

Short survey on employability - Greece

Unemployment has decreased significantly over the last ten years in Greece as the comparative table below demonstrates and dropped to 8.3% in 2008 compared to 9.1% in 2007 and 11.8% which was the case in 1998.

Table 1: Unemployment Rates (%): 1st Semester 1998 – 2008

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Unemployment (%) 1 st Semester	11.8	12.2	12.3	11.2	11.4	10.4	11.3	10.4	9.7	9.1	8.3

Source: General Secretariat of National Statistical Service of Greece, June 2008.

Women's unemployment rate is 12.3% which is more than double the percentage of male unemployment reaching 5.5%. The age group mostly affected by unemployment, according to the data from the General Secretariat of National Statistical Service of Greece, is the one of younger people aged 15-29 (17.3%). In particular, the percentage of unemployed women from this age group is 22.2%.

As to their educational level, higher education Bachelor graduates and in particular male graduates are at a lower percentage (3.8%) than the average unemployment percentage and at the lowest compared to graduates of other educational levels (8.3%). As for postgraduate and doctorate graduates, the percentage is satisfactory as far as men are concerned (5.4%). The situation is similar for women since female graduates who hold a bachelor and/or postgraduate and doctorate degree are in more advantageous position compared to females of lower educational qualifications. Moreover, new employment opportunities are offered to postgraduate and doctorate graduates not only with the new law for research which was recently approved by the Greek parliament but also with the establishment of new Departments in Higher Education Institutions.

Table 2: Unemployment rates (%) according to sex and level of education for the 1st semester of 2007-2008

Education level (both sexes)	2007			2008		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Doctorate or/and postgraduate qualifications	3.9	8.0	5.9	4.6	6.6	5.4
First Higher Education Degree	7.3	16.0	11.5	3.8	7.1	5.4
Third-level technical-vocational institution degree	5.9	17.0	10.2	6.7	14.5	10.5
Upper-secondary level education	5.4	18.1	9.3	6.1	13.9	9.1
Lower secondary education	5.8	11.6	7.9	5.4	17.6	9.2

Primary education	3.8	7.9	5.6	5.0	10.6	7.1
Have not completed primary education	14.2	18.6	16.4	5.4	9.5	7.0
Didn't attend school at all	11.5	7.3	9.7	6.7	19.4	12.2
Total	5.7	13.9	9.1	5.5	12.3	8.3

Source: General Secretariat of National Statistical Service of Greece, June 2008.

The Greek state has been making efforts to bring unemployment rates further down. Liaison offices operate in HEIs and guide new graduates towards planning their career and finding the most appropriate job that is also closely related to their field of studies. In addition, they provide information on various mobility and further training programmes and they are responsible for building up strong relationships between students and various companies and businesses. Moreover, Career Days and lectures are organized with the cooperation of the Liaison Offices and employers throughout the academic year, facilitating the quest for future employment.

Moreover, the Ministry of National Education encourages Higher Education Institutions' proposals for the reorganisation and modernisation of undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes which will meet the social and economic needs of the country and will create more career opportunities for the graduates. It also encourages the creation of new postgraduate study programmes in the field of new technologies as well as the creation of more interdisciplinary cross-scientific postgraduate courses.

In January 2005 the Ministry of Education established the participation of social partners in the National Education Council. Thus, for the very first time there is an institutionalised dialogue between employers, various trade unions and the leaderships of all Higher Education Institutions. Some of the most important topics in the centre of this dialogue concern the establishment of new departments as well as the sustainability and the professional qualifications of the study programmes.

To sum up, measures taken to increase the employability of graduates with higher education qualifications are the establishment of Liaison Offices, contacts with various companies and organizations, stage programmes and the modernization of HEIs' study programmes so that these can meet the needs of the labour market.