

WiSaR

REGIONAL STRATEGY OF LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE REGION OF THESSALY



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

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1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REGION

1.1 Profile

1.1.1 Features

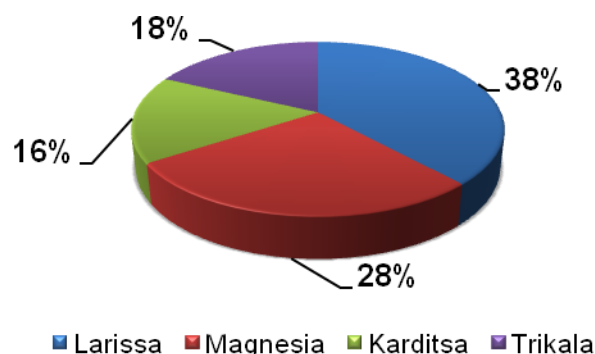
Region of Thessaly occupies the central - eastern part of the Greek mainland. It includes the prefectures of Karditsa, Larissa, Magnesia and Trikala and occupies a total area of 14,036 km² (10.6% of the total area of the country.) It is bordered to the north with the Regions of Western Macedonia and Central Macedonia, to the south with the Region of Central Greece, to west with the region of Epirus and to east with the Aegean Sea.

1.1.2 Population

The region of Thessaly is the second largest region in the country based on the resident population (2001: 740,115 inhabitants). The permanent population of the region recorded the lowest increase in the country (1.5%) in the decade 1991-2001. In intra-regional level, there is a clear distinction between western and eastern Thessaly. The two largest prefectures based on the population size are the prefecture of Larissa and prefecture of Magnesia with 282,156 and 205,005 inhabitants, followed by the prefecture of Trikala (132.689) and prefecture of Karditsa (120. 265).

In 2001 the population was concentrated in the city of Larissa, which had a permanent population of 131,095 inhabitants, followed by the city of Volos with 127,887 inhabitants. The highest population growth rates in the period 1991-2001 showed in Trikala (11.8%) and Larissa (11%), while the change in Tirnavos was -4.9%.

**Geographical Distribution of population in the region of Thessaly
(The estimated population in 01/01/2007)**

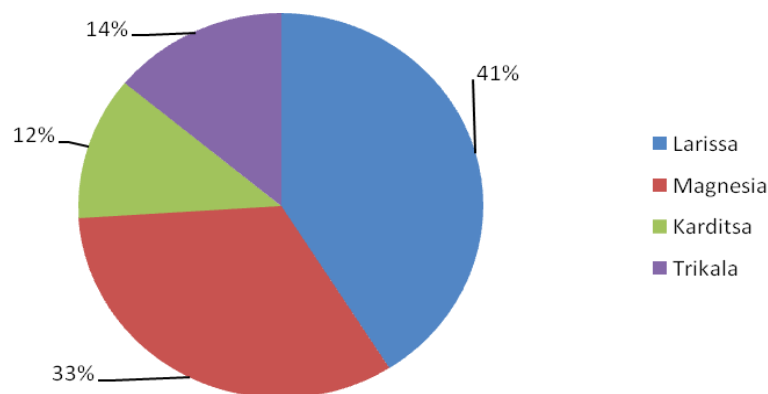


Source: EL.STAT.

1.1.3 Macroeconomic aggregates

Regarding the regional market size, Gross Domestic Product of Thessaly was in 2006 10,709 million €. The average share of national GDP for the period 2002-2006 stood at 5.2%. The prefecture of Larissa is the largest contributor to the regional average share of GDP (2001-2005 period) 40.7%. The second largest is the prefecture of Magnesia with 33.3% followed by the prefecture of Trikala and Karditsa prefecture

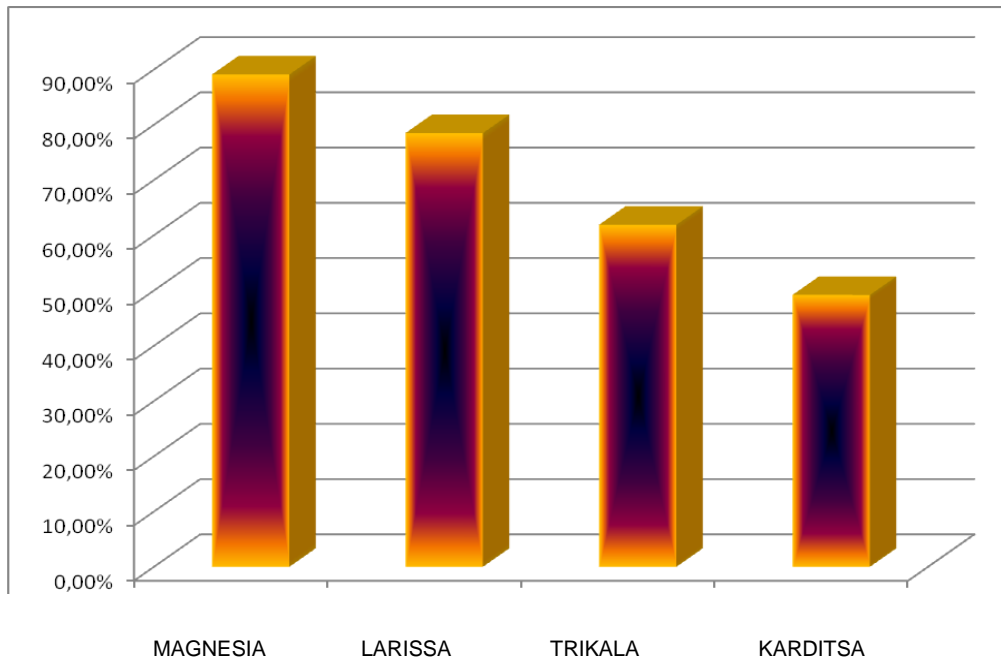
**Geographical distribution of GDP in Thessaly
(average 2001 - 2005)**



Source: EL.STAT.

The highest growth rate in the period 2001-2005 was recorded in the prefecture of Trikala 5.8%, followed by the prefecture of Magnesia (4.0%), the prefecture of Larissa (3.3%), while in the prefecture of Karditsa was recorded the lowest growth rate of 0, 5%.

In 2005 the level of prosperity and development for the inhabitants of Thessaly represented a per capita GDP equal to 16537.3 Purchasing Power or 13.727,4 € per capita, equivalent to 73.8% of GDP per capita of the EU. In the same period in intra-regional level the per capita GDP in the prefectures of Magnesia and Larissa was 89.1% and 78.5% of per capita GDP of the EU, while per capita GDP of the prefectures of Karditsa and Trikala reached 49.2% and 61.9%.

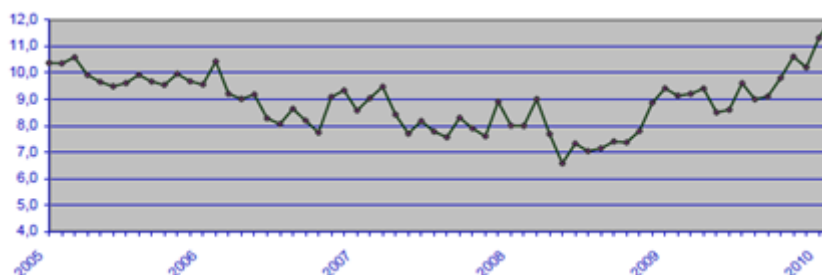


1.2 Unemployment Rate

The unemployment national rate in February 2010 was 12.1% while one year ago in February 2009 was 9.1% and in January 2010 11.3%. The manpower in February 2010, was 4,404,051. The unemployment raised at 605,277 people, while the economically inactive population totaled 4,282,874 people. In the period of February 2005 to February 2010 are presented in the chart below.

The manpower decreased by 83,439 persons compared to February 2009 (decrease 1.9%) and 41,692 persons compared to January 2010 (decrease 0.9%). The unemployment raised to 154,280 persons compared to February 2009 (increase 34.2%) and 38,145 persons compared to January 2010 (increase 6.7%).

By month Unemployment National Rate: January 2005 - February 2010



Source: EL.STAT.- Monthly Labour Force Survey

The region of Thessaly is slightly below (8,9) than average (9,8) of the country's unemployment rate. The highest unemployment rate is in the region of Southern Aegean (15.5%) and in the region of Western Macedonia (14.6%). On the contrary, the lowest unemployment rate is observed in the region of Peloponnese (8.3%) and in the region of Attica (8.4%).

Unemployment rate by region: 2005 -2010

REGION	February					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Eastern Macedonia and Thrace	14,0	12,5	13,0	9,5	10,9	15,2
Central Macedonia	11,2	10,5	8,3	8,0	8,8	12,6
Western Macedonia	16,6	16,6	9,6	16,4	11,8	16,6
Epirus	11,5	10,4	9,0	9,4	10,4	12,2
Thessaly	10,2	9,0	9,3	7,5	7,2	10,3
Ionian Islands	13,7	11,5	13,6	11,9	11,6	16,8
Western Greece	13,9	12,3	10,6	11,3	12,3	10,6
Central Greece	12,1	10,3	7,8	7,9	9,9	12,8
Attica	8,4	9,0	8,4	5,9	8,0	10,9
Peloponnese	9,2	9,1	8,0	7,7	6,9	9,1
North Aegean	10,0	14,1	16,0	6,6	7,5	7,9
South Aegean	9,1	16,4	10,7	15,5	17,3	21,3
Crete	9,1	11,9	7,5	8,9	9,8	14,3
Total Greece	10,4	10,4	9,0	8,0	9,1	12,1

Source: EL.STAT.- Monthly Labour Force Survey

According to the Manpower Employment Organization (Employment Agency) in April 2010 the registered unemployed in the country amounted to 711,699. In the region of Thessaly, for the same period, the amount of unemployed people was 46,216, while 16,213 of them (35.08%) are long-term unemployed people – registered as unemployed for a period of 12 months minimum.

1.3 Employment - The structure of regional economy

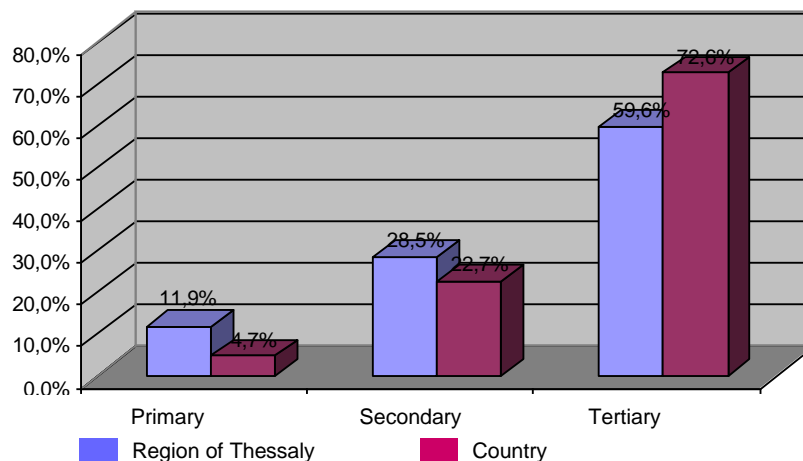
The number of the manpower in national level in the fourth quarter of 2009 is estimated at 4,476,806 people. During the fourth quarter of 2009 92,614 people started their working carrier. During the same period, 66,873 people moved from the economically active population to employment.

On the contrary, 129,302 people, who was working a year ago, now are unemployed and 76,373 people, who were working, are now inactive (people

who cannot or do not want to work). In addition, 92,896 people that a year ago belonged to the economically inactive population entered in the labor market seeking for employment but are unemployed.

The tertiary sector of Thessaly region covers 59.6% of total regional Gross Value Added (GVA) share significantly lower than that of the whole country which is 72.6%. The region of Thessaly has more developed the secondary sector which covers 28.5% of GVA over 22.7% of the whole country, while important place takes the primary sector with contribution of 11.9% to the total ATP, a rate considerably higher than that of the whole country (4.7%).

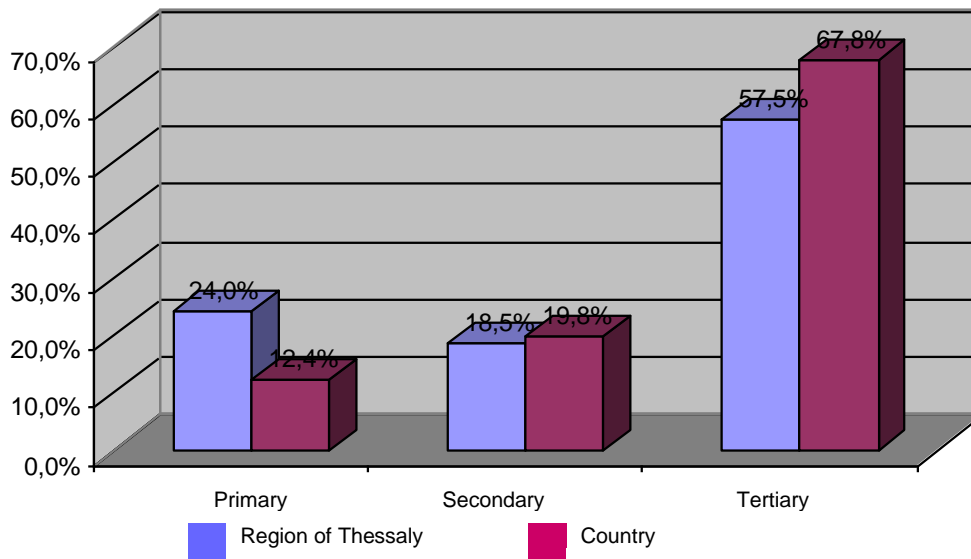
**Sectoral structure of ATP Thessaly - Country
(average 2002-2006)**



Looking at the evolution of the employees by economical sector, we can see that the primary sector have increased over the same quarter of the previous year (6.6%). In contrast, a reduction occurs in the secondary (6.8%) and the tertiary sector (1.4%).

At regional level, the primary sector covers 22.0% of total employment, by 21.1% in secondary and tertiary 56.8%, while rates in Greece amounted to 11.5%, 22.5% and 66 % respectively.

Sectoral employment structure Region of Thessaly - Country



Source: EUROSTAT, 03/2009

In inter-regional level there are differences: In 2004, the highest percentage of employees in primary sector appears in the Region of Peloponnesus (29.3%), in the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (27.2) and in the region of Thessaly (24.0%).

In the secondary sector, the highest change in the period of 2000-2004 is shown in the region of Thessaly (24%) and the lowest in the region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (-9%). The lowest proportion of employees in the secondary sector is in the region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and in the region of Thessaly and the highest in the region of Western Macedonia.

Finally, the tertiary sector employed more than 60% of employees in the region of Central Macedonia and Epirus, while the largest increase recorded again in the region of Thessaly (16.9%).

SECTORAL COMPOSITION OF EMPLOYMENT BY REGION, 2004 (in thousands)								
NUTS	Region	Total employmen	Primary sector		Secondary sector		Tertiary sector	
			employment	%	employmen	%	employment	%
gr11	Eastern Macedonia and Thra	235,8	64,1	27,2%	42,9	18,2%	128,8	54,6%
gr12	Central Macedonia	741,0	99,4	13,4%	156,2	21,1%	485,5	65,5%
gr13	Western Macedonia	102,5	18,2	17,8%	30,7	30,0%	53,6	52,3%
gr14	Thessaly	305,6	73,4	24,0%	56,5	18,5%	175,7	57,5%
gr21	Epirus	129,3	24,0	18,6%	25,1	19,4%	80,3	62,1%
znIV	zone IV	1.514,0	279,0	18,4%	311,0	20,6%	924,0	61,0%
gr22	Ionian Islands	90,4	14,1	15,6%	12,2	13,5%	64,2	71,0%
gr23	Western Greece	275,4	64,0	23,2%	46,0	16,7%	165,5	60,1%
gr24	Central Greece	210,0	37,0	17,6%	56,4	26,9%	116,6	55,5%
gr25	Peloponnesse	245,6	71,9	29,3%	40,5	16,5%	133,2	54,2%
gr31	Attica	1672,5	11,0	0,7%	346,6	20,7%	1315,0	78,6%
gr41	North Aegean	72,1	12,1	16,8%	9,9	13,7%	50,2	69,6%
gr42	South Aegean	124,3	10,3	8,3%	23,1	18,6%	90,9	73,1%
gr43	Crete	264,3	55,8	21,1%	38,1	14,4%	170,4	64,5%
gr	Greece	4468,9	555,1	12,4%	884,1	19,8%	3.029,7	67,8%

1.4 Formal, Non-formal and informal education

1.4.1 The National Education System¹

Education in Greece is compulsory for all children for the ages of 6-15, which includes primary (elementary) and Lower Secondary (High School) education level. The children however can start their education at the age of 2.5 years (preschool education) in private and public schools called kindergartens.

The primary education (elementary) lasts six years, and starts for the children in the age of six. The Vocational Secondary Education includes three types of schools: the General High Schools, the Vocational Schools (EPAL) with three years of study and the Professional Schools with two years of study.

The Professional Schools aim at students that want to expertise in practical than theoretical issues. The graduates of the Professional Schools immediately enter in the labor market as skilled craftsmen. In all the education levels there are schools for students with special education needs. Also there are specialized schools as Musical, Ecclesiastical and Sports schools

Post-compulsory secondary education also includes the Vocational Training Institutes (VTI), which provide formal but unclassified education. These institutions are characterized as unclassified, because they accept graduates from the lower secondary and the vocational secondary education level, depending on the individual skills they offer.

Public higher education is divided into Universities and the Open University. In Universities are accepted students who have completed the vocational secondary education level after exams and in the Open University are accepted students from the age of 22 after draw.

1.4.2 Formal education

It takes place in an organized and institutionalized educational framework (curriculum, teachers, and assessment of learning outcomes) leading to a certificate recognized nationally by the official authorities and is part of the scheduled educational scale.

Examples:

- * Attendance at Primary and Secondary Education
- * Studying in higher education (including the Greek Open University)
- * Studies in special schools of Primary and Secondary Education

¹ Source: Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religion - www.ypepth.gr

- * Attendance at Second Chance Schools
- * Attendance at Professional Schools (EPAL)

Secondary Education

The following table shows the number of secondary schools that operate by prefecture in the region of Thessaly.

	High Schools	Number of students	Unified Schools	Number of students	EPAL	Number of students	EPAS	Number of students
Prefecture of Larissa	56	8.777	40	6.950	10	1.949	3	438
Prefecture of Karditsa	27	3.423	16	2.301	6	892	1	170
Prefecture of Trikala	28	4.047	16	3.181	6	1.088	1	121
Prefecture of Magnesia	38	6.396	31	4.505	11	1.823	2	186
Total	149	22.643	103	16937	33	5752	7	915

Source: Regional Directorate of Education Thessaly - <http://thess.pde.sch.gr>

From the above data it is concluded that there is adequate training structures, and specialties offered by Business Schools and Vocational Schools, that cover a wider range of skills in the primary, secondary and tertiary production. For example:

- * EPAL
Agriculture, Food & Environment, Engineering, Applied Arts, Electrical, Electronics, Engineering, Shipping, Finance & Administration, Information Technology, Health & Welfare.
- * EPAS
Silversmith, pharmacy, Assistant Physiotherapist & Dental Assistant, furniture, tools CNC, Thermohydraulic Building & Maintenance Central Heating, Hairdressing & Beauty Art, Interior Design, Electrical Technician Jobs.

Post-secondary Education

Institutes of Vocational Training. The main goal of these Institutes is to provide initial or additional training to the trainees in order to get scientific, technical and professional knowledge for their easiest employability and to ensure their adaptation to the production needs.

Specializations offered in the region of Thessaly are: marketing, advertising, aesthetics, tax consultant, animation designer, hairdressing, music technology, nursing, gaseous fuels, car mechanic, decoration, computer network, computer applications, photography, cooking, aluminum and iron,

stylist assistant, physiotherapy, graphic designer, financial management, nutritionists, accountants, banking, car drivers instructor, organic agriculture, multimedia applications.

Higher Education

In the region of Thessaly, there are many higher education institutions. These institutions are:

- * UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY
Faculty of Engineering, School of Humanities, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, (Department of Physical Education and Sport, Department of Economics, Bureau of Foreign Languages)
- * HELLENIC OPEN UNIVERSITY
School of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Science and Technology
- * TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF LARISSA
School of Applied Technology, School of Management and Economics, School of Health - Welfare, Faculty of Agricultural Technology, Foreign Languages and Physical Education

Second Chance Schools

The Second Chance School is an innovative School of Adult Education. The training program is different from that of formal education in content, teaching methodology and assessment of trainees. The total duration of the training is 2 years. After the graduation is given to the students a title equivalent of high school. Second-chance schools are working in the region of Thessaly in the city of Volos, Trikala, Larisa, Karditsa, in the Judicial Prison of Larissa and Trikala Prison.

1.4.3 Non-formal education

It takes place in a well organized educational context (curriculum, teaching, assessment of learning outcomes), and can lead (but not necessarily) to nationally recognized certificates. Examples:

- * Courses in dance schools, academies, cultural centers, etc
- * Courses in schools of all kinds (school subjects, foreign languages, use the PC, etc.)
- * Monitoring of training programs at Vocational Training Institutes (VTI)
- * Studies in Institutions

- * Course attendance centers or schools for Adult Education, Schools for Parents
- * Monitor internal training programs

Non-formal Education in Regional level

In the region of Thessaly there is forty-two (42) Vocational Training Institutes (Public and Private), which provide vocational training (usually their duration is from 50 to 800 hours) to unemployed, employees of public and private sector, and disadvantaged groups. The main aim of these programs is the maintenance, renewal, upgrading and modernization of professional knowledge and skills that unemployed need in order to look for work, and for employees for professional development.

At the same time there are laboratories liberal studies, which mainly provide education on the use of computers and also Parents Schools in the four prefectures of the region of Thessaly.

1.4.4 Informal learning

It is running in the frames of professional activities, leisure, social, sporting and cultural activities. Currently it is not recognized and certified. Examples:

- * Directions from the boss or senior colleagues for the operation of work machinery
- * Self learning using the Internet or special computer program
- * Learning as a result of a visit to a museum, exhibition hall etc.

1.5 Advantage - Strengths of the Region

The region of Thessaly the main employment rate comes from agriculture and (shelf) employees, almost double of the employment in the country.

In relation to the efficiency of agriculture, it is noted that the average economic size (ESU) was located in the region of Thessaly in 2003, to a lowest level (penultimate) of the classification, 2-8, ESU when the average of the EU-25 equals to 14,4 ESU² (note that agriculture of less than 2 ESU is marginal viable).

² European Standard Unit (ESU): 1 ESU is equal to 1.200 € «standard gross margin» for the operation. The Location Quotient measures the relative concentration of an industry in a region compared to the total concentration of employment in the same section. Coefficients > 1 imply specialization, ie relative concentration higher than the national average (the level of Location Factor country = 1).

The decrease in employment in the agricultural sector may lead to the abandonment of the agricultural land, particularly on areas, where impacts on the environment (desertification, erosion, alteration of landscape) will be more pronounced. On the other hand, it is possible, especially in areas with similar resources, the development of a new type of agriculture and livestock, which will be based on the quality of the products and to the protection of the environment. These new potentials will require an agricultural policy with multiple dimensions: support for the vulnerable groups, orientation of the employees in other sectors, precautionary measures for the environmental impacts of agriculture, multiple employment and multi-functionality of agriculture in rural development, support for new agriculture research and advanced services, vertical integration of agro-food sector. In the table below we can see the basic sectors in manufacturing, in the region of Thessaly.

Processing Industries	Region of Thessaly
Food and drink industry	1,2
Manufacture of textiles	1,2
Manufacture of wood and wood products	1,1
Manufacture of other non-metallic minerals	1,6
Manufacture of basic metals	1,6
Fabricated metal products, except machinery	1,2
Manufacture of machinery and equipment	1,1

Source: EL.STAT.2001

In the region of Thessaly the industries that show increase are the industries of food and beverages, wood and wood products, paper and printing, chemicals, metal, non-metallic minerals and machinery. In these dynamic sectors the region has comparative advantages. In the table below it is shown the main features of the tourism industry

	Units			Rooms			Average unit size (rooms)	% rooms 4* and 5* in total
	2005	% in country	Change 99-04	2005	% in country	Change 99-04		
Greece	9.036	100%	11%	682.050	100%	14%	75	34%
Thessaly	548	6%	17%	10.933	4%	7%	18	19%

Source: EL.STAT.2007

Region of Thessaly is particularly strong (above the national average term), but less than the national average percentage points in high categories (4 and 5 star).

Some negative aspects of tourism industry in the region are: low bed capacity, low grades of accommodation, unsatisfactory tourist services, adverse environmental effects, especially because of widespread unreported location. However, there are also positive prospects:

- a) several areas in the region of Thessaly can support the new kinds of tourism,
- b) the new programmable modes of transportation to and from the region of Thessaly (e.g. new airport in the city of Volos)
- c) the reform of the tourism facilities will help to attract new large-scale capital³.

SWOT analysis is presented in relation to the strategic development objectives:

- * Enhancing competitiveness
- * Development of human resources

Enhancing competitiveness

STRONG POINTS	WEEK POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Traditional know how in production of traditional products. * The wide range of products * Products in Thessaly produced in a competitive global production volume (goat's milk, pork, cotton, wood, aluminum and other products). * The existence of production and processing infrastructure. * The existence of traditional markets (eg olives). * Mediterranean character products due to the climate and the environmental - conditions * The low level of intensification of production in certain areas of the region of Thessaly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The low degree of organization of producers into groups and generally interconnected relations of production and marketing. * The lack of sufficient standardization and packaging, of products in order to provide added value to the product * The inability to the Diagnostic Marketing in order to monitor the behavior of the market and the consumers * The lack of organized sales channels. * Inadequate education, awareness and knowledge of producers, consumers and industries. * Inadequate transport infrastructure for the movement of the products.
OPPORTUNITIES	RISKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Increasing demand for certified quality products, branded and organic products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The refusal of the market to absorb products without the certification of production processes, labels, etc

³ Operational Program of Thessaly – Central Greece - Epirus, Athens - September 2007

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The opening of markets under WTO agreements * The deficit of the EU in various fields. There are markets that do not know the products that is produced in the region of Thessaly * The adjustment of agricultural production by the EU in accordance with the lines: quality products - environment protection - reducing the cost of production - employment in the countryside. New laws on product quality, organic etc. * The interest of the EU for the protection and enhancement of local quality products. * The important location of the region of Thessaly in the center of Greece * The small size of the companies as a factor of flexibility and adaptability to standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The increase in imports from the new EU countries, third countries and from countries that are under the EU pre-accession * The reduction of tariffs and withdrawals * The use of substitutes and alternative products on the market (wines, nuts). * The decoupling of subsidies from the level of production and the shift of subsidies in the production of quality products * The obsolescence of products and sectors that do not follow international standards, particularly with the rapid dissemination of information (media, internet), early warning (RASFF).
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Human resources development and employment promotion

STRONG POINTS	WEEK POINTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Adequacy of training structures in the region (the mountain-remote-island regions lagging behind in this field) * Good presence of organized providers of social services and supportive counseling. * Professionals with knowledge and experience in training, counseling, social planning and advisory services. * Higher or Third Level Education Institutions * Structures of primary and secondary education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Weakness to design programs that will be linkable with the labor market needs. * Lack of evidence-based statistics at local, regional and national level. * Weakness to link training to the production, research, enterprise and innovation. * Lack of coordination between the structures and the employment promotion. * Lack of micro enterprises and SMEs managers in order to promote training and integration in the strategic planning firm. * Lack of policy evaluation that could be adapted to local conditions and certification qualifications, skills and services. * Lack of strategic work planning at local and regional level. * Rapid shrinking of the agriculture without alternative outlets. * Lack of support measures for new-entrants to the labor market. * Lack of lifelong learning for the target groups.

OPPORTUNITIES	RISKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Opportunities for connection with other countries in matters of employment and development of Social Economy. * Potential to strengthen corporate social responsibility. * The orientation of the EU for integrated actions through participatory processes * Potential inclusion in institutions and structures of training and employment through the use of new technologies. * Work-life balance (promotion by the EU political reconciliation between work and personal life). * High priority for the EU for Employment. * New opportunities and guidelines for Community policies to promote entrepreneurship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Increase in unemployment rates, occupational saturation. * Deterioration in employment conditions due to changes in the Common Agricultural Policy. * Reduced future funding. * Low estimate of public information services and promotion of employment (eg Employment Agency). * Devaluation of technical education in the Greek society and the career guidance. * Reduced growth

Source: Region of Thessaly - Lab results of cooperation between public, local authority, private and social actors of Thessaly in the design for the programming period 2007-2013

2. REGIONAL POLICY OF LIFELONG LEARNING

The rapid changes in the scientific, technological, economic, social and cultural sector highlight the urgent need for updating and upgrading knowledge and skills of citizens in order to meet the growing demands of personal and working life.

The need for continuing education and professional training prompted the Member States of the European Union to develop and implement policies on lifelong learning, to explore the learning process and to provide educational opportunities through flexible learning programs in a wide range of themes likely to meet modern requirements and the labor market.

The objectives of lifelong learning are the motivation for individual and social development, promoting active citizenship and increasing social inclusion opportunities and employment.

2.1. European Guidelines for Lifelong Learning

The European guidelines for Lifelong Learning are reflected in the Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (EC 2020).

By 2020, the main goal of European cooperation should be the support of the further development of education and training systems in Member States which aim to ensure:

- a) The personal, social and professional development of all citizens,
- b) Sustainable economic prosperity and employability, while promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue.

European cooperation in education and training for the period up to 2020 should be defined in a strategy that will cover education and training systems, based on a comprehensive perspective of lifelong learning.

The framework for the following four strategic objectives:

- * Implementation of lifelong learning and mobility
- * Improving of the quality and effectiveness of education and training
- * Promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship,
- * Fostering innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training.

2.1.1 European Benchmarks

The strategic objectives will be accompanied during the period 2010 - 2020 of indicators and reference levels of European average performance. These criteria are:

* Adult participation in lifelong learning

To increase the participation of adults, especially the unskilled, in lifelong learning:

- By 2020, at least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning.

* People with low basic skills

To ensure that all learners will achieve an appropriate level of basic skills, particularly in reading, mathematics and science:

- By 2020, the proportion of 15 year olds with low reading, mathematics and science should be below 15%.

* Achieving higher education level

Due to the increasing demand for higher education level, while recognizing the equal importance of vocational education and training:

- By 2020 the proportion of people aged 30-34 with tertiary educational level should be at least 40%.

* People who drop out of education and training

As a contribution to ensuring that the greatest possible number of trainees completes their education and training:

- By 2020, the percentage of people who drop out of education and training should be below 10%.

* Preschool Education

To increase participation in early childhood education is the foundation for later educational success, particularly for people from disadvantaged backgrounds:

- By 2020, 95% of children aged between 4 years and the age of compulsory primary education should be involved in preschool education.

2.1.2 Priority areas for European cooperation in education and training

The following are key areas of work and cooperation in relation to the four strategic objectives:

- * Pursue work on the following:
 - Lifelong learning strategies: Complete the process of implementing national lifelong learning strategies, with particular attention to the certification of non-formal and informal learning and mentoring.
 - European Qualifications Framework: Connecting all national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010.
- * To develop cooperation on the following:
 - «New Skills for New Jobs»: Ensure that the assessment of future skill requirements and meet labor market needs to be properly taken into account during the planning processes in education and training.
 - Learners with disabilities: Promoting inclusive and personalized education through early support, early identification of disability and well-coordinated services.
 - Partnership: Developing partnerships between agencies providing education and training services, and enterprises, research institutions, cultural institutions and the financial industry to create and promote well-functioning knowledge triangle.

2.2 National Policy for Lifelong Training⁴

The national strategy for education and training focuses on the need to develop and implement policies at national and regional level in a way that allows the development of a modern, flexible, dynamic, competitive, efficient and equitable system of education and training in the European Union, which is tailored to modern conditions, needs and challenges.

The aim is to increase the quantity, quality and efficiency of investment in human capital in order to upgrade the Greek system of education and training

In this framework, by implementing the national strategy for education and lifelong learning, Greece is planning the following:

- * To reduce the educational failure, early school leaving and poor basic skills.
- * To increase the attractiveness and the quality of vocational training.
- * To facilitate the application for certification of knowledge through national and European frameworks for accreditation so that the formal training to be

⁴ Act 3879: Development of Lifelong Learning and other provisions - Department of Education Lifelong Learning and Religion

a reliable option for those who choose faster way to joining the labor market.

- * To encourage and foster a culture of evaluation.
- * To provide better opportunities for adult education.
- * To improve the quality of the education system to the labor market needs.

The national policy for Lifelong Learning is mainly expressed through the recent bill submitted to the vote by the Greek Parliament. The provisions of this Act mainly relate to the area of non-formal education system, governing all aspects of development and operation including:

- a) all activities relating to post-secondary education and vocational training aimed to update, modernize and adapt professional knowledge, skills and human resources of the country in ever-changing labor market needs and therefore facilitate the professional integration
- b) all activities of adult education, aimed at developing their personality and cultivating their skills in the context of their function as informed and active citizens.

The following are the major strategic directions towards the development of Lifelong Learning.

1. *The National Network for Lifelong Learning – Purposes*

The purpose of the National Network for Lifelong Learning is the development of lifelong learning through the, ensuring transparency and interoperability education and training (formal, non formal and informal), orientation to learning outcomes and networking of institutions for lifelong learning.

Key features are:

- * initial training,
- * ongoing training and
- * general adult education.

Support functions include:

- * to explore the educational and training needs of adults compared with the labor market,
- * the provision of lifelong career guidance and counseling,
- * certification of structures, professional profiles, programs and instructors of non-formal education

- * recognition of qualifications and certification of knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals and
 - * recognition of professional allowances equivalent to qualifications that are acquired as part of lifelong learning, with the exception of higher education.
2. At central level, the **Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs through the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning**, assisted by the governing bodies of lifelong learning and exercising the role of headquarters, designs public policy for lifelong learning, sets the rules, prepared by the National Learning Programme, monitors the implementation of public policy, rules and program and coordinates the Administration System of lifelong learning.
 3. **The National Lifelong Learning includes, in particular, investment programs or specific vocational training or adult education and general operations of the public policy of lifelong learning.**
 4. For the improving of the quality and the effectiveness of lifelong learning programs and their connection with the labor market, was established the **Council for Lifelong Learning and Employment Association**. Members of the council are the minister of education, the general secretary of the Ministry of Labor, representatives of educational institutions, associations of employers', representatives of prefectures, municipalities, etc.

Responsibilities of the Council for Lifelong Learning and Employment Association are:

- The submission of proposals, on the following topics:
 - connection of the public policy of lifelong learning with the public employment policy in the context of development policies and programs in the country,
 - improvement of the National Network of Learning and the effective link with the public employment policy,
 - certification of input and output systems of non-formal education
 - connection of the vocational training and certification in vocational education and the labor market (skills, professions, skills), oriented to market needs at regional and local level
 - accessibility for people with disabilities in vocational education and training

- incentives and measures to increase the participation of all adults in vocational education and training, particularly those of vulnerable groups such as adults with disabilities
 - preparation of the necessary surveys, studies and expertise.
5. The regional lifelong learning program is created under national programs for lifelong learning. The regional program of lifelong learning includes investment programs or specific vocational training and, generally, actions of implementation of the public policy of lifelong learning at regional level.

The responsibilities of the regional Lifelong Learning program include:

The establishment of the Regional Committee for Vocational Training, with responsibility for making recommendations to the Regional Council for the vocational training and its connection with the labor market, investigation and assessment of quantitative and qualitative data of the labor market in the Region and the hierarchy of professional disciplines that the vocational training institutes must work. The decisions of the District Council take into account when drafting the National Program for Lifelong Learning and the Regional Lifelong Learning.

6. *The municipality in the frames of the local development program, created **the local lifelong learning program**, based on the national and regional Lifelong Learning. The local Lifelong Learning includes investment programs or specific actions of general adult education and generally, actions of implementation of the public policy of lifelong learning at local level, such as:*
- activities linking schools with community,
 - adult education activities, particularly in areas of public health, culture, sport, environment, social integration of immigrants and the training activities of the new generation, senior citizens.

2.3 Regional policy for Lifelong Learning and harmonization to the National Policy

The aim of the proposal is to show all the pillars that are needed to be analyzed in order to develop a regional policy for Lifelong Learning and how it will be integrated with the National.

Through this effort which involved local economic and social partners (educational institutes, businesses, representatives of employers, providers of formal and informal education), pursued the motivation on regional

development in order to secure jobs and the viability of businesses in the local community.

Through discussions revealed that the basic pillars that should be analyzed in order to have a specific policy for Lifelong Learning at the local level are:

- The sectors which show the dynamic region, according to social, morphological, economic, cultural and other characteristics.
- The human resources (in terms of quantity and quality) and adequate training structures in the region to meet the needs of these sectors in developing specific knowledge and skills.

2.3.1 Areas of development in the region ⁵

Both courses focused discussions in groups and in relation to the SWOT analysis presented in section 1.5 *Advantage - Strengths of the Region*, highlighted the following conclusions in relation to the first pillar on the axes in which the Region of Thessaly presents dynamic.

It should be noted that the findings reflected below additionally confirmed:

- Through the application of Delphi Method, that was conducted in two (2) cycles of questions in the form of written questionnaires, in which responded fourteen (14) experts from the fields of education, economy and local governments.

The sector with developmental potential for the Region that has emerged through this research and it had not reflected in the text of the strategy, is the livestock (45% of the respondents said that it would be need for specific skills in the next 20 years).

- Through the application of “round table method”, in which participated representatives of local community and economy.

Primary Sector

Priority Axis	Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of certified branded products • Organic farming • Animal production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large areas for cultivation

⁵ Regional Strategic Development Plan (P.S.S.A.) Thessaly 2007-2013 - Diagnostic Report Regional Spatial Strategy

Secondary Sector

Priority Axis	Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary production and processing • Renewable forms of energy production (wind, solar, natural gas etc. • Wood processing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central location of the Region in Greece

Tertiary Sector

Priority Axis	Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Services • Trade – logistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient scientific staff

These findings are in the direction of the “Regional Strategic development Plan (P.S.S.A.) Thessaly 2017-2013 – Diagnostic Report Regional Spatial Strategy”, which is claiming that the developmental sectors of the Region are:

a) Primary Sector

- * Development of new qualitative models for Sustainable Agricultural Development in the Region, which consist of three components. This section will form the core of two larger "circular concentric farming" based on the exploitation of the rules of the Common Agricultural Policy (CFP).

One cycle will be a part of multi-functional and multi-employment in agriculture and related regulations of the CFP, in particular in relation to environment, cultural / traditional designation of origin and organic agricultural products and foodstuffs, agrotourism and livestock.

The other cycle will be based on income subsidies CFP as they are formed ("decoupling" etc.), but as long the future of the latter is uncertain, this cycle will be mainly medium-term and transitional in nature and will involve either older farmers or farmers that will gradually move into other activities.

- * Rural development, in the base of Activities, Long - Employment and Socio-Economic Sustainability in Rural Areas as agriculture crafts, tourism, environmental sustainability of water, foster, cultural and other natural resources

- * Development (growth, improvement and diversification) of tourism, which will be important for the region.

b) Secondary sector

- * Development of industries:
 - the agri-food sector (supplementary to the aforementioned dynamic core of agriculture)
 - consumer industries sector based on local raw materials, the heavy specific expertise (eg furniture - wood and clothing)
 - repair units
 - units associated with the support of the penetration of new technologies and “green” industries.

c) Tertiary sector

- * Promotion of “development” subsectors of the tertiary sector, which is the business services:
 - financial,
 - research and technology
 - information society
 - logistics,
 - innovative actions

Overall, it is obvious that the Thessaly is in the process of quality enhancement of competitive advantages based on comparative advantages, but also to find new competitive advantages. In the final analysis shows that the region should insist on this target with openness towards the European and global environment by promoting innovative and interregional actions in order to create a critical mass medium socio-economic activities that can be maintained and developed diffuse sustainable and autonomous.

2.3.2 Human Resources

These areas of development determine the direction in which they should pay attention to formal and informal education and training for support to people who have the necessary knowledge and skills.

The positive and negative impacts of human resources in Thessaly (as were identified by studies of the Region of Thessaly) are:

Positive impacts:

- Adequacy of training structures in the region.

- Good presence of social services institutes.
- A significant number of structures that promote equal opportunities for both sexes.
- People with executive knowledge and experience in education and training, counseling, social planning and advisory services.
- Presence of higher education institutions

Negative impacts:

- Inability for designing and planning of training programs for connection to the labor market.
- Lack of adequate statistics at regional and departmental level.
- Inability to connect training with the production, the research enterprise and the innovation. The bodies of the local community (public and private) and the social partners usually remain uninvolved because they almost never are asked for their opinion. The twenty (20) specializations offered by EPAL and EPAS and the thirty (30) offered by IEK only two line towards developing a **Quality Model for Sustainable Rural Development**.

2.3.3 Connecting Regional Policy for Lifelong learning with the National Policy

The WISAR program in order to be supported by the Regional Committee (its establishment is provided in the new act for the development of Lifelong Learning) proposed the creation of a flexible Informal Regional Network for Lifelong Learning which is geared to the local needs of the economy and society.

Informal network of lifelong learning at regional level concerns operators, agencies, employees, unemployed people and generally people who are involved in lifelong learning. This network helps the social dialogue on lifelong learning, the implementation of educational programs for people of the local community and assists to the confrontation of the weaknesses of the market mechanism.

The configuration of this network, would help to the exchange of information, expertise and linking with bodies that are involved with the production as (Federation of Thessalian Industries, Chambers, Professional Associations, etc.) and also the labor market in order to detect the training needs of the people that is addressed. Through this network would be given opportunities to our fellow citizens to increase their access to learning opportunities. These

opportunities will enable the extension of their working life, their access to employment and to improve their quality of life.

A discussion on crisis and social cohesion of all stakeholders (including local government) would be at this level, more than ever imperative and would prioritize in regional level the needs and the educational priorities in terms of social survival. The key features that compose this network are:

Members of the network

Network members will be local social and economic partners (educational institutes, businesses, politicians, providers of formal and non-formal education, NGOs, etc.), or even individuals who can formulate policy proposals in the field of economy and education as:

- Executives - Experts from the Region of Thessaly
- Executives of Municipalities and Communities of the Region
- Representatives of Professional Associations (Traders Association, Federation of Industries, Technical Chamber, etc.)
- Staff of higher education institutes, vocational training institutes
- Members of the national agency of manpower

The aim of the Network

The network is intended to support the Regional Committee for Lifelong Learning, in order to mobilize social, economic and educational factors that operate at local level, to link national policy of Lifelong Learning to the characteristics and particularities of the region.

Network Mode

The network will be operated by an elected steering committee, which will invite its members regularly (twice a year) in order to plan the actions that would be taken and to report the actions that were carried out.

Fields of the Network

The interventions such a network in today's difficult times, as said above, can be various in the format of expertise on:

- Exploration of the labor market and human resources needs in order to formulate policies to combat unemployment with educational programs.
- Registration of the requirements and needs of the labor market in skills and qualifications that the manpower should have.
- Connection between education and the needs of the labor market.
- Inclusion of socially vulnerable groups into the labor market.

- Active employment policies which can be based on the specific characteristics of the region.

The Delphi method on a regular basis will be a key tool of the network in order to update the regional strategy on the development prospects of the region, the requirements of the labor market and the form that the education institutes will use to cover these needs.

2.4 Guidelines for the development of sustainable regional strategy for lifelong learning

In order to develop a regional policy for Lifelong Learning there are some basic steps:

1. **Coordinator:** There must be involvement of a local social - economic partner (eg educational institution, association of employers, chamber, etc.) who will be recognizable in the region. This partner will coordinate all stakeholders in the development of Regional Strategy for Lifelong Learning (LLL).
2. **Communication for the Need of a Regional Development Strategy LLL:** There could be a debate, through media and with the participation of experts of education, labour market and economy, about the benefits that can occur through the implementation of a Regional Strategy LLL. This action will sensitize the public awareness and will lead the bodies of political LLP to act.
3. **Coordination of social - economic factors which can contribute to the implementation of the Regional Strategy LLL:** There should be discussions in order to determine the form and the extent of involvement (who does what and how) of those specific factors in relation to key components that should be investigated, recorded and analyzed, including:
 - Quantity and Quality of Human Resources of the Region
 - Adequacy of education and training structures.

For this step we will need the contribution of the National Statistical Service, local employment services, local offices of education, etc.

4. **Undertaking of the stakeholders in the development of particular strategy for active, regular and ongoing involvement in the effort:** This undertaking could be through the establishment of an informal network of LLL, which will be managed by an elected committee that will

have a specific purpose, will meet on a regular basis in order to review and plan its actions.

5. **Implementation of the Strategy:** In order to implement the strategy, there should be commitment at the central level of administration. The informal network can contribute in this direction because of its participation of individuals and organizations that can have access and influence in the decision makers.

2.5 New opportunities for cooperation that WISAR project could bring into region

On the occasion of the WISAR program, our organization decided the constitution of a flexible “Informal Regional Network of Lifelong Learning” which is directed in the local needs of economy and society.

Through the concretization of the two focus groups, local, social and economic partners (who will be also members of the Network) had the opportunity to be together in order to discuss subjects that occupy them and to agree that a regular collaboration among them is required, so that exists orientation for education and training based on the particularities of Region.

It will present opportunities for collaboration, through the permanent operation of the network:

a) In a Local level

- Among the productive institutions of the Region (Association of Thessaly’s Enterprises and Industries, Chambers, Professional Associations etc), for the determination of the skills and qualifications which demanded by the labour market and the way that they can be covered.
- Among all the training and education institutions (formal or not) for the content reformation of the study programs (curricula) in order to correspond in the local requirements of the labour market.
- Among the training institutions and the employers’ representatives in the development, concretization and recognition of the study programs (curricula) which are offered.

b) In a National level

- Among the responsible services of the Central Administration (Hellenic State), through proposals of the network to the Central Administration, regarding the priorities and the particular needs of the Region.

ANNEX

Sources

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