



Greece

Evrpidis Stylianidis

Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs



In September 2007, the Honourable Evripidis Stylianidis was appointed Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs. Prior to this, he served as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, responsible for economic diplomacy and international economic cooperation. A graduate of the Law School of Democritus University (Thrace) and a PhD holder in Constitutional law of the University of Hamburg, Minister Evripidis Stylianidis has been a Member of the Greek Parliament since 2000. Along with his political and publishing activities, he is the youngest member of the Committee for the Revision of the Greek Constitution as well as a representative of the Greek Parliament in the "Convention on the Future of Europe".

From inclusive education to inclusive society

It has been some years now since the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs broadened the relevant policies and practices with regard to Inclusive Education in order to deal with the challenges posed therewith. The previously one-dimensional approach of catering for the children with disabilities or the ones with learning difficulties has now expanded to become "all-inclusive", to face the needs of various vulnerable groups of students.

It should first be pointed out that the large immigration influx in Greece has considerably changed the demographic profile of the classroom in both primary and secondary education. In many schools pupil composition is multicultural, which calls for immediate actions to deal therewith. Our efforts have consistently been oriented towards implementing viable and effective practices to foster the inclusion of students with a migrant background and repatriated pupils in the Greek education system. Inclusion in this case extends to facilitating their eventual integration in the labour market with education being the prerequisite instrument providing them with the necessary skills and competences.

For us, the role of education as a driver of social cohesion and economic prosperity has long been acknowledged and has necessitated taking up certain other priorities as well. Indicatively, I need to further mention the constant effort that is made on the part of the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs to guarantee that students with disabilities should have unhindered access to quality education while securing their subsequent access to the labour market. All the above relate to broader equity issues such as the reduction of early school-leaving and drop-outs, gender balances, adult education and social and labour mobility.

Overall, it is our aim to ensure the qualitative improvement of all levels of education. In this direction, enhancing teachers' education and training so that they are able to deal with the challenges posed by the new socio-cultural conditions constitutes a basic target of our educational policies. Success requires the effective synergy between education, social and employment policies. Ensuring access to quality education for all and confronting inequalities means securing the fundamental human rights of the diverse vulnerable groups. We hope to be doing so, indeed, and to gradually reduce social exclusion where it still exists.