



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
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NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference to the latter's Note Verbale, dated 14 August 2014, on the OHCHR report on better investment in the rights of the child (HRC Resolution 25/6), has the honour to transmit relevant information from the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights as well as the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 2 October 2014

To: **The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**
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Att.: 4 pages

Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights

The Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights is currently promoting a draft Presidential Decree on foster delinquent minors (shared competence with the Ministry of Labour). The PD shall promote the revision of the legal framework related to foster minors, by establishing a special register to be kept in the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and concerning foster families, which will receive delinquent minors under financial support following a court decision.

Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs

Education funding in Greece is planned according to general needs or needs arising from current affairs. The educational needs of marginalized and vulnerable children are seriously taken into consideration in the education policy planning and implementation within the broader framework for respecting and promoting the rights and the best interest of the child. Hereafter follows a brief outline of the way in which funding in education (primary and secondary) takes place as well as some reference to major programmes in the direction of inclusive education. In particular:

Primary and secondary education is mainly financed by the State through the Regular Budget and the Public Investments Programme, and less so by non state resources. The **Regular Budget** covers education personnel payroll expenses, operational expenses of schools, textbooks, the transfer of pupils, scholarships and the supply of teaching aids. The **Public Investments Programme** covers fixed capital cost expenses, such as the purchase of real estate, the construction and repair of buildings and facilities, the procurement and maintenance of laboratories and equipment. It also covers preparation and creation expenses for new educational programmes, scientific research strengthening and in general support to the overall educational policy.

Fees within Public Education

It is important to mention that there are no tuition fees in Greek public education. Attendance in primary and secondary education state schools is free of charge and includes the provision of textbooks and any additional material to every pupil.

Funding of Primary Education

Pre-primary school (*Nipiagogeio*) and primary school (*Dimotiko Scholeio*) constitute the primary level of education. In Greece, pre-school education is mainly offered by pre-primary schools (*Nipiagogeia*), supervised and financed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs; pre-school education is also offered by child and infant/child centers (*Paidikoi Stathmoi, Vrefonipiakoi Stathmoi*) which belong to Local Government Organizations, supervised and financed by the Ministry for Interior. Primary education is financed centrally by the state budget through the Regular Budget and the Public Investments Programme.

School committees (*Scholikes Epitropes*) are established at local or regional level. They are municipal or community legal entities entrusted with the management of appropriations allocated to cover the operational costs in primary schools and to support the administrative operation of school units, depending on their needs. The funds allocated for the transfer of pupils are also managed at local level.

Funding of Secondary Education

Lower secondary schools (*Gymnasia*), upper secondary, general and vocational (*Geniko Lykeio, Epangelmatiko Lykeio - EPAL*) as well as vocational schools constitute the secondary level of education. Secondary education is financed by the State Budget through the Regular Budget and the Public Investments Programme at central level.

Similarly to primary education, at local or regional level, school committees (*Scholikes Epitropes*) operate, being municipal or community legal entities entrusted with the management of appropriations allocated to cover the operational costs in secondary education schools and to support the administrative operation of school units, depending on the arising needs.

Financial Autonomy and Control

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

- i) use of public resources and in particular of capital allocated to them, for any purchases and acquisition of electronic equipment.
- ii) funds raising and, in particular, sponsorships and donations, the renting of school premises for activities beyond the school schedule and loans.
- iii) use of private resources for purchasing movable and immovable assets or for recruiting teaching and non-teaching staff, which are decided at a central level by the supreme educational authorities.

However, the new institutional framework on local government is an effort towards the autonomy and independent management of primary and secondary education school units. Pursuant to Law 3852/2010, issues such as accommodation, the

transfer of pupils and the organisation of school committees with responsibilities in operational and economic issues of schools are being revisited.

Financial Support for Learners' Families

Families with low income can benefit from an annual allowance of 300 euros for every child enrolled in a public school of compulsory education, which can be granted to them at the end of each school year, upon submission of a certificate issued by the Head Master that the child has regularly attended classes throughout the school year.

Additionally, the transfer of pupils residing in remote areas to state schools is carried out based on Ministerial Decision 24001/11-6-2013, from the Regions, either by means of special student voucher or by a public service provision agreement, depending on the distance measured in kilometers between the place of residence and the school. The transfer of Special Education School (SMEA) pupils from their place of residence or from a particular meeting point, to the school they attend and vice et versa is not bound by kilometric restrictions. Should transfer of pupils be non feasible or be considered unaffordable and if pupils have settled down in another residence close to their school for the exclusive purpose of attending the classes in said schools, a monthly allowance shall be granted.

Education of socially vulnerable groups

Based on the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2007-2013, innovative and development programmes have been planned and implemented, financed by 75% from EU resources and by 25% from national resources through the Sectoral Operational Programme "Education and Lifelong Learning". Hereafter follows mention to some important programmes which cater for the needs of different vulnerable groups of children in school. In particular:

a) The education of migrant and repatriate students

The main aim of the programme is to combat school dropouts so that equal access to education and social inclusion are ensured, with interventions starting from preschool education.

b) The Education of the Roma pupils

The said programme aims to enhance access and participation of Roma children in education, with particular emphasis on preschool education and early enrollment in the 1st grade of primary school to achieve regular attendance and the reduce students' dropping out of school. Throughout the implementation of the project special priority is given to the role and action of Roma school mediators.

c) The education of the children of the Muslim minority in Thrace

The main aim of the programme is to upgrade the education of the children of the minority and to foster their integration into Greek society.

d) Educational Priority Zones

The general aim behind the implementation of the Educational Priority Zones is to shape, and test under real classroom conditions, alternative and flexible educational approaches of differentiated teaching so as to ensure the equitable integration into the system of students from areas with low education and socioeconomic indicators.

e) Designing and developing an electronic registry for all students with disabilities and/or special educational needs, aged 4-25 years

The said programme aims to enhance access and participation of persons with disabilities and/or special educational needs in the educational system with the creation of a Special Management Information System (registry for persons with disabilities), where all students with disabilities and/or special educational needs, at primary and secondary education (aged 4-25 years), will be registered by type of disability and/or special educational need.

f) Designing and developing accessible educational and teaching aids for students with disabilities

This programme aims to:

1. to adapt the textbooks for all subjects of A and B primary school grades - in printed and digital format - so that they become accessible to students with disabilities.
2. to supply special software to be used for customizing and integrating educational content in digital environments, accessible to students with disabilities.
3. to develop a specific educational material for supportive services designed to more adequately prepare students with disabilities for school attendance.

Currently, the new National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2014-2020 is being drafted in which priority will be given to human resource development, education and lifelong learning.