

Generalist Youth Information Services in Greece in 1997

The attached pages constitute the chapter concerning **Greece** which is part of a 17-country study completed in 1997. Each chapter provides a summary of the situation in the country at the end of 1997 concerning generalist youth information and counselling, and the methods and structures involved in its organisation and distribution.

This study was conducted by the **European Youth Information and Counselling Agency** (ERYICA), to which all the author organisations belong as “Member Organisations” or as “Co-operating Organisations”. Accordingly, the study is limited to those countries where in 1996-97 there existed functioning networks of generalist youth information centres and services which were co-operating with ERYICA.

The 17 chapters of this study, in separate English and French versions, can be consulted on the ERYICA Internet site (“www.eryica.org” - see the section “Documents”, then “1997 Study”). Each file, which is in Word 2.0 for Windows / PC (varying between 4 and 20 pages in length), can also be downloaded from the site.

More recent information about each ERYICA national partner, its activities and its network can also be found on the ERYICA Internet site:

- a) **current addresses of national partners**: under “Discover ERYICA”, then “Members”, then “Country”
- b) **links to Internet sites of national partners**: under “Discover SERVICES”, then “Web-sites of ERYICA Partners”
- c) (when the organisation co-ordinates a network) **links to a list of addresses of regional or local centres**: under “Discover ERYICA”, then “Members”, then “Country”.

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G R E E C E

INTRODUCTION

The first Youth Information Centre in Greece was created in 1984 in Athens, with the aim of responding to the needs of young people as effectively as possible.

Today generalist youth information centres and services are quite widespread at regional and local levels.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

The aims of the youth information centres are to guarantee for all young people comprehensive and reliable information in order to facilitate their autonomy as well as their active participation in a democratic society.

The principles contained in the **Greek Youth Information Charter** correspond to those of the European Youth Information Charter adopted in 1993 by the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA).

GOVERNMENTAL POLICY

In 1984, a Ministerial decree authorised the establishment of the General Secretariat for Youth, to which the first youth information centre was attached administratively.

The governmental body responsible for youth information and for youth policy at the national level is still the General Secretariat for Youth, which encourages

the creation of youth information centres at the local and regional levels.

LEGAL STATUS AND FINANCING OF CENTRES

The Athens Youth Information Centre is a department of the General Secretariat for Youth. Regional and local centres depend on Municipalities.

The personnel of the Centres are a mixture of civil servants and employees under contract. All persons working in the youth information centres are highly qualified.

The financing of the youth information centres is provided by the General Secretariat for Youth and by the Municipalities.

The information in this text has been provided by the General Secretariat for Youth, which is responsible for youth information at the national level:

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NATIONAL CO-ORDINATION

At present there is a system of co-ordination between the General Secretariat for Youth and the youth information centres which depend on Municipalities. The structures of a more comprehensive national network are being developed.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND YOUTH INFORMATION STRUCTURES

The Government finances the youth information centres if their principles correspond to those of the Greek Youth Information Charter.

The youth information centres operate autonomously.

The centres launch themselves information campaigns according to local needs. They also provide information about the needs of young people to local and national authorities.

The General Secretariat for Youth provides assistance to regional and local centres, while respecting the autonomy of their operations.

TYPICAL SERVICES PROPOSED BY CENTRES

The following areas of information and counselling are made available in a youth information centre:

- studies
- leisure activities
- social problems
- youth mobility
- quality of life.

In addition to their "information" and "counselling" functions, the centres offer ticket services, the Youth Card, personal

ads, the availability of meeting-rooms, and a cafeteria, as well as the acquisition of skills in workshops (photography, etc.).

The centres are free to choose their own methods for informing, counselling and helping young people. There is no "correct" method imposed by a higher body.

Access to the centres is without restriction and their services are free of charge.

Opening hours vary according to the centre.

Information is collected directly from all the public or private bodies which offer services which are related to young people.

The distribution of information is by way of all information media, through publications, via personal ads, as well as with the help of new communication technologies.

ELECTRONIC NETWORK

A public electronic youth information system has been created at the national level, in co-operation with regional structures. In the framework of this network, the following initiatives had been developed:

1. the creation of youth information centres (situated in Communal capitals), whose sole function is to inform:
2. the creation of youth information points, which are small units which act as relay-points for the centres; they are equipped with a computer and access to Internet, and are located town-halls, educational administrations, etc.
3. making available to young people a direct access to Internet and to the

Web-site of the General Secretariat for Youth.

The public information network is managed by the General Secretariat for Youth, and the following services are proposed:

1. access to Internet, which gives access to data-bases on issues which interest young people
2. information via the centres and the youth information points
3. the distribution of booklets produced by the centres in schools and universities
4. publications which use electronic media
5. services employing modern technologies such as touch-screens

The youth information centres co-operate in the area of computerised data. They collect and enter information concerning studies, vocational training, careers, cultural activities, sport, tourist sites, the environment, social issues and European programmes which are related to young people.

The centres also have at their disposal European data-bases such as Eurodesk, INFOmobil et Thetis. They also provide:

- a) access to the main Greek and European data-bases
- b) direct access to Internet
- c) the possibility of doing desktop publishing.

ASSESSING THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Experience and personal contacts demonstrate that the issues, which are a matter of concern to most young people, are those relating to their studies and to employment.

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER SERVICES

Co-operation with other public services is maintained through administrative channels.

Co-operation with social service organisations is maintained by regular contacts and by the exchange of information.

HOW PLURALISM AND QUALITY ARE GUARANTEED

When a public administration provides information, this is discussed by the youth information centre with the providing service before being selected.

Training is given to the personnel of the centres, through training courses, by participating in specialised seminars and through exchanges with a certain number of other countries.

OTHER SPECIALISED INFORMATION SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In Greece, there are other specialised information services for young people in such fields as employment, sexuality, AIDS, drug addiction and health in general.