The common European strategy "Europe 2020", which aims at smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, characterizes LLL and the development of skills as an important policy tool for addressing the ongoing economic crisis, the ageing population and the wider EU financial and social strategy, in the context of globalisation.

As Greece connects its policies and objectives with the ones of the European Union, lifelong learning is a national policy priority, as its strong connection with employment, economic prosperity and full participation of the individual in society is clear. Especially in the context of the current economic crisis, lifelong learning is a crucial factor for growth and social cohesion.

In this framework, Greece is called upon to lift the discrepancies in access to adult education, mainly for people aged 55+, for workers, farmers, inhabitants of semi-urban and rural areas and even for persons with low educational background. The shift towards strengthening development policies constitutes the only way ahead for Greece to make progress and for this purpose the quality of lifelong learning actions is enhanced, intensified and upgraded.

With the enactment of law 3879/2010[^1] ("Development of Lifelong Learning and other provisions"), a national holistic strategy on lifelong learning (LLL) was for the first time created in Greece and the National Network for Lifelong Learning was set up, consisting of all LLL governing bodies and LLL service providers. In particular, law 3879/2010, as amended and in force, set forth the following objectives:

1. Systematisation and co-ordination of investigating the educational and training needs of adults in relation to the needs of labour market and social development
2. Planning and decentralization of lifelong learning actions, systematic support of the National Network for Lifelong Learning bodies and cooperation between LLL governing bodies and LLL service providers
3. Promotion of vocational training and general adult education as two equal pillars of lifelong learning
4. Establishment of standards and tools to develop and improve the quality of lifelong learning
5. Assurance of accessibility for individuals and especially for members of socially vulnerable groups in all training and general adult education actions
6. Continuing education and evaluation of adult educators
7. Creation of a coherent national framework for the evaluation and certification for all forms of training and general adult education, by establishing the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP)

As defined in law 3879/2010[^1], LLL applies to all forms of learning activities during the life of a person aiming at acquiring or developing knowledge, skills and competences which contribute to the formation of an integrated personality, vocational inclusion and personal development, social cohesion, capacity development of active citizenship and social, economic and cultural development. It includes formal education, non-formal education and informal learning.
In this context, the national strategy for the development of lifelong learning is reflected in the following main policies.

The National Network for Lifelong Learning (NNLL) consists of all lifelong learning bodies, which should cooperate both at the level of composing proposals and implementing actions but also of interacting.

Basic and supporting functions are exercised as part of the National Network for Lifelong Learning.

Basic functions are:

- Initial vocational training
- Continuing vocational training
- General adult education.

Supporting functions are mainly:

- Exploration of the educational and training needs of adults in relation to the needs of labour market and society
- Provision of lifelong counselling and career guidance services
- Certification of structures, professional profiles, programmes and non-formal education trainers
- Recognition of qualifications and certification of knowledge, skills and competences of individuals
- Recognition of professional rights corresponding to professional qualifications, acquired in LLL framework, excluding higher education.

The following LLL governing bodies and LLL service providers form NNLL, according to laws 3879/2010 [1] and 4186/2013 [2]:

**LLL governing bodies are:**

1. The General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning
2. Regional and Municipal department units responsible for Lifelong Learning
3. The National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP)
4. The National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA)
5. The Center for Security Studies (KEMEA)

**LLL service providers are:**

1. Vocational training institutes (IEKs)
2. Colleges
3. Lifelong learning centres (KDBM) - type I and II
4. Other public and private vocational training schools
5. Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (INEDIVIM)
6. Higher education institutions (HEIs)
7. Hellenic Open University
8. Service providers of general (formal and non-formal) adult education, including social, religious and cultural bodies, as well as structures providing general adult education, such as second chance schools (SDEs) and parent schools
9. Bodies offering counselling and/or career guidance services
10. Employment Promotion Centres (KPA), to the extent that they provide lifelong counseling and career guidance services
11. Bodies of the public sector and the wider public sector providing non-formal education to employees in the public and the wider public sector, such as EKDDA
12. Bodies which are set up by professional associations and chambers and provide non-formal
education to their members
13. Providers of lifelong learning services which comprise the tertiary trade unions of employees and employers co-signing the national collective labour agreement
14. Informal learning bodies
15. The Pastoral Training Institute (PTI) of the Holy Archdiocese of Athens to the extent that it solely provides LLL services on pastoral training issues
16. The Center for Security Studies (KEMEA)

General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning

The General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning, falling under the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, is the executive body of lifelong learning in Greece according to law 3879/2010. The General Secretariat’s mission is to plan the public lifelong learning policy, formulate the relevant rules, draw up the respective national programme and supervise its implementation.

The General Secretariat is also responsible for the following:

1. Co-ordination and evaluation of LLL management
2. Supervision and management of general adult education
3. Formulation of the educational framework of all the units offering initial, continuing vocational training and non-formal education, in general
4. Organisation, operation and management of second chance schools (SDEs), public vocational training institutes (IEKs), parent schools and other relevant structures and programmes
5. Support of NNLL bodies
6. Cooperation with the competent European bodies to harmonise our country with modern LLL policies promoted by the EU. Cooperation with other international organisations, such as the OECD and UNESCO
7. Study and exploitation of good practices offered at European and international level and management of European and co-funded by EU programmes
8. Quality assurance and evaluation of the training and general adult education services provided
9. Participation of members of socially vulnerable groups in LLL programmes
10. Use of new technologies and promotion of digital environment in LLL programmes
11. Compilation and maintenance of registers of LLL bodies and citizens’ qualifications.

The General Secretariat has undertaken the implementation of the "European Agenda for Adult Education and Training" in Greece. The Agenda is an awareness and information programme for all those involved in social and educational "affairs" at local, regional, national and international level. Activation and cooperation allow for a 'step forward' in the population with low skills through training programmes.

National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP)

EOPPEP constitutes the competent body for studies certification in adults’ education institutions. EOPPEP was established under law 4115/2013 as the successor body of the merger of the National Qualification Certification Organisation (EOPP), the National Accreditation Centre for Lifelong Learning (EKEPIS) and the National Centre for Vocational Guidance (EKEP). It develops and implements an integrated national certification system of non-formal education and provides the scientific support of Vocational Guidance and Counseling services in Greece. Moreover, EOPPEP is responsible for the development of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework (HQF) and its referencing to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Within its powers, EOPPEP promoted and completed the development of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework, providing the basis for the classification - at its levels - of all titles issued by the Greek educational system. The referencing of HQF to EQF was completed with a presentation made by the Greek delegation during the 33rd Meeting of the European Qualifications Framework Advisory Group in Berlin on 2 December 2015.
National Framework for Quality Assurance in Lifelong Learning

Improving and ensuring LLL quality has become a key pillar of the strategy for lifelong learning, as reflected in the provisions of law 3879/2010 [1]. Article 19 provides, inter alia, the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system for the programmes and effectiveness of the National Network for Lifelong Learning. The General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs developed the National Framework for Quality Assurance in lifelong learning, giving stakeholders a tool for planning, delivering and evaluating the results of lifelong learning, as it:

- Defines quality by setting quality principles in all three components of the educational process, i.e. inputs, processes and outputs.
- Provides measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators for assessing the implementation of quality principles by stakeholders.

National Plan for Lifelong Learning

The National Plan for Lifelong Learning as defined in law 3879/2010 [1], includes all implementation actions of the public lifelong learning policy, developed at central, regional and local level and financed by public funds (national or European).

The main aim of the plan is the interconnection and coordination of lifelong learning to employment, forming two equal pillars:

- Vocational training (initial and continuing) aiming at integration and reintegration in the labour market
- General adult education aiming at personal development and social cohesion.

The application of the plan includes actions related to creating the necessary infrastructure and conditions for the co-ordination and coherent functioning of lifelong learning. It also includes the implementation of educational and training actions with key recipient the manpower of the country.

LLL funding

Lifelong learning is funded by state, EU and private resources. The actions and projects implemented by state bodies are funded primarily by the operational programmes (OPs) of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) co-financed by Greece and the European Union. Significant steps have been taken to date for the implementation of the institutional framework (law 3879/2010 [1]) while the organisation and systematisation of lifelong learning remains a major goal.

A more extensive report on lifelong learning is given in Chapter 8 Adult Education and Training [4].