European, Global and Intercultural Dimension in Curriculum Development

Primary Education

The International and European dimension in compulsory Greek education is reflected in the general principles and aims of the curricula, in the individual objectives of certain school subjects and in the school books, too.

The general principles and objectives of compulsory education include, among others, the following: strengthening cultural and linguistic identity within a multicultural society, raising awareness of issues related to human rights, global peace and human dignity. One of the objectives of curricula in Preschool and School Education is to raise students' awareness on issues connected with cultural and religious diversity, gender equality, peaceful coexistence, multicultural societies and refugees as well as protection of the natural environment and adoption of an ecological behaviour.

More specifically, the current Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework (Diathematikon Programma) adopts and disseminates in all school subjects the primary educational principles that promote the values of democracy and respect for cultural diversity and human rights. According to the general part of the current curriculum framework, it is necessary to promote the cultivation of the identity of the European citizen alongside the preservation of our national identity and our cultural self-knowledge, as well as the development of a spirit of cooperation and collectivity.

The Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework adopts the principles that frame the common future of European education, such as preserving the democratic nature of political life, freedom, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, internationalism, justice, culture, employment, intellectual culture and social cohesion in open pluralist societies.

In the Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework for kindergarten, it is emphasized, among others, that young children should:

• realize their uniqueness but also to identify and respect their similarities and differences with others
• develop feelings of love and solidarity for all the creatures of the earth.

In this context, children through appropriate activities understand their uniqueness as well as their similarities with other children. They are encouraged to share experiences, learn about other people's way of life. They are urged to accept people with different linguistic, cultural or religious beliefs, to express their love and solidarity with their fellow human beings, to cooperate and build friendship bonds with them.

Within the "Flexible Zone for Cross Thematic and Creative Activities" framework in the first four grades of Primary-School (Dimotiko Scholeio), teachers are encouraged and receive support by means of teaching resources in order to introduce subjects pertaining to European identity, multi-culturalism, globalisation and environmental protection.
As far as Primary Education is concerned the aims and contents of the Cross-thematic Curriculum Framework and the relevant school books address the thematic fields of the International and European dimension as well as the acceptance of cultural diversity through different school subjects such as Modern Greek Language, Social and Political Studies, Foreign Language, the Study of the Environment, History and Religious Studies (New Curricula).

Secondary Education

Compulsory Lower Secondary Education

Lower secondary education (Gymnasio) students are engaged in European and international themes through the subjects of History, Literature, Social and Political Studies as well as Foreign Languages whose teaching includes references to the relevant foreign culture, promoting thus intercultural knowledge and understanding.

In particular, the Modern Greek Language school subject emphasises the inclusion and presence of Greece in the wider European and global political and social world through the teaching of relevant chapters that are part of the textbook of the Modern Greek Language of the third grade. Modern Greek Literature includes texts of foreign literature scholars. As regards the History curriculum of lower secondary schools, emphasis is placed on the teaching of Greek history, which is taught in all three grades, in the context of European and global history. In the subject of Social and Political Studies, taught in the third grade of lower secondary schools, the European, International and Intercultural Dimension is particularly prominent. The main teaching objective for students is to enable them to participate as European citizens actively in the European life, being aware that they are at the same time Greek and European citizens, as well as to understand not only the interaction among countries and people, but also the necessity of organizing international society.

Non-compulsory Secondary Education

New curricula that have been introduced and implemented in non-compulsory secondary education, integrate the European and international dimensions through general education subjects taught in both types of Upper Secondary Schools (General and Vocational).

In the framework of experimental actions, creative projects and research creative activities in Lyceum, teachers are encouraged and supported with relevant educational material to develop issues related to European identity, multiculturalism, globalization and the protection of the environment.

In Vocational Education schools (EPAL), teachers can implement a variety of programmes in the framework of Orientation group subjects (Creative Activity Zone, Research Project in Technology, School Vocational Guidance - Safety & Health at Work) in the 1st grade of EPAL. These subjects, as well as other subjects in the 2nd and 3rd grade provide students with opportunities to take creative initiatives and integrate into the educational act of international developments in science and evolution of the professions.

General education subjects in General Lyceums engage students in European culture and European identity themes in order to familiarise them with the history and formation of the European identity. More specifically:

- Religious Education (1st, 2nd and 3rd grade): one of the general objectives is to provide information on major world religions.
- Ancient Greek Language and Literature (1st, 2nd and 3rd grade): one of the general subject objectives is to highlight not only the 'European dimension' of antiquity, that is the achievements that played an instrumental role in the creation of the European civilisation, but also the role and contribution of other people and civilisations in these achievements.
- Modern Greek Language and Literature (1st, 2nd and 3rd grade): the subject’s main objective is to engage students in the literary works of our national and global heritage, consistent
with humanitarian values and ideals. This is accomplished by introducing students into Modern Greek, European and global literature. Teaching themes include Greek texts and foreign texts translated into Modern Greek.

- **History (1st, 2nd and 3rd grade):** As part of the wider objective to foster historical thinking skills and awareness, students are invited to learn global history and examine its links with Greek history. Students are also invited to familiarise themselves with the complexities of the modern world and cultural diversity, and explore and appreciate intercultural relations between civilisations and their cultural contributions to the global civilisation.

- **Political Education (1st grade):** The subject includes the subjects of Economics, Political Institutions and Sociology and Principles of Law: students are invited to gain knowledge on social, political and economic matters, understand and experience the interface Economy-Politics-Law-Sociology, learn about the fundamental institutions that relate to the structure and governance of the state, and develop critical thinking skills in order to actively participate in the local, national, European and global social, political and economic setting as free and responsible citizens.

- **Modern World: Citizen and Democracy (2nd grade):** The objective of the subject is to enable students to understand, discuss and reflect on the political and social present in our country, in Europe, but also in the non-European world. The thematic units aim at the students' political socialization, while focusing on the European and international dimension of modern political reality, seeking to raise their awareness on issues such as: Citizens and Rights, European Union, Population, Globalization, Migration, Poverty and Unemployment.

- **Philosophy (2nd grade):** The objective of this subject is to engage students in the fundamental principles of philosophy and its concepts, and the tools used by important philosophers worldwide in order to address questions and resolve human concerns.

- **Greek and European culture. European culture and its roots - The subject is offered as an optional one for students of the first grade and focuses on the historical course through which the European civilization was formed.**

- **History of Social Sciences (3rd grade):** This subject addresses several issues related to the international and intercultural dimension of education in units related to Modern Social Organization and Behaviours.

With regard to Orientation Group Subjects, these are the links with the European and international dimension:

- **Basic principles of Social Sciences:** students are invited to comprehend all the social, economic and political concepts and categories that will facilitate their understanding of the social, economic and political structure of the country in which they reside and act.

- **Latin:** through studying, understanding and translating Latin language texts, students become familiar with Roman literature texts.

- **Principles of Economic Theory:** the objective of this subject is for students to understand the basic principles concerning Economic Science and use its tools, but also learn more about its international dimension through studying International Economic Relations.

- **Principles of Organization and Business and Services Management (optional subject):** it aims at enabling students to understand the basic concepts of administrative science as this evolves within the modern, globalized economic and business environment.

- **Sociology:** engaging with issues concerning the intercultural approach to education, such as: difference, cultural differences and subcultures in contemporary Greek society, population movements (immigration - repatriation), different cultural groups and minorities in modern societies, prejudice and racism.

General education subjects taught in Vocational Lyceums are also reflecting the European dimension and identity, as it is the case for General Lyceums.
**Refugee Education**

Incoming child refugee flows into the country have led to a new reality in the field of education in Greece. In order to tackle the issue of their education, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs has initiated the formation of the Committee for the Support of Refugee Children (CSRC) as well as Scientific Committees to assist the work of the committee. Thus, since the school year 2016-2017 for the provision of education to children of third country nationals, refugee education structures have been established, operating a. either within the school units of the Regional Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education, in which hospitality centers lie b. or within the hospitality centers as defined in the relevant legislation.

During the school year 2017-2018, the main goal of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs was to integrate all refugee students into our schools, with particular emphasis on the smooth transition of refugee children into the morning zone. At the same time, last year's successful Institution of afternoon Reception Facilities for Refugee Education will continue to operate for those children who need it. To support refugee education, IEP has developed an online platform for the collection and distribution of approved educational material. Also, actions are being implemented to train executives on Intercultural Education and the operation of the Reception Classes and to produce supportive educational material.

Finally, in order to support Refugee Education, the Institute for Educational Policy (IEP) has developed an Open Educational Programme for the teaching of Greek in Primary and Secondary Education Reception Classes.

Law 4415/2016 provides a framework for issues concerning the interaction and creative blending of the cultural, historical and social Greek features with those of the global, regional and domestic environment of the host countries. This Law regulates issues concerning:

- the support of activities pertaining to the field of Greek Education Abroad with a view to “informing improvements in the quality of its services in order to meet the needs of Greek students living abroad and persons of Greek origin who wish to become familiar with the Greek language and Greek culture” (Article 1),

- cross-cultural education, designed in such a way as to contribute towards “the formation of relationships among different communities for lifting inequalities and social exclusion” (Article 20).

**Partnerships and Networks**

**Erasmus+**

Both General and Vocational and Training Education school units may implement Erasmus+ EU funding Programmes during a school year, after they have been attributed authorization by the National Agency, the State Scholarships Foundation (IKY). Erasmus+ aims at enforcing actions that have to do with synergies and cross-fertilisation, fostering innovation and creation of new ideas. Collaborating schools are enhanced to deal with common problems they face, like early school leaving, or low levels of basic skills and qualifications, to interact with their partners by practically removing artificial borders and to communicate with different fields of education and training. It also stimulates new forms of cooperation and collaboration through the cross-national teachers’ and students’ mobility. Vocational Education Schools have the opportunity to promote synergies with other actors and create strong bonds between the fields of education and training and the world of work.

**eTwinning**

Greece is participating in the eTwinning action, a European initiative that enables schools in Europe
to work together on collaborative projects using information and communication technologies (ICT). Schools are called to collaborate on issues with recognized pedagogical value but also be benefited both socially and culturally. eTwinning action promotes school twinning as an opportunity for students to learn together, to share views and to make friendships. Since 2014, eTwinning action has been integrated in Erasmus+ (2014-2020) providing significant support to any kind of collaborations between European schools. eTwinning is supported by the Central European Support Service (KYS) and a net of National Support Services (EYS), such as the Greek eTwinning Service, operated by the Institute of Computer Technology and Publications "DIOFANDOS". eTwinning projects can be performed either autonomously or integrated into other school projects (Cultural Projects, Environmental Education, Career Counselling, Health Education Programmes). More specifically, eTwinning action offers the opportunity to teachers, who are involved to the above mentioned programmes, to share their projects and make them feel and be part of a European community beyond their country’s borders. Teachers can combine any project with eTwinning, use the eTwinning platform tools offered by the eTwinning net, collaborate with teachers from other European countries and also take part in eTwinning National or European competitions held every year.

**UNESCO**

Under the auspices of [UNESCO](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO) [2], Greek schools and teachers are participating a. in the South-Eastern Mediterranean Environmental Project (SEMEP) and b. in the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet). Both of these programmes are part of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.

a. **SEMEP** [3], a Greek initiative, deals with technological, economic, historical, social and cultural issues as well as issues on peace, human rights etc. This project combines interdisciplinary teaching with holistic learning while aiming towards linking the natural and social environment with the cultural values of the South-Eastern Mediterranean people, an important cross-cultural link that has been facilitating development in different cultures for thousands of years.

This interdisciplinary Environmental Education programme aims at sensitizing students, teachers and the community in general to the common historical, social, cultural, ecological and moral heritage of South-Eastern Mediterranean countries.

SEMEP runs through school nets, which are directed by National Agents under the authority of the participant states’ Ministries of Education. A National Agent is responsible for the organization and coordination of the school activities in every SEMEP state member, as well as the exchange of information, experience and educational material between teachers and students and the educational supervisor.

b. The [ASPnet-Asssociated Schools Project Network](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Associated_Schools_Project_Network) [4], together with UNESCO, aims to promote international collaborations and peace through education and education’s human, cultural and international dimensions. The institutes-members of this network (Pre-primary Schools, Primary Schools, Gymnasiums, Lyceums, Vocational Lyceums) are working for achieving the Sustainable Development Objectives with a main focus on objective 4, which discusses education. Schools-members of the ASPnet are encouraged to carry out interdisciplinary experimental projects, for one or more of the main case studies that relate to a wide range of interconnected individual subjects: ASPnet and the priorities of the United Nations, Education for Sustainable Development, Peace and Human Rights, Intercultural learning and leading programmes such as "Global Cultural Heritage" and "Intangible Cultural Heritage". Within the framework of Associated Schools Project, the Greek National Committee for Unesco in collaboration with the Directorate of European and International Affairs have developed a school network (ASPnet). 150 school units of both Primary and Secondary Education belong to this network and work together for the dissemination of the project, its
interconnection with other Unesco’s members as well as the increase of schools’ participation, especially of schools located in Macedonia, the Aegean Sea and the borderland.