



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION,
TRAINING, LIFELONG LEARNING AND YOUTH**

Youth Policy Update – February 2023

The 2022-2024 youth policy strategy of the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth (GSVETLL&Y) of the Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs is outlined in the *Strategic Plan for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth 2022-2024*, which includes a specific strategy based on the current needs and interests of young people, international and European data and extends to other fields, developed on a coordinated effort to take a cross-sectoral approach to all major issues affecting young people's lives, highlighting the new challenges of our time, challenges related to digital transformation and policies to help young people to actively participate in the digital era. This year has already begun with our Strategic Plan at its peak of implementation, which embraced and included both our Youth Sector campaigns in its priorities, the European Year of Youth 2022 and the “Democracy Here. Democracy Now” campaign for revitalizing democracy of the Council of Europe, along with the implementation of the Vocational Education and Training reform.

The 1st quarter of 2023 finds, on the one hand, our General Secretariat still implementing activities in accordance with the national programming for the European Year of Youth 2022 until the 31st of May 2023 and on the other, the activities included in the campaign for revitalizing democracy “Democracy Here. Democracy Now” of the Council of Europe completed. More specifically, a short update on a few of our main actions in both campaigns, aiming at addressing and solving key issues, is the following:

- After our 1st online event of the General Secretariat for VETLL&Y on “*Youth Work: the road to recognition*” on the 15th April 2022 which marked the launch of the actions and procedures aimed at the institutional recognition and certification of the Youth Work profession in the country, an expert group with the participation of the National

Organization for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), the Greek actor mainly involved in the recognition, accreditation, and validation of non-formal learning (RVA), has been set up with the milestone of completing the professional profile of the Youth Work profession within 2023. This is highly anticipated both within the country and at European level.

- Our 4 national EYY 2022 surveys were selected by the Coordinating Committee of the EYY 2022 as a good practice of our national programme and were presented at the Project Fair of the 7th Meeting of EYY 2022 Coordinators and Stakeholders on the 5th December 2022 in Brussels. This is the first time that our country has received this distinction in any thematic area of Youth and it was announced by the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs Ms. Niki Kerameos at the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Education and Youth on 28th November 2022 in Brussels.

All 4 surveys have been completed and the results are ready in the Greek language. Two of them (*"Good practices of Municipalities implementing European Policies for young people living in their area"* by the Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government (EETAA), and *"Mental health in the after COVID-19 era"* by UNICEF Greece Country Office, both implemented under the responsibility of the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth) are already translated in the English language and their results are available for dissemination. Shortly, the results of our student survey *"Perceptions of democracy in decision-making at school"* and our survey for young people aged 18-29 *"Young people and Europe: How young people perceive Europe and their identity within it - Sustainable development goals and young people"* will be available in English as well.

On this topic, at the end of February, we will deliver to the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs **a policy paper** with the students' input and recommendations on the operation of the Students' Councils, legislation which has not been updated since 1986. It should be noted that these two surveys were the core activities of our national "Democracy Here. Democracy Now" campaign.

More specifically, here is a brief idea of what the research findings were expected to and have shed light on:

- a) the aspects that constitute the cognitive representation of young people about their status as Greeks, but also as European citizens. In particular, issues such as the perception of democracy and its future, the digital and green transition in the European context constitute additional fields of enlightenment for the perceptions of young people and the perspectives they themselves prioritise for the future of European coexistence, and
- b) the process of political socialisation of young people within the school environment, with an emphasis on the factors and conditions that favour the upbringing of participatory and responsible citizens who support democracy and contribute to safeguarding democratic processes.

On the 2nd of February, our 1st Closing Event of the EYY 2022 was held in Thessaloniki, with the participation of key stakeholders not only of the social and political sectors of Northern Greece but also of the Youth Sector, with the National Youth Council, all municipal youth councils of Greece and schools participating in the programme “Ambassadors of the European Council”. Additionally, the culmination of EYY 2022 celebrations will be held on 6th March 2023 in Athens, where the General Secretariat for Vocational Education, Training, Lifelong Learning and Youth, together with the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece and the Hellenic Agency for Local Development and Local Government (EETAA) will complete the proceedings of establishing the honorary title of *National Youth Capital* for the Municipalities of Greece by signing the official announcement.

The aim of the joint initiative is for the country's municipalities, in close cooperation with the young people living in them, to design and implement a comprehensive programme of actions and interventions that will empower young people, strengthen their participation as active citizens and bring a new perspective of youth in all aspects of city life. A necessary condition of the initiative is that young people have equal opportunities to shape the social, economic and cultural life of the place where they live.

It is worth mentioning that the legacy of the Year and the evaluation of the significance of the campaign for revitalizing democracy “Democracy Here. Democracy Now” have already started in Greece, as unresolved key issues in the Youth Sector have been prioritised and procedures are underway to settle them, with Youth Work recognition being at the top of the list of priorities.

Within this context, an Inter-ministerial Working Group, which aims both to record the existing policies of each ministry concerning young people aged 15-29 and the implementation of policies for the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) concerning the Youth sector, has been established by our General Secretariat and started its work already. With the participation of 27 General Secretariats from the Hellenic Ministries that implement policies for the youth of the country, this Inter-ministerial Working Group will render the GSVETLL&Y a continuously up-to-date hub for gathering all relevant information, record horizontal cross-sectoral proposals aimed at improving each sector involving youth policies, as well as contribute to the comprehensive mapping of the country's youth policies in order to provide national and European stakeholders with up-to-date information so that the Greek youth can benefit from every European initiative and support. Our goal is by the 3rd quarter of 2023 to create an online platform to record existing youth policies, equally accessible to the public for their information as well. The procedures, both technical and administrative, of setting up this platform have already started.

Finally, the first National Action Plan for Youth of the Hellenic Government is still being processed by the General Secretariat for Government Coordination regarding the implementation and monitoring of all the policies it includes.