

World Report

Greece

7 JULY 2007

The rebirth of
an education hub



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COVER ILLUSTRATION:
The School of Athens
by Raphael

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Why the Ancients have the answers

The traditional values of Greek education have an important contribution to make towards meeting the challenges of the new economic era

It was the Ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes who declared: "The foundation of every state is the education of its youth." More than two millennia on, it's an assertion that few would argue with, and the influence of Greek thought on modern education remains profound across the Western world. From Tony Blair's "Education, education, education" to the European Union's ongoing Lisbon Strategy, the importance of the contribution made by schools and universities to the success of modern societies – and, in particular, to their economies in highly competitive globalised world – is universally acknowledged.

Education in the city-state of Athens was intended to benefit both the individual and the community, combining the harmonious development of mind and body with the building of a successful state. It was aimed at creating good citizens with a strong sense of moral, social and political responsibility. The focus was on core values such as liberty, democracy, justice, communality and love of the homeland.

Today, of course, the age of the city-state has passed into history. Greece is now part of the European Union, an economic community of 27 member states and nearly 500 million people.

The Golden Age

Extending from around 500 to 300 BC, Greece's Golden Age was the time of the great philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Comedies and tragedies were produced by the dramatists Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Sophocles and Euripides, and important histories by Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon. Hippocrates founded modern medicine, and the Parthenon rose on the Acropolis.

Under the brilliant statesman Pericles, Athens was the cultural and intellectual centre of the western world. He described it as "the school of Greece," praising its democracy and values of equality and openness.

The largest economic bloc in the world, the EU is nevertheless facing major challenges – rapidly evolving markets, new technologies, changes in the organisation of work, ageing populations and globalisation.

High quality education is crucial to meeting those challenges and to ensuring the European community's future prosperity in a world economy that is becoming increasingly knowl-

edge-based. The age of manufacturing is giving way to an era in which skills and information take precedence over land, labour and capital.

The EU states have acknowledged that they have to raise the educational qualifications of their workforce if they are successfully to promote growth and jobs. Harmonisation of education and training systems across the EU is central to the Lisbon Strategy, which aims to make Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.

The common goals are to improve the quality and effectiveness of education and training, to ensure they are accessible to all and to open up European educational institutions to the wider world. Better links are to be established between higher education, research activities and the labour market.

In addition to driving economic growth, however, education also has a crucial contribution to make towards personal and cultural development and towards promoting social inclusion. In complex 21st-century societies facing important and challenging issues such as citizenship, immigration, multi-cultural diversity and changing concepts of national identity, it has become increasingly evident that a shared vision of a democratic community is a *sine qua non*.

Long after the Golden Age, the traditional values of Greek education, with their emphasis on moral, social and political responsibility, are proving as relevant to today's Europe as they were to the Ancient Greeks. ●

Harmonisation and lifelong learning are crucial to the development of growth and jobs

Harmonisation of the education systems of member states is a major objective of the European Commission as the EU focuses on creating growth and jobs. "We have put education into the centre of our strategies and long-term objectives," says Jan Figel, Member of the European Commission responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Youth.

Established to advance the goals of the Lisbon Strategy, the Education and Training 2010 work programme is aimed at building a highly educated European workforce, constantly able to update its skills and knowledge, and capable of producing sophisticated products and services.

Central to this is the concept of lifelong learning and the European Commission has recently launched a new integrated action programme to promote learning opportunities from childhood to old age. The 7 billion-euro (£4.7 billion) Lifelong Learning Programme will run until 2013, fostering cooperation and exchanges of teachers and students at all levels between education institutions in European countries. Special emphasis is being put on languages and information and communication technology.

Over the seven-year period it is hoped to involve at least three million pupils in joint educational activities and to achieve a total of three million individual participants in student mobility under present and past programmes by 2012. The programme also aims to increase placements in enterprises to 80,000 per year, and to support the mobility of 7,000 individuals involved in adult education per year.

An important intergovernmental initiative, which the Commission supports, is the Bologna Process, launched by 29 European countries, including Greece, in 1999. This aims to establish a European Higher Education Area to facilitate the mobility and employability of graduates across Europe. Forty-five European coun-



Latest initiatives will promote education and training from childhood to old age as European states seek to coordinate and cooperate



Jan Figel, European Commissioner
"We have put education into the centre of strategies and long-term objectives"

tries, including 20 non-EU members, are now committed to undertake a series of reforms designed to make their higher education systems more compatible and comparable.

"The Bologna Process came about as a result of Europe lagging behind as a cradle of universities on the one hand and because

of the rapidly growing number of students who had acquired knowledge and qualifications abroad, but had trouble getting them recognised," says Mr Figel. "The process addresses this gap and that need."

The Commission itself has launched a European qualifications framework that will enable states, employers and individuals to compare qualifications across the EU. It is also planning a European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) that will allow young people to accumulate and transfer their learning achievements from one country to another.

Commenting on progress made in Greece in recent years, Mr Figel says: "The reforms Greece has been making are moves in the right direction – support for quality assessment, a more open system, greater efficiency and more money spent on education and learning, and the acceptance of lifelong learning as a principle in this country. All of these are important." ●

SOCRATES

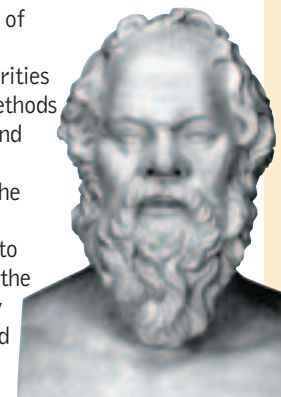
Kindling a flame to encourage critical thinking

As he left no writings of his own, all we know of the teachings of Socrates (469-399 BC) comes through the writings of others. The Socratic dialogues recorded by his pupil Plato portray a teacher for whom education was "the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel."

Rather than giving instruction, the Socratic method was to arrive at the truth by asking questions. He encouraged his students to examine received ideas and to reach their own conclusions through analysis and inductive reasoning – an approach that remains fundamental to western education.

Socrates's philosophy of education was ethically based. Its purpose, he believed, was to promote self-knowledge, critical thinking and individual moral virtue, which were the foundations of happiness.

The authorities found his methods subversive and charges of corrupting the youth and atheism led to his death at the age of 70 by state-ordered suicide.



Hellenic Republic
Ministry of National Education
and Religious Affairs

Managing Authority of the Operational Programme
for Education and Initial Vocational Training



European Union
European Commission

Life long learning



Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs
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HIGHER EDUCATION

Reform of universities designed to increase competitiveness

Faced with a highly centralised and underperforming tertiary sector, the Greek government is committed to making the country's universities more competitive in line with changes being made elsewhere in Europe.

Reforms are designed to give the universities greater independence in running their own affairs, bring transparency to university elections, and upgrade degrees.

Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis describes the plans to rejuvenate higher education as a "cornerstone" of government policy. "Our universities need change. They need to acquire new abilities and offer degrees with a recognised value, in order to meet more fully their role for growth, social movement and progress," he says.

Reorienting the system to meet the needs of more challenging times was never going to be easy, however. The reforms have provoked widespread protests by students and academics who want to maintain the status quo, and the issue has dominated the political agenda for the past year. The government says change is supported by the great majority of the Greek public and that the opposition is being spearheaded by a highly vocal minority.

A new education bill approved by parliament in March strengthens the self-governance of higher education institutions, granting them autonomy in their financial and administrative management. At the same time, more representative faculty elections are intended to make the universities more democratic and transparent.

The new legislation also redefines the asylum law, which has banned police from entering university grounds unless invited in by university officials. And tighter limits are being placed on the amount of time that students spend on getting their degrees; up to 94,000 students who enrolled at university eight years ago have yet to complete their four or five year courses, according to the National Statistical Service. Dimitrios Skiadas, Special Secretary for the Management of Community Support Framework Programmes, says that with greater autonomy for the universities comes social accountability. "The university authorities have the final say on almost everything, but they also have the corresponding responsibility in justifying everything."

Boost for investment in education and training

Quality assessment student mobility and accountability are key concepts in the government's education reforms, which are being backed by extra state funding



Since coming to power in 2004, the centre-right government of Costas Karamanlis has introduced a series of initiatives designed to achieve convergence with the best European and international education standards and practices. "The basic, immediate target is to improve the quality of state education, bring about a rebirth of the state university and undertake reforms that will lead to the education system of the future," says the Prime Minister.

Key elements of the Lisbon Strategy, such as lifelong learning, form an integral part of the national policy, and Greece has been signed up to the Bologna Process since it started in 1999. Laws have been passed implementing reforms on quality assurance, degree recognition and widening access to education and training.

The government has heightened institutional accountability, increased study programmes in languages other than Greek, enhanced student support and increased student involvement in institutional governance. A working group, chaired by the Secretary for

Higher Education, has been set up to develop a national qualifications framework, and measures to recognise non-formal and informal learning are currently under consideration, following pilot projects.

Much of this is supported by EU structural funds, but the government has also decided to increase investments in education and training to the level of 5 per cent of GDP by 2008 – a massive hike, equal to more than 1.2 per cent of GDP. Millions of euros are being invested in training teachers, establishing new school and university departments, and on providing new books and computers.

Ensuring high standards is central to Greece meeting the requirements of the Bologna accord. "Quality assurance lies at the heart of the European Higher Education Area," says Minister of National Education Marietta Giannakou.

The initial results of an internal evaluation of public universities and colleges in Greece by the recently established Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency will be ready as early as this autumn. The first round of external evaluation is due in the spring of 2008.

An important step has been made towards lifting quality in higher education with the raising of the minimum requirement necessary for entrance to higher education institutions to at least 50 per cent of the highest possible passing grade.

Although Greece has not signed the Lisbon Recognition Convention, it is a member of international networks dealing with the recognition of higher education degrees, such as NARIC and ENIC. Greece has also adopted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which promotes student mobility within European Higher Education Institutions, and diploma supplements, which allow Greek graduates to be employed around Europe.

An important goal of the internationalisation of the system is the return of Greek scientists currently working abroad, both to contribute to research and innovation in Greece and to contribute to the upgrading of higher education in the country. Initiatives are also being taken to promote the development of joint degree programmes between Greek and other European institutions. ●

Creating opportunities for learning at all ages

Lifelong learning is at the centre of Greek education policy. The government aims to provide all Greek citizens with opportunities for education and training at all stages of their lives, and has drawn up an action plan based on national and international experience. Particular attention is being paid to minority groups, young people who have fallen out of the education system and older people wishing to upgrade their skills.

The plan involves systemising existing provision and extending it with new initiatives. Greek universities and technological education institutions are being provided with the financial and institutional support

needed to create 'institutes of life-long learning.' Flexible learning paths will provide university graduates with access to continuous updating of knowledge and skills, enabling them to acquire qualifications that will match the ever increasing demands of the labour market.

Greece is also starting to catch up with other European countries in terms of the involvement of its citizens in adult education. With significant improvements and investment since 2004, 12.5 per cent participation in adult education by the 25-64 age group is now considered achievable by 2010. This would put Greece within the target

range of the Lisbon Strategy, which aims for an EU-average level of at least 15 per cent of the adult working age population, with no country achieving lower than 10 per cent.

The last three years have seen the establishment of 46 adult education centres, offering courses ranging from citizenship to literacy, mathematics and ICT. Thirty 'second chance' schools have been opened, with the aim of bringing young people back into the educational system so they can complete their education, as well as 40 'parent schools', offering programmes to prepare couples for marriage, parenthood and schooling.

INTERVIEW MARIETTA GIANNAKOU

“We have managed to break the deadlock and push initiatives forward”

Minister of Education and Religious Affairs Marietta Giannakou outlines the steps being taken to reform the education system



What contribution does education make towards maintaining the country’s economic growth?

The role of education is fundamental and indispensable in fostering people’s competences and skills. For Greece in particular, human capital is its main asset towards achieving sustainable growth.

How do the education policies of the Karamanlis government relate to its general approach to reform and to the European Union?

The government pursues a coherent and multidimensional set of policies, the aim of which is to modernise structures and practices across many fields of policy and administration in order to increase the country’s convergence with European and international standards. Together with financial consolidation and stability, tertiary education reform, should be seen as one of the main reforms.

What have been the most important education reforms implemented so far?

We have managed to break the deadlock in higher education and push forward legislative initiatives pending for more than five years. Most of the legislative tasks announced in the 2003 Greek National Report regarding the Bologna Process – including

quality assurance, the diploma supplement, the European Credit Transfer System, four-year agreements based on performance between state and universities, and lifelong learning – have been carried out in the period since 2004.

How prepared is Greece to be part of the European Higher Education Area?

The government aims at the internationalisation of Greek tertiary education. We have made good progress towards converging with the standards of quality set for shaping up a European Higher Education Area (i.e. the common targets set in the Bologna process), thereby securing Greek universities, academics and students’ active involvement in European and international academic developments.

What does the new education reform bill mean for higher education?

The bill relates to the structure and operation of higher education and aims at achieving the following: safeguarding the financial and administrative self government of the universities, the social accountability of the universities, changing the regulations of academic asylum, more transparency and improving the quality of higher education.

The government has also given the go ahead to 11 new public private partner-

ship schemes. The approved schemes include the country’s first PPP in the education sector.

What is being done to expand lifelong learning?

We have managed to achieve a sharp increase in citizens’ participation in lifelong learning programmes, reaching an astonishing 1,700 per cent increase since 2004. Moreover, a new legislative framework for lifelong learning has been established offering more opportunities and structures in the field.

What are your expectations for the development of the University of Thessaloniki?

The new International University of Thessaloniki will offer postgraduate degrees and will become a centre of academic excellence attracting students from the East Mediterranean region. Furthermore, therefore, is taking the proper initiatives to secure their role in the European Higher Education Area.

What is your evaluation of the competitiveness of Greek students internationally?

As official data testifies, Greek students show a very impressive academic record in universities across the world.

PLATO

Maths, morals and music to educate future rulers

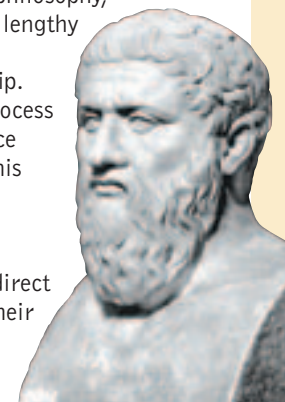
A pupil of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle, Plato (428-348 BC) founded what many consider to have been the first university, his Academy, in a grove of trees near Athens in around 385 BC.


Plato believed that the ideal society should be managed by a guardian class. Their education had a distinct moral purpose; it was intended to turn out future guardians who were both temperate and courageous.

It was a long process. The earliest proponent of what is now termed lifelong education, Plato saw elementary education as taking up the first 20 years, with an emphasis on music and physical training. Intellectual development was to be encouraged through Socratic dialogue.

Higher education was to be grounded in mathematics to develop the faculties for abstract thinking and reasoning. It is said that written above the gates of the Academy were the words: “No-one ignorant of geometry admitted here.”


This would be the prelude to the study of philosophy, and finally a lengthy period of apprenticeship. The whole process would produce rulers – by this time in their fifties – sufficiently qualified to direct the lives of their fellow citizens.






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Vocational education & training



ΜΕΡΟΣ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗΣ ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΣΤΕΡΕΟΤΥΠΩΣΗΣ
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΣΤΕΡΕΟΤΥΠΩΣΗΣ



Η ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΚΟΡΜΟΣ
Ευρωπαϊκό Κέντρο Στερεοτύπου
Ευρωπαϊκό Κέντρο Στερεοτύπου

Managing Authority of the Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training-European Commission
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Moves to become a regional hub for education

A new university and joint degrees with foreign institutions are all part of a bid by Greece to re-establish its reputation as a centre for learning



Greece is positioning itself as a regional centre for educational excellence as well as an international focal point for cultural learning. At present Greece has proportionally more students studying abroad than any other country, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Now it hopes to reverse the trend and to attract more foreign students to study there.

The flagship of this campaign is the newly established International Hellenic University located in Thessaloniki, Greece's second largest city. The university, which has been established specifically to target foreign students, is scheduled to open its doors to its first intake later this year.

The university offers programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral level, and also distance learning courses. There are three schools: a School of Hu-

manities, a School of Economics and Administration and a School of Technological Sciences. The degrees awarded will be equivalent to those issued by other Greek universities.

High-level academic staff have been recruited from all over the world. Teaching will be in English, with courses in Greek and other languages also available.

To qualify for admission, applicants must have lived outside of Greece for the six years before submitting their application. Undergraduate candidates will be required to possess a secondary education qualification that is equivalent to a Greek Lykeio (high school) certificate. Postgraduate candidates will be required to have a university degree equivalent to a Greek university degree.

The university is expected attract students from the Balkans, the Black Sea re-

gion, South-East Mediterranean countries and the Middle East, but courses are open to anyone who lives abroad and would like to study in an international environment, including Greeks living in Europe and the United States. According to Minister of National Education Marietta Giannakou, interest has been shown from as far afield as China.

"One of the objectives of this government is the creation of an educational hub with the opening of the international university," says Andreas Karamanos, Secretary General of the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs.

"Greece in the past used to be the centre for education and the cradle of western civilisation. With this initiative, we are attempting to recreate this environment. We want the university to become a centre of excellence in the area covering all disciplines."

Operational funding for the university will be provided by EU funds as well as through tuition fees. All students will pay the same tuition fees regardless of their country of origin.

"We believe that people will come here because they feel inspired," says Dimitrios Skiadas, Special Secretary for the Management of Community Support Framework Programmes. "Above all we want to create an academic audience that is going to be interested in the Greek concept of learning.

"This concept means they have to understand themselves; to understand their position in society; and understand their position in the labour market. It has a dual objective: developing independent personalities and a skilled workforce."

Another way in which Greece aims to attract foreign students is by offering opportunities to study for joint degrees with universities in other countries. A law has been passed providing the legal framework to issue joint diplomas, and students are guaranteed that their degree will be recognised.

Proficiency in Greek used to be mandatory to study in Greece, but universities are now legally allowed to organise postgraduate studies in a foreign language, either on their own or in collaboration with foreign universities and EU institutions.

Inter-university co-operation, undertaken between the Greek and the French Ministries of Education and between the Greek and the French Rectors' Conferences, has led to the establishment of several joint masters degree programmes. Discussions have been held between the Greek and German Rectors' Conferences to promote a similar cooperation with German universities, and interest is also being shown by Russian universities.

Five Greek universities are also participating in the Erasmus Mundus programme, a cooperation and mobility scheme in postgraduate higher education, which aims to promote the EU as a centre of excellence around the world by attracting students from countries outside the EU to register for joint masters degrees.

The government hopes that initiatives like these will promote the exchange of academic staff, ideas and good practices, and lead to partnerships with other European institutions in teaching and research activities. ●

QUOTE/UNQUOTE ANDREAS KARAMANOS, Secretary General for the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs

"Skills alone will not meet the demands of the labour market"

WHAT the European Union did with the Lisbon declaration of 2000, and the renewed declaration of 2005, was to reinforce the fact that education is the pillar to any kind of future development. All the countries of the EU have realised that any kind of development in society will have to be made through education. Other European countries that are not part of the EU are doing the same; the Bologna declaration is not limited to states within the EU; 45 countries have signed it, including Russia, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

OUR target is not only to provide the technical skills but to build general knowledge as well as background knowledge for every Greek citizen. It has been acknowledged by many countries that the main target of education is not just to create specialists; businesses are not recruiting pure specialists any more.

Background knowledge and general education are very important in our policy. This is very

clear in the measures that we have taken so far.

ONE of our main goals is to decrease school drop out rates. We need to reduce these to 10 per cent by 2010 according to the EU target. They are currently around 14 per cent. Other measures that have been taken have to do with improving the qualifications of school graduates, such as the introduction of a second foreign language in primary school. Up to three years ago the only language that was taught from the third class in primary school was English. Now either French or German are being introduced as second languages in primary school, and there is a possibility of introducing other optional languages as well.

WE have to take the steps to create the necessary environment for universities to be able to tackle the new challenges. This translates into greater university autonomy, with accountability towards society and with trans-



parency. Greek universities are 100 per cent publicly funded by the state. Hence they are obliged to explain to Greek society and the Greek taxpayer what they are doing. Everything must become open.

THE gap between the demands of the labour market and the number of graduates coming from Greek universities cannot be bridged by giving just skills. We need to take other measures in order to reconsider the structures and orientations of our universities in order to create more attractive sectors of science or humanities. We need to create new dynamic programmes – not faculties – that are more flexible, leading to some degrees that are more welcomed by the labour market. This is the way to balance out the demands of the labour market and the output of students.

Private sector involvement will accelerate projects

Public private partnerships (PPPs) will play a significant role in Greece's development during the coming decade, including in the education sector, where new buildings, facilities and maintenance are already being provided by this method. Indeed, the very first PPP project to be approved in Greece was a scheme sponsored by the Organisation of School Buildings, for the construction, renovation and maintenance of 27 new school buildings in Attica last year.

Since then further multi-million euro PPP construction and maintenance contracts have been awarded for new school buildings in East Macedonia and Thrace, West Macedonia, Epirus and the Ionian islands. A PPP is also under way for the design, construction and subsequent maintenance of new buildings for the recently opened University of the Peloponnese, with a construction budget of 84 million euros. The private entities in-

Funds and expertise from private companies are set to make an important contribution

involved take on the responsibility for the construction and financing of the project, and for maintenance of the buildings for a period of 25 years.

The government sees PPP projects as a means of ending dual shifts made necessary by a shortage of classrooms, replacing leased schools and upgrading school buildings. Leonidas Korres, General Secretary for Public Private Partnerships, says the involvement of private finance provides an opportunity to accelerate education projects.

"We need to build 1,500 new schools, and to achieve that target we need a budget of 2.5 billion euros," he says.

"If we use funding from private companies and their technological know-how we will be able to get more, and better quality, schools sooner, and they will maintain the buildings."

Dimitrios Skiadas, Special Secretary for the Management of Community Support Framework Programmes, says the Universities Rectors' Conference has welcomed proposals for bringing the expertise of the private sector into the management of the universities. He observes: "We have had private sector managers working very successfully in the banking sector, so why not do that with universities?"

QUOTE/UNQUOTE DIMITRIOS SKIADAS, Special Secretary for the Management of Community Support Framework Programmes

"We want to make our past a useful tool to build our future"

EDUCATION is the core of social development. If we succeed in convincing all the people that education is the best way to help themselves, then education will become the top priority not just for the government but for the people themselves.

ALL the curricula have been reformed during the last 4-5 years, and we have developed about 300 new postgraduate curricula that have been adapted to the needs of the labour market. We have introduced schemes of practical exercise as an obligatory element. Nobody can graduate unless they have

six months work experience in their field of expertise in industry or the public sector.

GREECE has a great historic tradition and trying to introduce concepts such as European education, or international relations, is not an easy thing to do. We do not want to forget our past, we simply want to make it a useful tool in order to understand our present and build our future. This government has succeeded in doing that.

WE want to support the universities by helping them to help themselves. We want



to invest, not just spend money. We have to have targets, but the ministry is not the appropriate body for locating these targets. The universities are. Through our legislation we are asking them to determine their own targets for the next four years. A more socialist concept would be that the state would design and provide for everything and the universities would simply execute. We do not share these views.

ARISTOTLE

Creating the good man and the good citizen

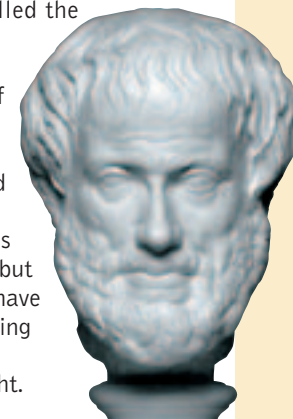
Aristotle (384-322 BC) was Plato's most famous student, studying at the Academy for 20 years. Later he supervised the education of the future Alexander the Great.

He believed that the purpose of education was to produce a good man. Man was a social and political being, but was not good by nature; he had to be taught to use his reason and become a productive citizen. Like Plato, Aristotle believed education should have a strong moral basis.

He famously said education was an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity, as well as the best provision for old age. He believed that habit was the best method of learning.

Aristotle established his own school of philosophy in 335 BC in the Lyceum, a gymnasium with covered walks named after the neighbouring temple of Apollo. Because he strolled around while giving his lectures, he and his followers came to be called the Peripatetics.

Few of the 150 volumes of his lectures on everything from ethics and politics to the natural sciences have survived, but those that did have had a long-lasting influence on Western thought.



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Better quality of education



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The Greek Educational System in the 21st Century

The main instrument for the implementation of the educational policy in Greece is the Operational Programme for the "Educational and Initial Vocational Training", which is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund.

The Operational Programme is closely related to the revised Lisbon strategy and the other EU policies (employment policy, gender equality, ICT and life long learning), synergy with the pillars of the National Action Plan for employment, the ESF priorities and the objectives of the National Action Plan for social inclusion.

Lifelong learning is one of the most basic pillars to the Greek strategy in Education. Through the Programme, the aim is to provide everyone with the opportunity to acquire or improve his/her knowledge, that will allow him/her both to be an educated person, an active citizen, as well as a fully qualified member of the workforce needed in the labor market.

One of the main choices, reflected in the Programme, is to provide equal opportunities in education and beyond that, to the labor market. Efforts have been undertaken during recent years, aiming to include the less

privileged groups of the population in the educational system, to reduce school drop out, to improve employability and combat social exclusion.

In order to make strategic interventions, the Greek government is going to implement evaluation procedures in all educational levels. The evaluation process, which is going to be supported by the Operational Programme, is not a means for punishment but a means for improvement.

Furthermore, investing in the human capital of the educational system is one of the most significant priorities. Therefore an extensive programme of teachers' training schemes is being implemented, with resources from the Operational Programme.

Another major strategic choice is to create and consolidate a Greek Education and Culture Center for south-eastern Europe, by establishing a new International University in Thessalonica for students that are coming mainly from abroad focusing on the Balkans area and the Eastern Mediterranean basin, but also welcoming students from all over the world.

This new institution will be financed through the Operational Programme.



ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΕΘΝΙΚΗΣ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΑ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ ΕΘΝΙΚΗΣ
ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΕΧΝΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ
ΣΥΓΧΡΗΜΑΤΟΔΟΤΗΣΗ
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟ
ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟ ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑΚΗΣ ΑΝΑΠΤΥΞΗΣ



Η ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΚΟΡΥΦΗ
Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα
Εκπαίδευσης και Αρχικής
Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης

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