

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

REPORT

Implementation of the

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

(MIPAA/RIS)

Fourth Review and Appraisal Cycle

2018-2022

JANUARY 2022

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Part I	4
General Information.....	4
1.1 National ageing situation	5
1.2 Method.....	9
Part II: 20 Years of MIPAA/RIS.....	10
2.1 Recognizing the potential of older persons	10
2.2 Encouraging longer working life and ability to work.....	14
2.3 Ensuring ageing with dignity	18
Part III: Healthy and Active Ageing in a Sustainable World.....	26
3.1. Contribution of ageing-related policies to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.....	26
3.2. Managing the consequences and impacts for older people in emergency situations: the COVID-19 pandemic - Lessons learnt.....	27
3.3. Activities in preparation and implementation of the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020 – 2030	30
Conclusions and priorities for the future	31

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 fourth overview of MIPAA / RIS with information on policies and legislation regarding the implementation of three main goals set out in the Declaration of Ministers in Lisbon in 2017.

The report consists of three 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 (2018-2022). The present report therefore does not contain an exhaustive overview of policies concerning older persons in Greece. The third part refers to contributions of Ageing-Related Policies for Healthy and Active Ageing in a Sustainable World.

Part I

General Information

1. *Country:* Greece

2. Name and contact details of the person responsible for the preparation of the report:
Angeliki Zoulaki, National Actuarial Authority of Greece (a.zoulaki@eaa.gr).

Acknowledgements

For the preparation of this report, there has been cooperation with units of various ministry related services. Experts from the competent authorities have worked together in order to identify the relevant issues and provide necessary material. We would like to express our sincere acknowledgements to the representatives of such units for their contribution:

- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
- Ministry of Health
- Labour Force Employment Organization

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 2020 was 45.2 years according to Eurostat.

Table 1: Median age of the total population

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EU 27	41.3	41.6	41.9	42.2	42.5	42.7	43.0	43.2	43.4	43.7	43.9
Greece	41.1	41.5	42.0	42.5	42.9	43.4	43.9	44.2	44.6	44.9	45.2

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. Older persons aged 65 and more in Greece in 2020 correspond to 22.3% of the total population, which is higher by 1.7 percentage points than the European average (EU27).

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

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EU 27	17.6	17.8	18.0	18.3	18.7	19.0	19.3	19.7	20.0	20.2	20.6
Greece	19.0	19.3	19.7	20.1	20.5	20.9	21.3	21.5	21.8	22.0	22.3

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

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

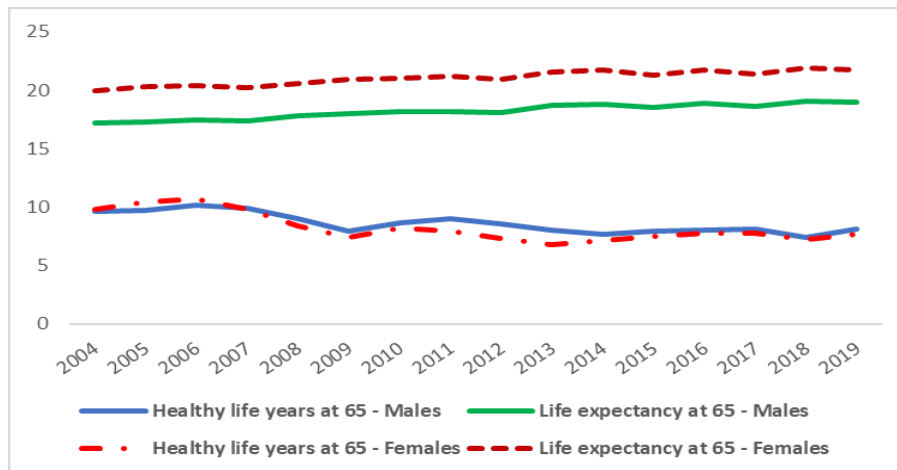
Table 3: Old-age Dependency ratio (population aged 65+ / population aged 15-64)

Year	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
EU 27	23.8	24.4	25.1	25.7	26.3	27.1	28.3	29.6	30.8	32.0
Greece	26.1	27.1	27.7	28.0	28.6	30.0	31.6	33.1	34.1	35.1

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

According to Tables 4 and 5, employment rate in Greece for persons aged 25-54 and 55-64 is lower than the respective EU average (EU27). In particular, employment rate is much lower for women. Following a downward trend in the first half of the last decade, due to the deep recession of the Greek economy, employment rates in Greece gradually increase in the second half of the decade.

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

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EU 27 (men)	84.2	83.7	83.5	82.6	81.9	82.4	83.0	83.8	84.9	85.6	86.2	85.3
Greece (men)	88.3	85.3	79.9	73.9	71.4	71.8	73.7	76.0	77.5	79.6	80.8	79.7
EU 27 (women)	71.2	71.1	71.2	71.1	70.8	71.3	71.9	72.6	73.4	74.3	75.1	74.5
Greece (women)	62.3	61.1	57.8	53.9	51.4	53.1	55.4	55.9	57.2	58.2	60.8	61.1

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

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

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EU 27 (men)	52.7	52.8	53.5	54.8	56.0	57.5	58.9	60.9	62.9	64.7	66.0	66.2
Greece (men)	57.8	56.5	52.3	47.7	46.0	44.0	44.9	46.2	49.6	53.3	56.1	57.0
EU 27 (women)	36.0	37.1	38.9	40.6	42.2	44.2	45.9	48.0	50.0	51.6	52.9	53.6
Greece (women)	27.8	29.1	27.5	26.1	26.0	25.0	24.7	27.2	28.0	30.0	31.6	33.5

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 decade. However, there has been a downward trend from 2014 onwards.

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

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EU 27 (total)	7.9	8.6	8.6	9.5	10.1	9.6	8.9	8.1	7.2	6.5	5.9	6.2
Greece (total)	8.4	11.2	15.9	22.3	25.4	24.8	23.4	22.2	20.2	18.2	16.4	15.4
EU 27 (men)	7.7	8.5	8.4	9.4	9.9	9.4	8.7	7.8	6.9	6.1	5.6	5.9
Greece (men)	6.0	8.9	13.5	19.8	22.5	22.1	20.4	18.5	16.7	14.3	13.0	12.7
EU 27 (women)	8.1	8.8	8.9	9.7	10.2	9.8	9.1	8.4	7.6	6.8	6.3	6.5
Greece (women)	11.6	14.4	19.2	25.5	29.0	28.2	27.2	26.8	24.7	23.1	20.7	18.8

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 Greece for persons aged 65+ in 2020 is lower than the respective EU average (EU27). Women are in a worse position than men.

Table 7: Population (%) at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2020

Age groups	Total population	Women	Men
Total	27.5	28.8	26.1
0-17	31.5	29.5	33.4
18-64	29.6	31.5	27.7
65+	19.3	22.0	16.0

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, ilc_peps01n)

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

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
EU27 (men)	14.7	15.2	15.2	15.9	16.2	16.9
Greece (men)	15.9	14.8	17.0	17.2	17.9	16.0
EU27 (women)	20.6	21.1	21.0	21.6	21.9	23.0
Greece (women)	18.7	18.0	19.5	20.7	22.5	22.0

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> (People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, ilc_peps01n)

The percentage of the older persons in material deprivation is more than double in Greece than in the EU (EU27), according to Table 9.

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

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EU27 (Men)	6.0	6.3	6.6	6.2	5.5	4.9	5.3	4.7	4.3	3.9
Greece (Men)	9.8	11.0	11.8	12.1	13.8	13.7	13.2	13.7	11.5	11.1
EU27 (Women)	8.6	9.5	9.6	8.7	8.0	7.0	7.4	6.8	5.9	5.5
Greece (Women)	14.4	14.7	16.3	15.0	16.9	16.5	16.8	17.5	15.4	14.5

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

1.1.3 Description of the social, economic and political situation

Following a deep and prolonged recession, during which real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by 26%, the Greek economy has started to grow again from 2017 onwards. By reforming its economy and administration, Greece has ended 8 years of financial assistance and successfully exited from the European Stability Mechanism support programme in August 2018. Greece is also subject to enhanced surveillance, which monitors, among other things, implementation of the post-programme policy commitments.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent measures, the GDP dropped significantly in 2020. Recent figures do show strong recovery in 2021.

Briefly:

- Unemployment is at high levels, however, there has been a downward trend from 2014 onwards.
- 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.
- Significant reforms in various areas have been designed and implemented.

With regards to the COVID-19 pandemic, Greece timely reacted by adopting precautionary and protective measures. Since mid-March 2020, several measures have been implemented.

Briefly:

- Government measures were taken to prevent the spread of the virus. A ‘controlled lockdown’ was applied for about a year, meaning that not all outdoors activities were banned.

- In the health sector, legislation and directives have been issued to protect vulnerable population groups.
- The government introduced several economic packages of financial support and employment-related measures to help individuals, households and enterprises affected financially from lockdown measures.

Also, a vaccination program is running in Greece, after the first approval of vaccines against COVID-19 was issued in December 2020.

A more detailed description regarding policies undertaken for the COVID-19 pandemic is included in section 3.2.

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 2018 for the implementation or the progress made in achieving the goals of the Lisbon Declaration.
- the topics analyzed in the third part of this report (2030 Agenda, COVID-19 pandemic, Decade of Healthy Ageing).

The main source of quantitative statistical data used in this document is ELSTAT and EUROSTAT database providing statistics also considering several surveys such as Labour Force Survey and Income and Living Conditions Survey.

Part II: 20 Years of MIPAA/RIS

Part II describes the relevant and important actions that foster and facilitate active and healthy ageing. These are grouped under three policy goals, according to the Declaration of Lisbon in 2017.

Goal 1- Recognizing the potential of older persons

Goal 2-Encouraging longer working life and ability to work

Goal 3-Ensuring ageing with dignity

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

2.1 Recognizing the potential of older persons

Unify and simplify employment framework after retirement

In order to give more incentives for older and experienced people to stay in the labor market or for the reintegration of retirees who need to work to supplement their additional income, but also for reasons of recognition of the contribution of the older persons which is valuable both financially as well as socially (in the context of the Silver Economy), the employment framework for retirees has been unified and simplified and the rate of pension reduction in the event of post-retirement employment has been reduced.

In particular, with article 27 of law 4670/2020, as it replaced article 20 of law 4387/2016, which regulates the employment issues of pensioners of public pension fund e-EFKA, the rate of reduction of pensions in case of pensioners' employment was reduced from 60% at the rate of 30%. In case of employment in a General Government body the full suspension of the pension payment applies until 28.2.2021 for those who have not completed by this date the 61st year of their age, and from 1.3.2022 for those who do not have completed the 62nd year of age. After reaching these age limits, pensions are paid reduced by 30%.

Enhance public services for Gender Equality in the context of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020

In Greece during the period 2013-2016, the gender impact of the economic crisis urgently necessitated the inclusion of gender equality in a more concrete and direct manner in all the government's political and economic plans in order to overturn the negative effects of the crisis but also to open up new development prospects for the whole of society while reducing poverty. When drafting the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020, particular care was given to working poor, according to EU figures. For Greece, according to

Eurostat database statistics, there was an increase of over 4% of the working poor between 2008 and 2013.

Based on the above framework, the former General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE- now General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality-GSDFPGE) focused its policy of intervention on women belonging to vulnerable social groups, including older women. Against this background, a relevant organizational unit within the former GSGE was institutionalized. The newly established Department for Social Protection and Combating of Multiple Discriminations, under the Directorate of Social Protection and Counseling Services, was established in the organizational chart of the Ministry of Interior with article 25 of the PD. 141/2017 (Government Gazette 180 A).

The Department for Social Protection and Combating of Multiple Discriminations is responsible for:

- The elaboration and promotion of measures to tackle gender discrimination faced by persons belonging to vulnerable social groups (migrant women, refugee women, single parent families, Roma women, older women etc.) with a view to their social inclusion and social cohesion.
- Co-operation and networking with all relevant stakeholders to mainstream gender into vulnerable social groups within the framework of national, regional and local social policy planning.
- Design, coordinate and implement social networking and cooperation actions with transnational bodies and international organizations, as well as with national bodies, on issues of multiple discrimination.
- Providing first-line services and counseling services on psychosocial support and legal counseling to women who face multiple discrimination (eg migrant women, refugees, single parents, disabled people) etc.
- Participation in collective bodies, working groups and committees of the public sector and local government for the elaboration of specialized actions for the prevention and combating of multiple discrimination.
- Review of studies and researches on sexism and gender identity issues and on the other hand the implementation of training interventions in cooperation with stakeholders to combat discrimination related to gender identities and sexual orientation.
- The development of awareness raising activities on the issues of its competence and their implementation in cooperation with the competent Department of Administrative & Financial Support and Publicity of the GSDFPGE.

Implementation of actions under the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2021-2025

The objective 4.3 of the new Greek National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2021-2025 (NAPGE 2021-2025) provides support for older women to eliminate multiple discrimination and remove their social exclusion. The actions to be implemented include:

A) Collaboration, networking and submission of comments and suggestions to relevant bodies for inclusion of the gender dimension in the context of policy making on ageing

(General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Anti-Poverty and with the Ministry of Health for actions on primary health care for older women).

B) Encouragement and support of older women (over 65 years) with the aim of enhancing, a) their participation in society and b) their healthy, safe and autonomous living through:

- Basic digital skills training programs for older women to access digital health services, employment services, e-commerce, banking services, etc. and familiarize them with the use of devices and applications on a daily basis. Collaboration with the Ministry of Digital Governance for the use of material of the Digital Academy of Citizens <https://nationaldigitalacademy.gov.gr/> for the creation of educational programs adapted to the needs of older women.
- Intergenerational programs with the participation of older women in primary and secondary education that will be developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Religions, the Institute of Educational Policy, Centers for Protection of Older People (KAPI) and the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty.

C) Encouraging volunteer work in non-governmental organizations through the following actions:

- Information campaign for older women with television advertising to promote volunteer work,
- Information workshops for older women on the existence and work of non-governmental organizations active in specific areas such as the provision of social services and environmental protection,
- Organizing visits to selected non-governmental organizations active in the provision of social services to further familiarize them with their work,
- Creation of a unified digital platform for the provision of information on volunteering opportunities for older women in non-governmental organizations active in the provision of social services,
- Awareness-raising and information workshops for older women on the role of dietary habits, mental health, exercise, smoking prevention and the proper use of mental health drugs and the prevention, early diagnosis and management of diseases in women over 65 years in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (Directorate of Primary Health Care), the Hellenic Association of Geriatrics and Gerontology and the Centers for Protection of Older People of the Municipalities following the National Pilot Program for the Prevention and Promotion of Health of the Older Persons-IPIONI.

Under the objective 4.8 of the NAPGE 2021-2025, studies and research are planned for the development and improvement of gender equality actions with the aim of strengthening statistics and research from a gender perspective. More specifically, an evaluation study targeting older women is planned including the gender perspective of the programs "Help at Home" and "Day Care Centers for Older Persons" in collaboration with the Social Services of the Local Authorities and the Community Centers.

Most important policy achievements during the last 20 years

➤ **Unify and simplify employment framework after retirement**

Recognizing the contribution of the older persons which is valuable both financially as well as socially (in the context of the Silver Economy), the employment framework for retirees has been unified and simplified and the rate of pension reduction in the event of post-retirement employment has been reduced.

In particular, with article 27 of law 4670/2020, as it replaced article 20 of law 4387/2016, which regulates the employment issues of pensioners of public pension fund e-EFKA, the rate of reduction of pensions in case of pensioners' employment was reduced from 60% at the rate of 30%.

➤ **Actions under the National Action Plan on Gender Equality**

The inclusion of gender equality in a more concrete and direct manner in all the government's political and economic plans in order to overturn the negative effects of the crisis but also to open up new development prospects for the whole of society while reducing poverty.

The General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality focused its policy of intervention on women belonging to vulnerable social groups, including older women.

2.2 Encouraging longer working life and ability to work

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 13.08.2015 so that they have reached the above mentioned age limits on 01.01.2022. Already vested rights are not affected by this measure.

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.

Reforming the Social Security System

Following a full reform of the Greek pension system by law 4387 in 2016, new amendments were introduced by law 4670 in 2020. Particularly, the accrual rates considered for the calculation of the contributory pension for the insured with a long insurance period have been increased, in order to ensure a higher pension amount for persons with a long working life.

The accrual rates for those who have insurance period over 30 years are increased from 1.10.2019 and all pensions granted, from this date onwards are calculated based on the new accrual rates.

Accrual Rates for the contributory pension component			
Contributory Years		Law	Law
From	To	4387/2016	4670/2020
0	15	0.77%	0.77%
15.01	18	0.84%	0.84%
18.01	21	0.90%	0.90%
21.01	24	0.96%	0.96%
24.01	27	1.03%	1.03%
27.01	30	1.21%	1.21%
30.01	33	1.42%	1.98%
33.01	36	1.59%	2.50%
36.01	39	1.80%	2.55%
39.01	40	2.00%	2.55%
40.01+		2.00%	0.50%

As regards amendments in insurance and insurance contributions, most of the existing arrangements are not solely for the purpose of encouraging older people to remain in employment instead of retirement. But in the end, directly or indirectly, they provide incentives for the continuation of employment and insurance of the older persons.

Specifically:

- For the period from 1/1/2017 to 31/12/2019 the insurance contributions of the self-employed were calculated based on the net income of the insured from the professional activity during the previous tax year (20% x net taxable result for the main pension), with provision for a minimum monthly contribution (amounting to € 130.00 for the main pension). From 1/1/2020, the insurance contribution scheme of the self-employed was reformed, based on insurance categories. The fixed amount corresponding to the insurance category chosen by the insured is paid as an insurance contribution. For the main pension the minimum contribution amounts to € 155 and the maximum to € 500, and for farmers to € 91 and € 296 respectively. The above change in the insurance contribution scheme is an incentive for insured persons with many years of work experience, and therefore with high incomes in most cases, to remain in insurance and not retire, as it has led to a reduction in insurance costs.
- There are special arrangements for employment in the agricultural sector. Farmers who continue to work in the agricultural sector after their retirement do not pay insurance contributions. Respectively, the retirees from other economic activities or ex public servants who after their retirement are employed in the agricultural sector pay insurance contributions as long as their annual income from employment in the agricultural sector does not exceed the amount of 10,000 euros.

Extension of working life- Employment

The demographic trends in Europe reflect the higher life expectancy, the lower birth rates, and ageing societies overall.

Having said this, countries have already embarked on a process of green and digital transition. And this transition is taking place in parallel with efforts for a resilient economy and society, without leaving anyone behind. The impact of the pandemic, along with its economic consequences, taking place amidst pre-existing deep changes due to demographics, social changes in an ageing society, the climate crisis, has rendered imperative the need to incorporate demographic factors in the design of its policies targeting the labour market and the world of work.

Therefore, it becomes imperative to address pressures at the level of job losses, reduce unemployment, yet, at the same time, tap on all the resources of the productive-age population, which is declining in numbers, also by involving more senior citizens.

I. The design and implementation of actions and policy measures by the General Secretariat for Labour, take into account all aforementioned parameters, the fact that workers may need to remain active in the labour market longer, and especially those in older age groups will need to be retrained, upgrade their skills, perhaps also add new qualifications.

- For former workers who have found themselves unemployed, several Public Works Schemes have run as of 2018. These co-funded, direct job-creation programmes, dubbed “Kinofelis” in Greek, gained prominence in the years of the crisis, and during the pandemic as well. Said programmes are time-bound, and their beneficiaries belong to specific age groups and profiles. However, some of them are also addressed to senior citizens (target group above 50 years old). Apart from supporting employment, in the most recent programmes, it is mandatory for beneficiaries to participate in training. Participation in training aims at skills upgrading, re-skilling, and upgrading of qualifications of beneficiaries, with a view to be integrated or re-integrated in the labour market. Specifically, two Public Works Schemes involve considerable number of beneficiaries, the one for ca 30.000 individuals, which started in 8.2018 and which is expected to be formally completed in 2022, and the one for ca 36.500 individuals, which started in 7.2020 and is expected to be formally completed in 2023.
- To encourage longer working life and the ability to work also for senior individuals, who will be affected by the green transition, the General Secretariat for Labour is currently designing programmes supporting the labour market, both businesses and workers, in the frame of Just Transition. Namely, those programmes include wage subsidy, labour relocation measures, counseling-training and employment programmes for former workers of businesses affected by the phasing-out of lignite in the Regions of Western Macedonia and Peloponnese. The design of such programmes is addressed inclusively to all working-age population groups, with special consideration so as not to exclude senior workers.

II. 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.

The Employment Department of OAED (public employment service), in order to facilitate the access to the labor market of older people, implemented the following active policies through employment promotion programs:

In particular:

- **Subsidization program for the employment of 8,500 long-term unemployed, aged 55-67** in a) all kinds of Legal Entities under Public Law (NPDD), b) companies, organizations of the public sector, as it was redefined based on article 51 of Law 1892 / 1990 (A '101), which regularly exercise economic activity and c) enterprises of the local authorities of first and second degree (Municipalities and Regions) of Law 3852/2010, which regularly exercise economic activity.
The aim of the program is to create 8,500 new full-time jobs, for the employment of the long-term unemployed, aged 55 to 67.
- **Subsidization program for enterprises for the employment of 15,000 highly disadvantaged unemployed persons aged over 50.**

The purpose of the program is to create 15,000 new full time jobs, by recruiting highly disadvantaged unemployed persons aged over 50 in private enterprises, cooperatives, Social Cooperative Enterprises and employers in general who regularly exercise financial activity.

- **Subsidization program for enterprises with more than twenty full-time employees for the recruitment of 5,000 disadvantaged and highly disadvantaged unemployed persons aged over 50.**

The purpose of the program is to create 5,000 new full-time jobs, by recruiting disadvantaged and highly disadvantaged unemployed persons aged over 50, in private companies, cooperatives, Social Cooperative Enterprises and generally private sector employers with more than twenty (20) full-time employees who regularly exercise financial activity throughout the country.

Most important policy achievements during the last 20 years

The employment rate of the age group 50-64, following a downward trend in the first half of the last decade (43% in 2014) due to the deep recession of the Greek economy, gradually increased in the second half of the decade (54% in 2020).

In order to **facilitate the access to the labor market of older people**, several active policies have been implemented through employment promotion programs.

- For former workers who have found themselves unemployed, several Public Works Schemes have run. These co-funded, direct job-creation programmes, dubbed “Kinofelis” in Greek, gained prominence in the years of the crisis, and during the pandemic as well. Said programmes are time-bound, and some of them are addressed to older persons (target group above 50 years old). Apart from supporting employment, in the most recent programmes, it is mandatory for beneficiaries to participate in training. Participation in training aims at skills upgrading, re-skilling, and upgrading of qualifications of beneficiaries, with a view to be integrated or re-integrated in the labour market.
- Several subsidization programs have run in the past years in order to create new full-time jobs for the employment of unemployed persons aged over 50.

2.3 Ensuring ageing with dignity

Pensions adequacy

With the recent reforms of the Greek insurance system (laws 4387/2016 and 4670/2020) the structure of the Greek pension system ensures both the adequacy of pensions and the viability of the pension system.

The goal of pension adequacy is fulfilled through the following three dimensions:

- (i) protection against poverty in order to avoid the risk of poverty in old age
- (ii) the maintenance of income, as a means of replacing income earned before retirement
- iii) retirement period, in order to provide benefits to retirees throughout their lifetime.

i) **Protection against poverty** (article 7 of law 4387/2016): The main pension consists of two parts, the contributory pension financed by insurance contributions and the national pension which is an amount financed by the state. Overall, the pension paid by e-EFKA ensures a decent standard of living for all insured and creates a close relationship between benefits and contributions paid on the basis of income earned, so that the pension benefit corresponds to the standard of living of the insured during his working life.

As mentioned in the explanatory report of Law 4387/2016, the determination of the amount of the national pension at 384 € with 20 years of insurance was made based on 60% of the median income, according to EU rules. In addition, to protect the most vulnerable, there are provisions that ensure a minimum pension amount for survivors, invalidity pensioners, etc.

ii) **Maintenance of income** (articles 8 and 28 of law 4387/2016 and articles 24 and 28 of law 4670/2020). In order to maintain the income earned during working life, a new method of calculating pensions has been introduced, which uses the average pensionable earnings and accrual rates according to the years of insurance, thus ensuring that the retiree will maintain a similar level of income during his retirement years.

The accrual rates on pensionable earnings that lead to the contributory pension amount calculation, based on articles 8 and 28 of law 4387/2016 as in force, depend on the duration of working life for all the categories of pensions granted (the same percentages for all pension categories).

As mentioned above, the new accrual rates of law 4670/2020 for the main pensions with effect from 1.10.2019 onwards, increase the pension amount of those who have an insurance period of more than 30 years and consequently the amounts of pensions granted by this date onwards. The new accrual rates do not apply only to the new pensions, but from 1.10.2019 and to all those paid on 30.9.2019. This regulation was deemed necessary due to a relevant Council of State ruling and aims to respect the legitimate expectations and to protect the income of all retirees, as well as to ensure the long-term viability of the public pension system.

iii) **Retirement duration** (article 1 paragraph IA4 of law 4093/2012): In order to ensure the viability of the pension system and the maintenance of retirees' income, the gradual increase of the retirement age limits was introduced by law 4336/2015 provisions.

The eligibility rules for retirement are as follows:

- a) 62 years old, with 40 years of insurance
- b) 67 years old, with at least 15 years of insurance
- c) There is also the possibility for the majority of insured, for a reduced pension at the age of 62 with at least 15 years of insurance.

Reforming Auxiliary pension insurance

Auxiliary pension insurance in Greece is linked to the main pension insurance, has the same characteristics and operates supplementary to main pensions' benefits (old age, invalidity and survivors' pensions).

The financial system of the auxiliary pension insurance has so far been exclusively distributive on a PAYG basis and therefore vulnerable to the demographic risk.

To deal with this risk, Law 4826/2021 established the 'Hellenic Auxiliary Pensions Defined Contributions Fund', dubbed TEKA in Greek. TEKA will operate on the basis of the fully funded financial system. Participation in the new Auxiliary Pension Fund will be mandatory for new entrants to the labour market from 1/1/2022 onwards for whom the participation in auxiliary insurance is compulsory and voluntary for those already employed under the age of 35 who choose it. Unlike the current system, the contributions of each insured person will not finance the existing pensions, but will be kept in individual account and will be invested. The introduction of a funded system elements in the public insurance system seeks to disperse the demographic and fiscal risk and to ensure the adequacy of future supplementary pensions. Intergenerational solidarity for the benefit of the younger generations is also strengthened, young people's confidence in social security is restored and incentives are created for legal work and staying at work for a longer period of time.

Welfare Sector

Population ageing is a fact with serious social and economic implications, increasing the demand for long-term care services and consequently putting pressure on social protection systems. At the same time, ensuring for the older people the enjoyment of all human rights in a sustainable society for all is a major challenge as well as the systematic orientation towards "active aging" in the sense of optimizing opportunities regarding health, participation and safety, in order to enhance quality of people's life as their age progresses.

Long term Care

In the field of long-term care for older persons, the services in Greece are provided by open and closed (residential care) institutions and specifically by:

a) Older persons' Care Institutions

They are residential care structures for persons, either capable of taking care of themselves or not, and operate in the form of non-profit (founded by charities, the Church, etc.) or profit (founded by individuals) private law bodies.

These institutions are granted a license for establishment and operation by the relevant Region¹. Furthermore, a basic condition for the legal operation of non-profit institutions is their registration in the National Register of Private Social Care Institutions.

In Greece, there are 314 such Care Units for older persons, which serve about 14,000 people.

b) Chronic Diseases Therapeutic centers

They are residential care structures of the chronically ill and are licensed² by the relevant Regions.

c) Day Care Centers for older persons

They constitute daily hospitality units for older persons 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 older persons 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 Older Persons' Open Protection Centers which may exist in the same area. A license for the establishment and operation of those centers needs to be issued by the relevant Region³.

In Greece, there are about 74 Day Care Centers for older persons.

d) Houses of Supported Living

Furthermore, given the need to expand the network of long-term care services and to strengthen open care structures in order to maintain the autonomy of the older persons and their maximum level of health and functional capacity, alternative forms of care and support strategies are systematically considered, which will encourage care at home. Specifically, in order to enhance active aging, autonomy and participation of the older persons, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs included in the Regional Operational Programs of the PA (Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework) 2021-2027, the establishment and operation of Houses of Supported Living for older persons, according to the model of Houses of Supported Living for the Disabled.

¹ in accordance with the provisions of Law 2345/1995 and the conditions set by decision No. 'Π1γ/οικ. 81551/15-6-2007 (B' 1136)', as amended and be in force

² based on the provisions of Presidential Decree 631/1974 (A' 271)

³ according to the provisions of decision no. (B' 1397), as amended by decisions no. 'Π1γ/ΓΠ/οικ. 11801/5-2-2003 (B' 160)', 'Δ27/οικ. 9746/409/4-4-2013 (B' 914)' and '58005/4-8-2021 (B' 3866)'.

Welfare benefits

Additionally, with regard to the goal of ageing with dignity, the uninsured and financially weak older persons are provided with the following benefits, which are aimed specifically at ensuring a decent standard of living, as well as the protection of the right to housing, and consequently , physical and psychological security of these individuals.

a) Social Solidarity Allowance for Uninsured Older Persons:

Older persons who are not entitled to pension or other welfare benefits (higher than the allowance) 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 older persons which is set at € 360,00 on a monthly basis. The competent institution for its granting is the Organization for Welfare Benefits and Social Solidarity

b) Uninsured Older Persons Housing Allowance

The Uninsured Older Persons Housing Allowance is granted to lonely uninsured and financially weak older persons, as well as couples of uninsured and financially weak older persons, provided 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 abroad⁴.

With the provisions of articles 24-30 of L.4756 / 2020 (A' 235) new regulations were introduced for the granting of the housing assistance allowance for uninsured older persons. In particular, beneficiaries are uninsured lonely persons who have reached the age of 67 or a couple of uninsured persons related to marriage or cohabitation agreement, at least one of whom has reached the age of 67. Especially with regard to the existing beneficiaries of paragraph 1 of article 24 of law 4756/2020 and the applicants whose applications are pending at the time of publication of the law, the age limit is set at 65 years of age. Further conditions are defined in articles 25 and 26 of law 4756/2020.

The competent body for its granting is the Organization of Welfare Benefits and Social Solidarity. The application for the grant of the allowance is submitted electronically, through the Single Digital Portal of the Public Administration (gov.gr).

“Home Social Care” program

“Home Social Care” Program was established by 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) as well as by article 91 of Law 4583/2018 (GG 212/A) and is implemented by the Municipalities or their Legal Entities or other Legal Entities of local authorities’ Agencies or Public Bodies Corporate. The program is financed by the budget of the Ministry of Interior.

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

⁴ with the exception of the pension of Law 1296/1982 (A' 128) and the Social Solidarity Allowance for Uninsured Older persons

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 older persons 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: 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 older 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.

Independent living

Furthermore, it is a remaining challenge to strengthen the services of open care for the older persons, to personalize these services and to orient them towards the stay of the older persons in their familiar environment and the maintenance of their autonomy. The current demographic situation, combined with the lessons learned from the ongoing health crisis regarding the older persons and their social care, is an opportunity to further strengthen and expand open and community-based care with a view to maintaining the autonomy of the older persons, the encouragement of their stay in their familiar environment and consequently, the realization of mental, physical and social well-being, as well as their participation in society according to their abilities, needs and desires.

In this context, the project entitled "Development of a Strategy for Reform of Social Care Services for the Older Persons in Greece" is in progress, which is implemented in the framework of technical assistance of the country through DG Reform (Directorate General for Structural Reform Support – European Commission).

The rationale of the study is based on how the demand for long-term care in the country is formed, in relation to demographic trends and how it is influenced by socio-economic and demographic factors, considering that Greece is a country facing a rapidly aging population.

The project aims to support the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in developing a strategy to improve the accessibility, quality, effectiveness and sustainability of Long-Term Care for the Older Persons in Greece, through a deep understanding of the current functions of

public programs, of the demand and the total supply of Long-Term Care for the Older persons in Greece.

Increasing the IT literacy of older persons

To combat the exclusion of the older persons and enhance their participation in the digital transition society, which has been accelerated by the ongoing pandemic and the need to combat the spread of COVID-19, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has included in the proposed for the Recovery Fund actions, a digital training program for the older persons for which the relevant funding has been approved. Also, this program has been proposed for inclusion in the Regional operational programs of the PA (Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework 2021-2027) as an ongoing action.

The Objective 3.1 of the NAPGE 2021-2025 provides for the strengthening of women's employment, especially for older women. More specifically, seminars are planned to upgrade digital skills to improve the access of older women to the labor market in collaboration with the Greek Manpower Organization with the aim of extending their working life if they wish.

Health Sector

Policies aiming at:

- (a) the reduction of risk factors associated with chronic diseases and non-communicable diseases, through prevention and health promotion actions
 - (b) early diagnosis through appropriate screening programs; and
 - c) appropriate treatment and rehabilitation;
- contribute greatly to lifelong health and the prevention of disability and consequently healthy ageing.

After all, the importance of preventing and treating non-communicable diseases in promoting health across the spectrum of life is also reflected in the United Nations initiative to reduce by 2030 1/3 of premature deaths from non-communicable diseases (UN SDG's, Target 3.4.) Therefore, investing in prevention and health promotion programs can improve well-being and extend the years a person offers to the community and live independently and without disability, reducing the overall need for long-term care and health care.

In the context of the above, although Ministry of Health has not prepared a strategic plan specifically for healthy aging, it has taken actions and initiatives aimed at reducing the risk factors for non-communicable diseases through actions to prevent and promote the health of the older persons, including actions relating to modifiable environmental risk factors. More specifically:

- The "National Nutrition Guide for People 65 and older" has been approved and adopted⁵, which includes useful tips for both the diet and the physical activity of the

⁵ Circular No 'Γ1α/ΓΠοικ76309/11-10-2017 -ΑΔΑ: Ψ68Α465ΦΥΟ-Γ7Φ'

above age group. For the wider dissemination of these instructions, posters and leaflets have been printed and distributed to Health Centers and other structures.

- A poster "Healthy aging - for a better quality of life" is published, aimed at the older persons.
- Greece participated in the Meeting of the ADVANTAGE Initiative, an EU Joint Action for the Prevention and Management of Geriatric Vulnerability. 22 Member States and more than 35 organizations participated and was co-financed by the EU and the Member States. The result of the Joint Action is the ADVANTAGE JA'S State of the Art Report (SoAR), which provides a summary of the evidence-based management and prevention of geriatric vulnerability.
- Ministry of Health participates in the consultation for the development of the National Pilot Program for the Prevention and Promotion of Health of the Older persons - Epione, which is prepared by the Hellenic Gerontological and Geriatric Company. The "EPIONE" Program is addressed to people aged 55 and over, in order to be informed and sensitized beyond the older persons also middle-aged people, in order to achieve early detection and diagnosis of incidents, the formation of healthy attitudes, habits and behaviors as well as strengthening the role of chronic disease management and self-care.

With Law 4675/2020 a five-year National Action Plan for Public Health is established within the framework of the National Public Health Strategy. The National Action Plan for Public Health, among others, includes Special Action Plans for specific groups of the population such as patients with dementia and people with functional disabilities in general.

Specifically at the level of primary prevention, the following programs are established:

- National Program for the Promotion of Physical Exercise and Healthy Eating, for the control and management of risk factors related to poor diet and lack of physical exercise
- National Vaccination Program, which is addressed to special and vulnerable groups of the population, while at the level of secondary prevention, the National Screening Program is established for the early detection of highly prevalent diseases.

In addition, by Article 58 of Law 4690/2020 (104 A) the specialty of geriatric nursing is established in order to provide effective nursing services to this group of the population.

Most important policy achievements during the last 20 years

➤ **Pension system reforms.** Main features are:

All social insurance main pension funds are integrated into one single social insurance pension fund (e-EFKA) with common governance and administration framework.

Harmonized eligibility and pension benefit rules for all, men and women, ensuring a decent standard of living for all insured and creating a close relationship between benefits and contributions paid on the basis of income earned.

To deal with the demographic risk, the 'Hellenic Auxiliary Pensions Defined Contributions Fund', dubbed TEKA in Greek, is established. TEKA will operate on the basis of the fully funded financial system.

➤ **Support independent living of older persons**

"Home Social Care" Program was established in 2013 and is implemented by the Municipalities or their Legal Entities or other Legal Entities of local authorities' 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 older persons and economically weak individuals and individuals with disabilities who need home assistance services, namely supportive and nursing services.

Part III: Healthy and Active Ageing in a Sustainable World

3.1. Contribution of ageing-related policies to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals

Greece, strongly committed to the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has already started, in 2019, the process of preparing a National Implementation Plan, which will reflect, among other things, all the central and long-term measures policies that have or are to be adopted, in order to implement, in a balanced and comprehensive way, all SDGs.

In this context, the reliable quantitative monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the policies for sustainable development in society as a whole is of particular importance for Greece. In this direction, the Office for Coordination, Institutional, International and European Affairs of the General Secretariat of the Government has proceeded, after extensive consultation with the competent Ministries and the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), to adopt a set of national indicators, by which the progress of the implementation of the SDGs is monitored. These indicators, which will be updated and adjusted, each time, depending on developments in individual policy priorities and available statistics, have been selected from a total of 232 relevant UN-adopted indicators, as well as from the corresponding framework of the 100 Eurostat indicators.

At EU level, SDGs are a key component of the new European Green Deal, which will also provide the framework for pandemic recovery programs towards a 'green' and sustainable recovery for all Member States («Build back better and greener»). At the same time, they are fully integrated in the European Semester, and Annex E of the annual National Reports is dedicated to the achievement of the Objectives in each Member State, with a presentation of Eurostat quantitative data / indicators (see . [Report for Greece - European Semester – 2020](#)).

Under the coordination of the former General Secretariat of the Government (now the Presidency of the Government), Greece drafted and presented its 1st Voluntary National Review ([VNR - Greece 2018](#)), during the High Political Forum for Sustainable Development, in July 2018, in New York.

3.2. Managing the consequences and impacts for older people in emergency situations: the COVID-19 pandemic - Lessons learnt

Greece timely adopted precautionary and protective measures with regards to the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim was to prevent the spread of the virus, to protect the health system from being overburdened and to handle the social and economic consequences for people. Main priority is to protect older persons or vulnerable population groups who are at greater risk of a severe or fatal case of COVID-19.

Since mid-March 2020, several measures have been implemented. Briefly:

- A 'controlled lockdown' was applied for specific periods from March 2020 up to June 2021, meaning that not all outdoors activities were banned.
- In the health sector, legislation and directives have been issued to protect vulnerable population groups.
- The government introduced several economic packages of financial support and employment-related measures to help individuals, households and enterprises affected financially from lockdown measures.

Especially regarding the applied lockdowns, the outdoors activities that were allowed were categorized as the absolute necessary. One of these outdoor activities was to provide care and help to people in need, including older persons.

Excess mortality

The average monthly excess mortality⁶ in Greece (12.8%) for both genders regarding period March 2020 – October 2021 is in the level of the EU average (13.3%), according to EUROSTAT database statistics.

Concerning the 1st 12 months of the pandemic (March 2020-February 2021), Greece is between the countries with low average monthly excess mortality rate (6.2%) among the 27 EU member states.

Health Sector

During the COVID-19 pandemic, legislation and guidelines were issued to protect vulnerable groups of population as well as older persons, such as:

- The imposition of the measure of temporary prohibition of the operation of Open Protection Centers for the Older Persons and the temporary prohibition of visits to Older Persons' Care Units
- Recommendations for the protection of individuals belonging to groups at increased risk for severe COVID-19 infection

⁶ The monthly excess mortality indicator of Eurostat (demo_mexrt) is expressed as the percentage rate of additional deaths in a month, compared to a baseline period. The baseline is given by average monthly deaths in the period 2016-2019. The higher the value, the more additional deaths have occurred compared to the baseline.

- Recommendations for the avoidance of trips of vulnerable groups.
- Recommendations for the avoidance of visits to Physical Medical Rehabilitation Centers, Older Persons' Care Units and Day Care Units.

Since COVID-19 testing facilities have become available, and in order to mitigate issues of loneliness and social isolation, the initial temporary visit ban of the above cases was replaced with the possibility of a visit only if a visitor's necessary test has preceded the previous few days along with other measures such as of wearing masks.

Vaccination program and prioritizing

After the first approval of vaccines against COVID-19 issued in December 2020, a vaccination coverage program is underway since then. Priority in all phases of the program is given to the older age groups as well as to the vulnerable groups of the population.

Pensioners

Measures were adopted in the country's pension system which - although adopted before the health crisis - COVID-19 acted as an accelerator of their implementation process.

- Through the website of public pension fund e-EFKA, retirees can be informed about their retirement issues such as electronic submission of their retirement application, information on the progress of their application, etc. on the following page: <https://www.efka.gov.gr/el/elektronikes-yperesies/elektronikes-yperesies-gia-syntaxioychoys>
- "Digital pension" through the ATLAS system [note: ATLANTAS is the Unified Insurance Register, in which the insurance history and insurance capacity of all persons in the country are recorded in a central system which is updated in real time (I.4237/2014)]. For certain categories of pensioners who are gradually included in the aforementioned system (old-age farmers' pension, survivors' pension), the pension is granted during the day. The provision was adopted before the pandemic (Article 17 of Law 4670/2020), however COVID-19 acted as an accelerator of the process.
- Also, with article 34 of law 4778/2021, a special regulation was introduced for the granting of a payment in advance against the future pension in order to deal with the delays in pensions' awarding.
- In order to deal with the pandemic, there was a suspension of the operation of KEPA (Disability Certification Centers) and therefore, the extension of payment of disability pensions for the specific periods was foreseen.

Labour Sector

The most important Measures adopted after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in the labor sector are briefly:

- ✓ A special support system has been established for employees of entities temporarily suspended from operation or whose operations are temporarily banned due to Covid-19, or, those which have been economically severely hit from the pandemic. From this Support Scheme are exempted employees who perform their duties remotely, employees on regular leave. **The Labour contract suspension scheme** is based on eligibility criteria, and businesses and employers may decide to put all or part of their staff on a status of labour contract suspension. This renders workers beneficiaries of

extraordinary economic aid/allowance, with insurance coverage by the state. Initially, the measure was activated for one month, but has been extended for fewer business activities than initially, on several occasions through the pandemic.

- ✓ **Short Term Work Scheme “Syn-Ergasia”** was legislated in June 2020 as an employment support scheme, in the form of financial support from state budget and with the view to preserve the full-time job positions in the private sector. Syn-Ergasia was launched in mid June 2020, with the most recent extension of implementation of the scheme to be valid until 31.03.2022.
- ✓ **Unemployed:** Payment of a 400-euro one-off economic aid to non-subsidized long-term unemployed. Also, extension of the validity of the regular unemployment benefits, long-term unemployment benefits, and unemployment aids for beneficiaries self-employed.
- ✓ Open programme for **100,000 new jobs**, with wage subsidization by the MoLSA. The subsidized labour contracts have a term of six months. Programme successfully completed in December 2021, and extended for another 50,000 subsidized new jobs.
- ✓ **“Special Purpose Leave”** for one of the two parents with children aged up to 15. The measure was in effect during the temporary suspension of the face-to-face classes, and the initiation of the on-line educational process. This measure also indirectly aimed at protecting older persons, since in Greek society grandparents make a significant contribution to the daily lives of preschool and school children.

Insurance

- Extension of the deadline for payment of current insurance contributions for the period February-April 2020 for companies-employers and February-May 2020 for self-employed, whose activity during the above period had been suspended by state order or based on the activity were considered affected. The above insurance contributions can be paid until 31/12/2021, or they can be subject, together with insurance contributions for periods of employment from February 2020 to June 2021, in a regulated regime of up to 72 monthly installments, with favourable terms.
- Full insurance coverage in the cases of employees who are suspended from employment (either due to the suspension of the operation of the company by state order or due to the designation of the company as affected by its activity). The insurance contributions, of the insured and the employer, are paid from the state budget, and are calculated on the nominal salary of the insured and not on the special compensation received by the employees who were suspended.
- Full insurance coverage in the cases of employees who are part of the "SYN-ERGASIA" mechanism for the period they are not employed. The insurance contributions of the insured and the employer, which correspond to the period of time the employee is not employed, are paid from the state budget, and are calculated on the nominal salary of the insured. The measure is applicable from 1/7/2020 to 30/9/2021, while its extension has been announced until 31/12/2021.
- Full insurance coverage in the cases of seasonal workers with the right of compulsory re-employment in categories of tourism professions, whose employment contract is suspended from 1/6/2020 to 31/10/2020. The insurance contributions, of the insured and the employer, for the above period are paid from the state.

3.3. Activities in preparation and implementation of the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020 – 2030

There is currently no separate national action plan for implementing the WHO's Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021–2030. However, several actions/activities fall under its scope.

The newly established WHO Athens Quality of Care Office, in partnership with the Government of Greece, organized a first-ever “Meeting of Minds on Quality of Care”⁷ bringing together ministers, experts, policy-makers, health professionals and civil society organizations. Work begun during the event will result in a “Compendium of applied good practices on quality of care,” to be released in 2022. The compendium will promote innovation and guide action to provide health services, raise awareness and promote the improvement of quality of care and patient safety across the WHO European Region.

Inspired by WHO's European Programme of Work, 2020–2025 – “United Action for Better Health in Europe”, the newly established WHO Athens Quality of Care Office will lead this work in collaboration with governments and partners across the European Region.

Also, to accelerate progress on the quality of care agenda, new collaboration agreements with WHO/Europe have been announced by Greek Ministry of Health, to begin in March 2022.

⁷ <https://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/greece/news/news/2021/12/whoeurope-and-greece-put-quality-of-care-at-the-top-of-the-health-agenda>

Conclusions and priorities for the future

It is a fact that in Greece population is ageing fast. Greece's share of population aged over 64 in the total population, is between the highest in the EU. Thus, it is obvious that there is a continuously increase in the demand of services and supports concerning older persons.

The overall framework regarding older people has continued to improve over the past years. Important progress has been realized in several areas, as it is derived by the measures and activities implemented for older persons presented in this report. Areas mainly affected by the imposed measures and activities are the labor market, the pension system and welfare benefits, as well as the healthcare and older persons' care area. In the context of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality, special attention was given in tackling gender discrimination faced by persons belonging to vulnerable social groups including older women with a view to their social inclusion and social cohesion. Also, significant efforts have been made in supporting independent living of older persons, while the project entitled "Development of a Strategy for Reform of Social Care Services for the Older Persons in Greece" is in progress, which is implemented in the framework of technical assistance of the country through DG Reform. The project aims to improve the accessibility, quality, effectiveness and sustainability of Long-Term Care for the Older Persons.

Of course, there is still work to be done in several areas, in order to ensure healthy and active ageing, guaranteeing older people's rights and improving their life quality. Special emphasis will be given in the promotion of lifelong learning, in order to help people remain employable across their life-cycle and the provision of quality health and long-term care services to meet the growing demands of an ageing population. It is also of paramount importance to foster cooperation and coordination among relevant Ministries and Bodies, in order to ensure that all actions are integrated in a general context of national planning.