life quality of elderly people and help them stay in their natural and familiar environment, and also to maintain a normal social and working life for those family members who take care of these individuals.

These centers are established and function by enterprises of local authorities, profit or non-profit private law bodies, and natural persons, in urban and semi-urban regions. At functional level, these centers are interconnected with the Elderly Open Protection Centers which may exist in the same area.

V. Holiday-camp, thermal treatment, pure clay treatment program:

Every year, this program of seven days duration is developed in cooperation with Municipal Enterprises for elderly people and adults with disabilities, throughout the country, from July until October (Joint Ministerial Decision 25725/1158/31-7-2013). The selection of the beneficiaries for participation in this program is made by Public Health and Social Care Directorates of the country's regions in cooperation with local authorities and under purely socio-economic criteria.

B. Health Sector

I. A "National Pilot Project concerning Health Prevention and Promotion for Elderly Individuals - Epione", was developed in cooperation with scientific and professional bodies, for the prevention of specific diseases. For 2015, it was conceived for the prevention of diabetes, while, for the year 2016, it was conceived for the prevention of osteoporosis and falls. This program is an initiative of the Ministry of Health, which adopted the relevant proposition of the Hellenic Gerontology and Geriatrics Company and is conducted in cooperation with other scientific companies or jointly responsible agencies (Hellenic Endocrine Company, General Medicine Hellenic Company, Greek Nurses' Association, Pan-Hellenic Medical Association etc.). It includes information and awareness actions addressed to elderly people, to their families, caretakers and health professionals. It also includes laboratory tests and clinical assessment, which aim at the prevention and the improvement of the above mentioned diseases' treatment.

The Program's philosophy is to enhance the importance of active and healthy ageing via the protection of elderly people's rights, the improvement of life quality for them and for their families, reinforcing independent living, social participation and integration while strengthening their role at social, economic and cultural level.

The general goals of the “National Pilot Project concerning Health Prevention and Promotion for Elderly Individuals - Epione” are the following:

- Development of cooperations between bodies and services through local networks with Health, Social Care Units and agents of the Civil Society
- Protection and promotion of health for elderly individuals
- Reinforcement of their multidimensional role in family and social environment
- Citizens’ awareness and information provided to the public opinion concerning health issues and their psychosocial aspects
- Enhancement of planning and reinforcement of the friendly environment’s role for elderly people within the residence, the city and the services.

II. In raising public opinion and health professionals’ awareness, concerning the protection of elderly rights, the Ministry of Health, in the context of World/International Days has issued the following circulars:

- a) World Alzheimer-Dementia Month/Day_21 September 2016, with subject entitled: “Remember Me”¹⁰
- b) World Elder Abuse Awareness Day_15 June 2016¹¹
- c) World Alzheimer-Dementia Month/Day_21 September 2016, with subject entitled: “Remember Me”¹².

III. Within the actions planning for the development of the Home-based Health Care institution, ministerial decisions were issued under the subject: “Establishment of a Pilot Network of Home-based Health Care Departments or Services and project setting¹³”, and “Amendment and extension of the duration for the Pilot Network of Home-based Health Care Departments or Services¹⁴”. In accordance to these ministerial decisions, the relevant Pilot Network of 17 bodies, 13 Hospitals, 3 Health Centers and one Multidimensional Regional Medical Office was established.

The procedure concerning their implementation is defined via circulars¹⁵, uniformly by all agents participating in the Pilot Network and the requirements for further development of

¹⁰ protocol number Γ38ΙΑΙΦΑ Υ9Γ.Π.ΟΙΚ.68683Ι15.09.2016(ΑΔΑ:7ΚΣΧ465ΦΥΟ-ΡΩΘ)

¹¹ protocol number Γ38ΙΑΙΑΥ91Γ.Π.ΟΙΚ.43779Ι14-06-2016 (ΑΔΑ : 7ΒΔΜ465ΦΥΟ-Τ4Β)

¹² protocol number Γ38ΙΑΙΦΑΥ9Ι2015Γ.Π.ΟΙΚ.69995Ι10-09-2015 (ΑΔΑ : 7Ω6Α465ΦΥΟ-Δ3Τ)

¹³ protocol number Γ38ΙΑ.Φ.14Γ.Π./ΟΙΚ.26847Ι9-4-2015, (ΑΔΑ:6Γ7Β465ΦΥΟ-225)

¹⁴ protocol number Γ38ΙΑ.Φ.141Γ.Π.ιΟΙΚ.3357Ι18.01.2016, (ΑΔΑ:ΩΕΧΨ465ΦΥΟ-1ΛΥ)

¹⁵ protocol number Γ38ΙΑ.Φ. 14Γ.Π.ΟΙΚ.58490131.7.2015, (ΑΔΑ:ΩΙΥΩ465ΦΥΟ-ΩΟΗ), with subject: “Organization, operation and uniform definition of procedures for the development of the Pilot Network for Home-based healthcare Departments or Services” and protocol number 14662 / 18.03.2016 (DDA: 6Η97465ΦΥΟ-ZRA), on the subject of “Supplementary clarifications concerning the number Γ38ΙΑ.Φ.14Γ.Π.ΟΙΚ.58490131.07.2016 (ΑΔΑ:ΩΙΥΩ465ΦΥΟ-ΩΟΗ), on “Organization, operation and uniform definition of procedures for the development of the Pilot Network for Home-based healthcare Departments or Services”

the Home Care Treatment are set out at a national level. In the framework of the Pilot Network, home health care services are provided to individuals suffering from chronic diseases, including elderly people.

IV. Greece participates in the activities of the “European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing”, an initiative of the European Committee, aiming at increasing the average life expectancy of the Europeans by two years, until 2020. This initiative is taken along with the cooperation of the European Committee and the countries of the European Union, the Regions of the Member States, the Industry, the Health and Social Welfare Professionals and the Organizations representing elderly people and patients. This collaboration focuses in the life improvement of elderly people, helping them participate in social life and on the parallel, in the reduction of the pressure on the health and welfare system, contributing by this way in sustainable growth. Greece’s participation in this strategy of the European Committee is done via the “Greek Network for European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing”, constituted by representatives of the Scientific Area, of Health Professionals, of Agents and Municipalities, such as by experts of the telecommunications sector. Since 2014, the Greek Network has developed various activities for the pilot application of large-scale telemedicine services and also for the application of innovative technological solutions and practices, enhancing efficiency of Health and Social Welfare services, through the improvement of the coordination between the health care providers and the Municipalities’ social structures.

V. In the field of Education, the Hellenic Gerontology and Geriatrics Company implements activities for Health professionals, concerning workshops and seminars.

VI. At the Ministry of Health, a National Dementia-Alzheimer Observatory has been established (Law 4316/ O.G.27012014), aiming at supporting permanently Greece’s policy on tackling Dementia and protecting the patients’ and their families’ rights.

Furthermore, this Observatory develops the National Action Plan for the disease, monitors its implementation, represents Greece in national and international events, or working groups regarding this disease, communicates with patients’ organizations, and with Scientific Bodies.

2.5 Conclusions and priorities for the future

All these above mentioned actions, even though they constitute important steps towards the Policy for Elderly People, they are not integrated in a general context of national planning, which must take into consideration the various factors affecting life quality of Third Age and also the need for coordination of the involved Ministries and Bodies.

Consequently, the development of an integrated Action Plan for the Third Age is required. Special emphasis is planned to be given in the areas of health and welfare, in order to ensure healthy ageing, guaranteeing elderly people's health and rights and improving their life quality.

Towards this end, elderly people's health will be a priority the following months, within the actions planning of the relevant Ministry of Health Directorate, which will propose the specific issue to be integrated among the strategies of the Ministry and stand as a framework for cooperation among the involved Ministries and Bodies.