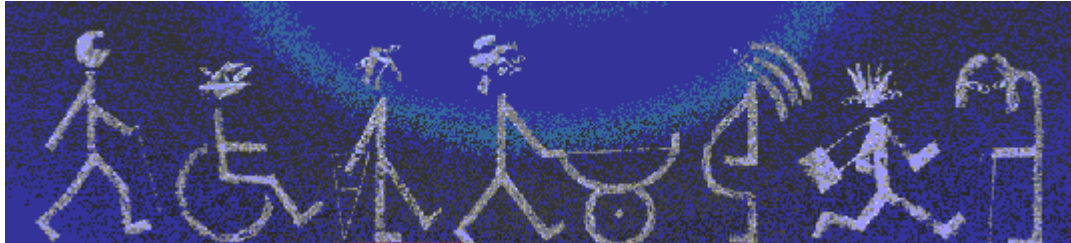


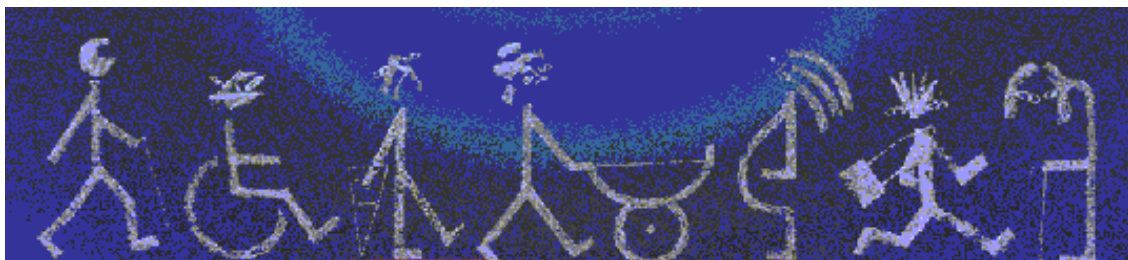


MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY



National Action Plan for Social Inclusion

2003-2005



**Athens
July 2003**

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INTRODUCTION

Governance and Reactive Management

The key distinction to be made at the start of a National Action Plan is that between **governance** and **reactive management**. The latter term implies an, often passive reaction, to external developments. Governance entails an active endeavour to shape events, charting a course selected for its desirability, and not merely because it is the least bad of the available options.

The very decision to draw and pursue an Action Plan is an act of governance rather than management. In social policy especially, such a course amounts to a decision to adopt an proactive role, where social policy is a dynamic lever for the aspirations of society; equally it is a choice to abandon a mere palliative function, where policy confines itself to alleviating the adverse effects of social developments.

An *effective* Action Plan, therefore, will need to form part of a more comprehensive national social programme – a broader complex of goals and aspirations.

During the 90's Greece's central objective – achieved with unqualified success – was that of **nominal convergence** with the other countries of the EU. Attaining this objective entailed overcoming the immense macro-economic problems besetting Greece at the beginning of the decade, while preserving social cohesion through the quantitative expansion of social spending. The crowning achievement of this strategy was the attainment of consistently high rates of growth, and hence laying firm foundations for real **convergence** – a process which began in 1996 and has gathered pace over the last few years.

The key challenge of the current decade – to 2010 – is to sustain the pace of real convergence. **This is the best way to attain our fundamental objective – social prosperity and individual fulfilment.** Over the next few years we must create the appropriate conditions – both economic and social – for the achievement of high and sustainable rates of growth. Such rates of growth will support the development of the Welfare State, as well as the upgrading of quality in social services and will hence safeguard social cohesion.

Simple *reactive management* does not suffice. What is needed is:

- *Coordination* among policy sectors
- *Compatibility* of objectives among the different sectors
- *Broad social consensus and joint efforts* to achieve these objectives
- A transcending of narrow personal or sectoral interests

In other words: what is required is *governance*, not *management*.

If policy does not rise beyond reactive management, then mention of values promoted by social policy would be mere ritual. In contrast choosing active *governance* can mobilise the values underlying social policy as instruments for its success. Such values are: **Respect for the individual. Solidarity, Respect for life, equality, social justice. The building of a cohesive society for active citizens.**

The Government has announced that in September 2003 it will announce its **Charter for Real Convergence 2004-2008**, providing a framework of specific commitments to objectives and interventions in the coming years.

This **National Action Plan for Social Inclusion** is the first step in this process – evidence of the importance of social cohesion in the overall plan. As part of the open method of coordination in the EU, it presents a strategic account of the problem accompanied by an inventory of the various measures being taken to resolve it. It also lays down *ten* central targets – ambitious but realistic – for social cohesion, objectives which will also serve as criteria for evaluating the success of the whole process of real convergence.

CHAPTER 1

MAIN TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

1.1 General strategic framework

1.1.1 Greek strategy – in line with the overall Lisbon strategy – rests on human resources, the utilisation of human capital. The mobilization of these resources – in both quantitative and qualitative terms – is a necessary condition for the attainment of our development objectives.

What is required, then, is a **social policy which acts as an engine for growth**.

- A policy which itself creates surpluses – surpluses which can be employed in redistribution policies that strengthen rather than weaken social cohesion. In this way social policy needs not to wait upon the redistribution of surpluses generated elsewhere.
- A policy whose main objective is the upgrading and more effective utilization of human capital, creating more opportunities for autonomous productive involvement through employment.
- A policy which fosters a sense of security, allowing each individual to feel that they will be supported in the various difficulties they may encounter – a security which brings added value to the process of redistribution.

This is not a strategy which poses dilemmas (development or justice/solidarity); instead it makes social policy and social solidarity (that we should all live in a fairer society, that we should all be able to look forward to a secure future) the concern of the *whole* community. If social protection operates with clear, transparent and just criteria, then it elevates **solidarity** from a personal virtue into a social good.

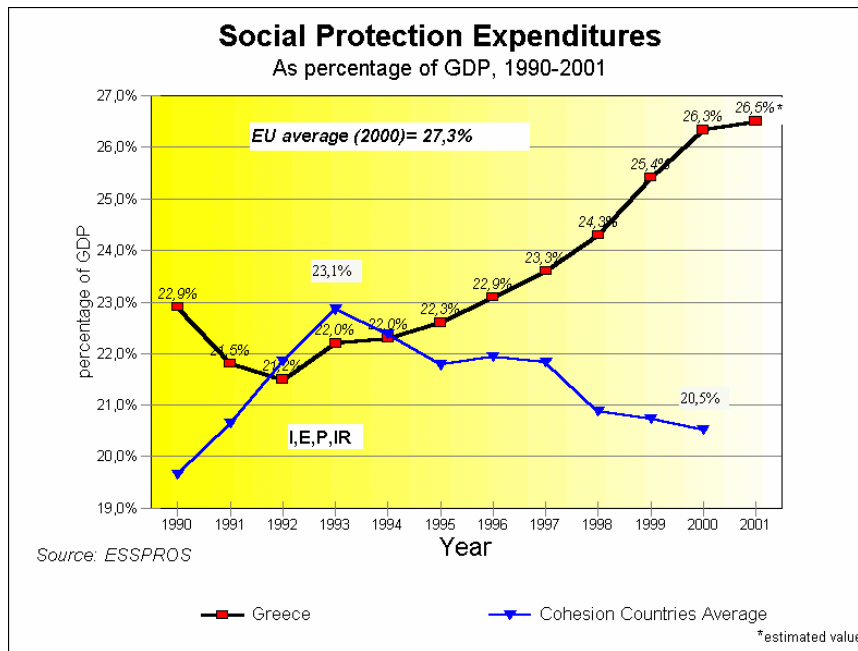
Thus, our endeavours must be framed in line with the following principles:

- Legitimation of the welfare state
- Fair, transparent, generally accepted rules
- Objectives and targets based on generally accepted priorities.
- *Quality* in services.

A virtuous circle will thus result, in which social solidarity increases opportunities for growth, thereby generating the conditions for its own continuation. In contrast, the more traditional view leads to cutbacks in social provision at precisely those moments when the support of the state is required most urgently – the moments when difficulties are encountered.

1.1.2. For the success of this overall strategy, **four preconditions** are necessary. Of these the first two can be thought largely secured, while significant progress has been made with the third precondition. Our priority in the coming years, therefore, must be to concentrate on the third and fourth preconditions, without neglecting work still remaining to consolidate the first and second.

First precondition: Adequate funding. The creation of a welfare state geared to growth is a social investment. Cutbacks in investment of this kind, however expedient they may seem in the short term, lead in the end to undesirable consequences. Since 1996 Greece has been increasing its social spending each year, even during the difficult period of adjustment to the Economic and Monetary Union conditions. *Diagram 1 demonstrates that Greece, once the lowest-ranking state in southern Europe, is in 2000 just one percentage point behind the EU average.* Robust foundations have now been laid – a fundamental prerequisite for real social progress. Of particular significance is the fact that *finance for the extra spending was universally approved, with no dissension (across the spectrum) from the view that the spending represented a positive trend.* This illustrates the consensus in Greek society on the importance of solidarity. Nevertheless it must also be credited as a significant success of the overall thrust of the policies pursued.



Second Precondition: Structural changes to pave the way for progress. For many years social policy in Greece was hostage to a number of factors: on the one hand unresolved problems like pension reform were breeding grounds of uncertainty and insecurity. On the other, administrative weaknesses made it almost impossible to implement a whole range of vital initiatives. The pension reform in 2002 (Law 3029) provided an unambiguous ‘road map’ to guarantee secure pensions for at least a generation ahead. Radical administrative changes –local government reform (the ‘Capodistria programme’), the modernization of public administration – have opened up new avenues, whose exploration had hitherto not been feasible.

Third Precondition: Targeted interventions to tackle phenomena of social exclusion in population groups which must be identified on the basis of income and other criteria; otherwise they are doomed to remain ignored, general interventions failing to correct the special problems they face. Examples of such groups are EKAS beneficiaries (Social Solidarity Supplement for Pensioners), elderly without full national insurance cover, the disabled, large families on low incomes, Gypsy/Rom groups, minority groups, unemployed individuals with special problems, individuals with disabilities and all other groups which, at the time when the country’s social security and welfare structures were being developed, were prevented - by factors of time, geography or legislation – from enjoying full integration into the structures of the welfare state.

The the Mediterranean welfare state

The welfare state in the Mediterranean countries differs from its counterpart in western Europe:

- In **economic** terms: Importance of the rural economy, and of small and medium-sized businesses. Direct transition to service-based economy. Once a major source of emigration, now a destination for immigrants.
- In **social** terms: importance of family and informal solidarity networks.
- In terms of the **institutional development**: Comparatively recent development of institutions, limited administrative infrastructure, corporatist history.

But also in terms of

- **Political factors**: Gaps in institutional organisation. An emerging Civil society. Positive attitude to the European dimension.

enjoying full integration into the structures of the welfare state.

The fourth precondition is also the most important: **High-quality services** – Quality in social services. The provision on the part of the State of welfare services of a quality to match the best available internationally – this is the only way to re-establish the prestige of the welfare state in the eyes of the citizen. Quality services for all will re-establish the bonds linking the individual citizen with the community as a whole.

Only thus can the welfare state begin to generate social cohesion, and cease to be a source of nuisance and stress. A welfare state of this kind will strike the spark from which a true civil society can be mobilised.

It is this issue - of the quality of relations between state and citizen, the quality of administration, social interventions and social services – which forms the central idea of the action plan.

1.2 The challenges of social cohesion

1.2.1 Greece is currently undergoing a process of rapid evolution. As a result of long-standing economic and social factors Greek society – like the other societies of the Mediterranean – is passing through a phase of deep structural changes, in the transition from one societal model to another. The system of social protection is called upon to support this change – which means that while continuing to answer the problems of the old model, it must also adjust to the demands of the new. This evolution entails the following consequences:

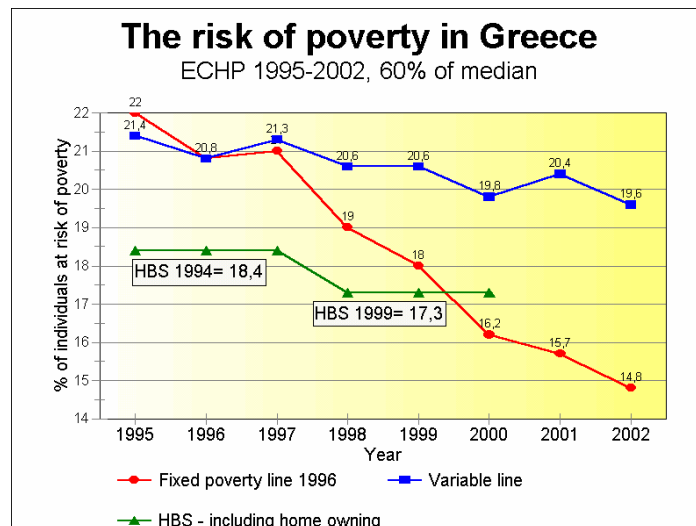
1. The system of social protection itself needs to undergo reform – yet this reform cannot ignore the needs of the older social model.
2. Heavy demands will be made on governance during the transitional period – it will be required to continue responding to existing needs while preparing structures to meet the new challenges.
3. That the Mediterranean model is different from the northern European is not in question. Preparing responses for future needs must involve the quest for solutions appropriate to the region; it cannot simply rely on models imported from elsewhere. The Mediterranean economies face the special challenge of making a *direct* transition to the *post-industrial* age.
4. Nonetheless, organized interventions by society as a whole will be required to shoulder more of the burden of responsibility for social protection – a burden borne hitherto primarily by the family, and more generally by informal solidarity networks. Supporting the family, in these circumstances, is perhaps the main challenge for social policy in the current decade. If interventions in this area are to succeed, they must enjoy the support of the whole community – State initiatives alone will not be enough.
5. Special attention must be paid to the interpretation of statistical data. When studying a phenomenon as complex and multidimensional as social exclusion, one and the same indicator may be susceptible of different interpretations in different communities. Two examples of this should suffice:
 - The same money income entails much greater risk of marginalization if accompanied by the threat of **homelessness**. A tenant will feel much more stress from financial hardship than an individual who enjoys the security of owning the roof over his head.
 - Although financial data (e.g. income, consumption) lend themselves more easily to statistical representation, the task of policymakers must be to focus on areas where they can provide the maximum alleviation to social problems, even if they are not susceptible of statistical measurement. For example, for those with impaired mobility, the issue of access is more important than that of income. Likewise, state funds may be more profitably channelled into the provision of services (e.g. those allowing the elderly to lead a longer independent life outside residential care) than the provision of cash allowances or benefits.

This observation lends additional weight to the argument for involvement of civil society – either those individuals directly affected or social solidarity organizations – since it is only in this way that we can hope to correct what might be described as ‘statistical myopia’.

1.3 Features of the current situation in respect of social cohesion.

Charting of policy for social cohesion must take into account the following general observations on the nature of the problem in Greece (for details and a presentation of the 18 Laeken indicators for the EU-15 countries, see Statistical Appendix).

1. The risk of poverty in Greece is not far from the EU average. This results once adequate weight is given to the greater financial security enjoyed by those who live in a house of their own¹.
2. Over recent years – since 1994, and even during the period of stabilization – this percentage has been gradually declining (see Diagram 2). Compared with 1995, the figure declined by more than 2 percentage points, or by some 250 thousand individuals. There are indications that the rate of improvement is actually accelerating.
3. The small percentage improvement in *relative* risk of poverty conceals much greater improvements in financial status, in the standard of living of the individuals at risk. The percentage of those who have escaped the risk of poverty on the basis of the purchasing power of the 1996 line was 29% lower in 2002. Likewise, the average real income of those at risk (with the variable) has risen by more than 25%, and more rapidly than that of other citizens,



4. The distribution of income, as generated by market forces – i.e. before *any* state intervention – is relatively equal. The most decisive form of direct intervention is through pensions to low income pensioners (reducing the percentage of risk by one third) and, to a lesser extent, through other income interventions. As for the *efficacy* of the policy of income transfer, it is enough to mention that 56% of the income of individuals at risk is derived from social transfers, i.e. from welfare benefits and pensions (in 1996 this figure was just 47%), not including services and deficiency payments on rural incomes. Thus, the claims of limited efficacy themselves demonstrate above all a limited understanding of the situation².
5. Nevertheless, the existing percentage of relative risk of poverty remains an obstacle to the implementation of the overall economic and social policy. In this

¹ In low-income groups rent represents an average of between 20 and 30% of family income – a sum which benefits the household if there were no rent to pay. The Household Budget Survey takes this fact into account, reducing the risk of poverty by three points – to roughly 17%. A Bank of Greece survey on indebtedness showed that households with mortgages are mainly or exclusively those enjoying average or above average incomes, not individuals at risk of poverty.

² In regard to inequality in distribution of income, there is some evidence of a slow improvement – certainly not a ‘widening of the gap’ – see Stat. Appendix.

context, a **significant reduction in the number of individuals living in conditions of poverty is a major policy goal.**

It is easy to forget, when conducting a simple statistical survey, that hardships affecting the population at large are felt all the more keenly by individuals suffering from disabilities. It is essential that in all our analyses we take the trouble to study the interaction of various situations (financial or otherwise) with the existing problems of the handicapped.³

To understand the dynamics of income distribution, and to approach the causes of poverty, it is useful to examine a differentiation in two crucial dimensions. This distinction is partly to do with the quality of statistical data existing for each category. But mainly it has to do with differences in the characteristics of poverty - in how poverty is actually experienced – and in the nature of the measures best suited to combat it. The case of the disabled demonstrates vividly the importance of the subjective, ‘existential’ factor in matters of social inclusion, and reminds us of the importance of wider analyses.

First dimension: Age. In Greece, poverty comes with white hair. Despite progress made since 1994 (EKAS, Agricultural pensions), the elderly remain part of the population most at risk. It is this vulnerability of the old which accounts for the *totality* of the difference between Greece and the EU-15; among the *non-elderly* (those under 65) the Greek percentage is comparable to that of the EU-15⁴. If a judgment is made that the risk of poverty in Greece is elevated, then this is statistically due to the economic position of the elderly as a distinct group within the population.

Second dimension. Urban versus rural. The factors which make up quality of life, and the way they are recorded, differ substantially in the city and the countryside. In rural Greece home-ownership is the rule, while consumption of one’s own produce and exchanges of commodities among households are much more significant. At the same time, the complexity of the economics of the small family farm, and the different tax regime to which it is subject, lead to systematic underestimating of money incomes in rural areas. The result is that the statistics tend to paint an unreasonably grim picture of life in the rural areas (i.e. for the residents of villages and small towns of less than 2,000 inhabitants). In urban areas the percentage of risk of poverty (in each age group) is less than half that of the corresponding group in the rural areas.

The picture of elevated risk in rural areas is altered if a separate analysis of those at risk is conducted for urban areas and countryside (see Stat. Appendix). In this way the comparisons underlying the analysis are made in two stages: one *within* each region, and one *between* the two regions⁵. Such an analysis belies the picture of greater numbers at risk in rural areas – the percentage of those at risk is roughly the same as in the urban areas, while trends to convergence in standards of living have accelerated over recent years.

These two distinctions – by age and by region – are of key significance in framing policy and establishing the order of priorities. This is because the appropriate response differs according to the causes of the problem.

³ This is the concept behind the mainstreaming of provisions for individuals with special needs in all policy measures, as described in resolution 10244/03 put forward by the Greek Presidency.

⁴ This is without any correction for home-ownership. When that correction is made, the situation in Greece is better.

⁵ The first phase of comparison employs the average standard of living *within* each sector, and only then the nation as a whole. This can be justified by the fact that the *quality* of the data and the extent of statistical error is systematically different in each sector.

	Elderly	Employed
Urban areas	State pensions (contributory) Problems from incomplete contributions – e.g. EKAS Women without their own pension entitlement Family solidarity	Mainly wage-earners or salaried Access to employment critical, especially for women At risk if only one family member employed - make work pay Questions of housing more important
Rural areas	Basic OGA Pensions (welfare) Problems of isolation Inadequate services – access to health and care	Development of countryside - Entrepreneurship Issues of geographical exclusion Services and quality of life

The main source of income for the **elderly** are pensions. The Pension Strategy Report of 2002 makes clear that the problem of poverty is most acute among the elderly when they have an incomplete record of contributions – a problem diminishing over time. It is a question therefore of income support for *today's* pensioners, while measures which have already been taken in the pension system will ensure that this problem gradually grows less acute. The distinction between **rural** and other areas is associated with the OGA pensions, which up until 1998 were a form of welfare benefit, while since then the new system of a primary pension (contributions-based) is already leading to higher pensions for the rural population. In contrast to the situation in urban areas, all women in the countryside have their own pension. Quality of life for this age group is materially affected by the informal support enjoyed by the family, and also on access to – and quality of – health and care services, especially for the disabled.

For people of **working age** issues of inclusion are substantially different in the two areas. In **rural areas** the key factor is the more general level of development, since households living in rural areas derive their income from a range of activities, *one* of which is usually the small family farm (producing crops or raising livestock). Social inclusion in rural areas goes hand in hand with the pursuit of *sustainability* in development –the fourth pillar of the Lisbon Strategy. Family income is boosted by policies in agriculture (e.g. deficiency payments) but also by measures differentiating the incomes of the self-employed. The nature of agricultural activity is such that calculations of income based on surveys designed mainly for populations of wage- and salary-earners (such as the Panel) are especially unsatisfactory⁶.

Although it is not included in the ESSPROS definition of social spending, the provision of deficiency payments is the most important social intervention, helping to retain the populations of the mountain and disadvantaged regions (Stat. Appendix). Their purpose is to improve income by compensating for the difficulties (low productivity, geo-morphology, climatic conditions) facing crop and livestock farmers in these regions, on the basis of the size of their holding.

In **cities**, on the other hand, the main cause of the problem of inclusion is associated with access to employment. For a family with two children the risk of poverty line (at 2003 prices) is around €870 per month. As in other EU countries, the surest way to raise oneself above this line is for there to be two members of the family in employment (even if one is only working part-time). Attainment of the Lisbon objective on women's employment contributes decisively to combating exclusion. *The Statistical Appendix contains calculations which show that achievement of this objective reduces the risk of poverty by between a half and a third.*

⁶ For example, whereas the company car supplied to an employee counts as part of his income, the same is not true of a farmer's pick-up or van, which will be numbered among the assets of his 'business', *not* the household.

Even though the percentage of individuals at risk (about 12%, or 15% if we ignore home-ownership) is not high by EU standards, their problems are more difficult, and their experience of poverty in the form of insecurity and uncertainty is without doubt more painful. It is significant that (only) in this category do we find a higher percentage of poverty among tenants, for whom housing and conditions of accommodation are a vital issue and a key factor in the danger of exclusion. While the high degree of solidarity in Greek society may alleviate some of the worst aspects of the problem (e.g. the presence of children reducing the likelihood of poverty, lower correlation between unemployment and risk of poverty) the fact remains that the danger of exclusion manifests itself in this group with characteristics as intractable as those experienced in the western European states. In a way, this group represents the core of the problem of inclusion to which the Action Plan must respond.

Developments in the labour market are the critical factor. Of particular significance in recent years has been the decline in the numbers of (unpaid) family members assisting in small family businesses, as these individuals have turned to the labour market and found paid employment. The replacement of unpaid labour *within* the family by paid activity outside the home may have a large (favourable) impact on the finances of the household and help to reduce the risk of poverty. The creation of more employment opportunities which allow individuals to reconcile work and family life will encourage this trend to continue.

The *long-term* response to problems of inclusion must involve not only guaranteeing access to employment but also the productivity of labour and the level of remuneration. While pay levels in recent years are driven by powerful factors specific to the medium term (e.g. high rates of growth in the economy, Olympic Games) their long-term course will depend on what happens in the development and utilization of human resources. It is necessary at this point to remind the reader of two factors:

- The enormous difference in educational qualifications between the younger and the older generation – a difference particularly striking among women. This is the result of the greater importance attached to education in the value system of the population and, in part at least, of the overcoming of many of the problems which formerly impeded equal access to education.
- The training and vocational guidance interventions currently being implemented under the 3rd CSF, many of which are financed by the Social Fund. These interventions, the largest the Greek labour market has ever seen, are upgrading human capital and improving the workings of the labour market. They are expected to leave a permanent positive legacy.

The above analysis of the risk of poverty has laid the main emphasis on economic and employment issues. However, the subjective experience of those at risk is coloured by their degree of access to a range of goods and services. The most crucial of these are **medical** and **care** services. It is at stressful times of personal need that the citizen calls on these services, and he will see the care he receives as a mirror of the welfare state: if these services let him down in the moment of need, the chain of negative consequences extend far beyond the immediate area of health care. The existence of a black economy in the health sector, or of a parasitic relationship between the public and private health-care sectors – both products of long-term structural imbalances – stands in the way of equal access to treatment and care, thereby exacerbating social inequalities. Thus qualitative improvement and the guaranteeing of *genuinely* equal access to services, regardless of geography or economic status, are key elements in the *overall* strategy for social inclusion in Greece.

CHAPTER 2

PROGRESS 2001-3

The years covered by the first Action Plan – 2001-2003 – were a period of social progress. Despite recessionary conditions elsewhere in Europe the Greek economy continued to grow, allowing a continuing rise in social spending. In the social sector, the symbolic emphasis on social policy in the country's revised Constitution was accompanied by important structural changes and initiatives which laid the foundations for rapid improvements over the next few years.

A. The Macro-economic context

Since the second quarter of 2001 the European economy has been in the downward phase of the economic cycle, with slowing growth rates, increasing public sector deficits and rising unemployment. However, the Greek economy has been spared these problems, enjoying healthy growth in domestic consumer and investor demand and in GDP.

From 2000 to the first quarter of 2003 the rate of growth exceeded 4%, sustaining the dynamic of real convergence with the EU countries. During the two years 2001-2002 productivity of labour and average real wages both recorded significant annual rises, of 4.3% and 3.0% respectively, (compared with 0.3% and 0.5% for the Eurozone as a whole), with a parallel annual increase in business investment of 7.6%. Inflation remains higher than in the Eurozone, but this reflects the different positions of the economies in the economic cycle, and the more rapid rate of growth of the Greek economy.

For the third year in succession **unemployment** fell (9.7% in the fourth quarter of 2002 compared with 10.9% in the corresponding quarter of 2001). During 2002 and the first quarter of 2003 there was significant increase in the level of employment, and in the percentage of the population employed, thus reversing an alarming trend of the previous two years. Continuing its downward trend, unemployment fell by one percentage point in the first quarter of 2003 (compared with the same period in 2002). In overall terms, unemployment has fallen by 2.2 percentage points since 2000, representing a 25% decline in the average annual rate. The greatest progress has been made in reducing unemployment among the young and long-term unemployment, while efforts to combat unemployment among women have not been so successful.

Increased employment has been accompanied by a rise in productivity of labour (from 75.6% of the EU average in 1998 to 86.5% in 2003). Thus the economy is accelerating the rate of creation of new jobs, while unemployment rates are falling without any drop in the numbers entering the labour market.

B. Resolution of issues pending – Laying the foundations for rapid progress

A salient feature of developments over these two years has been the preparatory work enabling for rapid progress in coming years. This work has proceeded along three axes:

1. The settlement of **major unresolved issues**, which remove obstacles to further development. The question of *pensions* had been a permanent stumbling block to good industrial relations, and also a cause of insecurity for the workforce. The passing of Law 3029/2002, and the process of implementing its provisions, has laid down a clear road map for the modernization of the pension system, as well as creating clear prospects for its progress towards self-sufficiency and the viability of pensions. In their turn the *tax reforms* too have clarified the situation,

introduced new incentives, especially to small family businesses, and brought welcome tax relief to low-paid workers. A similar role may be played in the

THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION, 2001

1. The revised Constitution, finalized in 2001, introduced a provision which explicitly enshrines the role of the welfare state at the very highest statutory level. The new phrasing of article 25 § 1 of the Constitution states that '*The rights of each person as an individual and as a member of society and the principle of a social rule of law are guaranteed by the state*'. Apart from its significance in symbolic and political terms, this reference in the Constitution formally establishes the principle of the welfare state in Greek law. It both reinforces the content of the citizen's social rights and – in respect of legislative initiatives in the area of social protection – imposes a clear regulatory limit on the freedom of future legislators and administrations who might seek to lower the level of social protection provided.

2. Article 116 § 2 provides that '*It shall not constitute discrimination on grounds of gender when the State shall take positive measures to promote equality between men and women. The State shall take the necessary measures to end those inequalities existing in practice, especially those suffered by women.*' The article brings Greek law into line with the legislation in other EU countries and responds to an earlier ruling by the Council of State which found that the taking of positive measures in favour of one population group was a contravention of the principle of equality before the law. In its scope this provision comprehends not only women, but also other groups and conditions of inequality, permitting the state to take measures which, while they might appear to discriminate, are in fact designed to counter such undesirable phenomena as social exclusion.

3. Article 21 § 6 provides that '*Disabled individuals have the right to enjoy the benefit of measures which will ensure their independence, occupational integration and participation in the social, economic and political life of the country*'. It reserves for the disabled their own special constitutional right, urging legislators to take all necessary measures to protect the disabled and facilitate their enjoyment of the fullest possible life.

countryside by the reform of the *Common Agricultural Policy*.

2. The **creation of administrative capacity**. Progress in *modernizing public administration*, and especially in decentralization, has opened up new prospects of more specialized and finely targeted social policy actions, allowing the decision-making to take place at a point closer to the final user. Of critical importance in this area were the structural changes in social services. The local authorities have already begun to take over key areas of social policy, such as the implementation of the Help at Home programme. The same period was of equal importance in establishing on a firm basis the institutions which guarantee the **efficient administration** and performance of the 3rd CSF (e.g. National Accreditation Centre of Vocational Training Structures, Management Organization Unit, etc.). Also of particular significance is the accumulated experience of targeting measures on the basis of financial need, which advances hand in hand with the progress in taxation infrastructure and the improved reliability of declarations submitted by the taxpayer in his income tax return.
3. **Benefits derived from earlier provisions**.– Legalization of Immigrants' status has led to a regularization of their position in the economy and has made it possible to highlight the contribution they make to the economy while significantly reducing the danger of marginalization. The more general benefits of this policy have already begun to make themselves felt, with a boost to revenue of the social insurance funds: so far in 2003 IKA (the Institution of Social Insurance – the country's main pension fund) has already registered more than half a million foreign workers. Now that the economic status of the immigrants has been regularized, the way is clear for tackling broader issues of intercultural and social inclusion, above and beyond questions of employment.

In **health-care** emphasis has been laid on the rapid implementation of the programme to upgrade technical and material resources – e.g. new hospitals, health centres. The years 2001-2003 were also a period of change in the administration of the National Health Service, the main element being the

reorganization of services into 17 regions, autonomous in their administration and provision of public health services. The main objective was to reorganize health-care services with the emphasis on prevention and primary health-care, in order to assess the real needs of the population (public health map) and to ensure optimum access to health-care services.

C. Experience from the 2001-2003 Action Plan for Social Inclusion.

During the period 2001-3 a particularly important role has been played by the **income policy** for low-paid workers and the elderly on low pensions, in combination with other measures in the area of social security. The table below shows that the increases granted have led to large real income increases. Since 2000, low pensions have increased at a rate above that of inflation or wages. Since 2000 there has been an overall increase in the purchasing power of the basic OGA pension of more than 21%, while a retired person drawing the lowest IKA pension and the EKAS supplement has seen his real economic position improve by 27%, nearly a third.

Income policy and pensions: Real increases 1998-2003 (% annual change)

	<i>RPI</i>	<i>Minim um wage</i>	<i>OGA</i>	<i>IKA</i>	<i>EKAS</i>	<i>IKA + EKAS</i>
1999	2,6	3,3	4,2	3,9	50,0	18,0
2000	3,2	4,3	29,7	4,0	17,6	9,3
2001	3,4	3,3	11,2	5,5	35,7	18,1
2002	3,6	5,5	10,3	3,5	15,4	9,2
2003 May	4,4	4,2	9,3	4,0	15,2	9,7
2003/2000 cumulative real increase			20,7	1,5	63,8	27,4

Assistance to earthquake victims. During the course of 2002 €62.2m were distributed in the Prefecture of Attica and €34m in other regions. The area struck by the 1999 quake, the western districts of Athens, is home to a large number of people on low incomes. The housing and city planning programmes being implemented are leading to a significant improvement in the standard of living of these people, with important social consequences.

The dedication of the year 2003 as the Year of the Disabled provided a boost to a whole series of issues involving these individuals. Time will reveal the significance of a special survey by the NSSG, in the framework of the Labour Force Survey, in establishing the extent and nature of the problem of the disabled, especially in respect of employment (Appendix 3). At the same time significant progress was made in such programmes as Help at Home, which attempt to provide practical solutions to the problems of independence and social inclusion in the family and broader socio-economic environment.

The period covered by the first Action Plan for Social Inclusion coincided with the completion of the first phase of the independent **Ombudsman**. The mediation of the Ombudsman's office is intended on one level to make it easier for the ordinary citizen to exercise his rights, and on another to help improve the quality of services provided by the public administration. The Ombudsman has not only assisted to resolve individual cases, but has also made important inroads into broader issues and inefficiencies in social administration. The Ombudsman examined 5125 cases in 2002⁷, highlighting problems, recommending solutions and calling for further initiatives. The area of social protection was the target of widespread public dissatisfaction with social administration, which is directly associated with the

⁷ The overwhelming majority involve questions of pensions (73.9%), and to a lesser extent health-care (12.8%), problems of the disabled (4.1%) and welfare (3.8%).

difficulties faced by vulnerable groups in the exercise of their social rights⁸. *The Ombudsman's experience confirms the need for closer focus on the quality of services and facilitating access and opportunity for ordinary people to exercise their rights.*

In **rural areas** the actions initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture to tackle social exclusion focused on measures for employment (e.g. establishment and training of 8000 young farmers), as well as access to resources, goods and services (deficiency payments to 180,000 farmers and early retirement to 42,000 beneficiaries). Finally, we should note the widespread active involvement in the planning of integrated development programmes for the rural areas.

Tax reform

The two phases of the tax reforms were completed, designed to achieve fairer distribution of the tax burden, a reduction in the overall burden (especially on the lower-paid) and a simplification of the whole system. Specifically:

- A raising of the tax exceptions and a reduction of the tax rates, with a higher impact on lower incomes. Of particular importance is the additional tax relief granted for family spending.
- Simplification of the tax relief system . Deductible expenses of a social character have been retained, such as mortgage interest payments, rent on one's main dwelling, rent for offspring at university, school fees. The sum deductible has been raised for medical and nursing care and for life insurance premiums. The right to submit family expenses receipts as tax deductible has been retained only for wage-earners and pensioners.
- Tax on owner occupation income has been abolished.
- Certain presumptive indications of income have been dropped (e.g. home ownership, possession of car <2000 cc) and others have been simplified.
- The system of estimating the income of small businesses without taking into consideration the formal accounts has been dropped.
- Simplification of submission of tax return for wage-earners and pensioners.
- Measures to facilitate purchase of first dwelling
- Inheritance tax. or tax on parental gift of business (to ensure business continuity).

Meanwhile a number of observations made during the period 2001-3 have been made use of in drawing up the current Action Plan:

In regard to the pioneering complex of **targeted income support measures** contained in the Action Plan, the infrastructure has been designed to allow identification of beneficiaries, to ascertain their relevant details and issue the support. The successful pilot implementation during 2003 has led to a strategic decision to use these measures as key social policy tools in the next Action Plan.

Experience from the active mobilization of the broader community has demonstrated the importance of the existence of permanent structures for communication and consensus not only between the state and the community at large, but also among the agencies and organizations active in the field. The establishment of the Social Protection Commission in the spring of 2003 should do much to fill the gap in this area.

A key role in the implementation of employment actions is to be played by the individualized approach to clients, a process which has been entrusted to the Employment Promotion Centres. By October 2003 67 of these Centres will be open, while Employment Counsellors have been recruited and are undergoing training. Finally, the renewed 'tools' to be employed in the individualized approach are now in the stage of trial application.

⁸ A significant number of problems are due to questions of organization, coordination and staffing of government services, as well as the complexity of legislation. There is also a critical failure to provide information on procedures so that the citizen can exercise his rights.

D. Conclusion

As the previous Action Plan acknowledged, the starting point was characterized by a view of social exclusion from the perspective of each individual agency. This led to a flawed picture of the way in which the totality of problems (regardless of origin) for the ordinary citizen, fuse into a *single* social problem – that of social exclusion. The absence of an overall perspective meant that each agency (as was natural) would confine itself to its own area of competence, anxious not to encroach on the territory of others. There was thus a real danger of a greater burden being shifted to the citizen, who is responsible for seeking a solution from each one of the fragmented agencies. To the danger of social exclusion, there was thus added the danger of *administrative exclusion*.

The main achievement of the first Action Plan (and of the open method of coordination) was precisely its overcoming of this limited perspective and the first steps to tackling the phenomenon as a *single, composite* problem – through awareness-raising and the quest for institutions which will establish, coordinate and promote synergy among the various actions and agencies involved.

CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC APPROACH – MAIN OBJECTIVES

The most important point in the strategy is to sustain a steady trajectory of growth which will lead to income increases and leave no one behind – **quality of growth**. This approach will limit the need for *ex post* correction through income transfers. Thus there will be less acute distortions and less need for administrative intervention. Ensuring this kind of growth trajectory is the best investment in social cohesion. However, *general* policy must be complemented by *specialized* interventions. The nature of the problem of social cohesion means that the strategic choice of meaningful promotion of social inclusion requires specific definition in *four* directions:

A. The countryside

Integrated development of the countryside is the most important, if not the only response. This objective will be attained when we have eliminated the differences in quality of life enjoyed by urban and rural populations, one of those differences being level of income. The overall approach being promoted has three dimensions:

1. **Economic** – qualitative development of the countryside in line with the principles of sustainability and respect for the environment. Actions focused on the mountain and disadvantaged regions, as well as areas likely to undergo a process of conversion. The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy agreed in June 2003 has paved the way for protection of the farmer instead of his holding.
2. **Pensions** – continued evolution of the OGA as a primary pension fund. Income policy for the older pensioners with increases above the rate of inflation for the basic OGA pension.
3. **Social services**. Guaranteeing equal access to health and care services for the inhabitants of rural areas and ensuring access to a broader range of services, especially for individuals with special needs.

B. The Elderly

Law 3029/2002 is an important turning point, removing a source of insecurity and uncertainty among the social partners. Without ignoring other areas, the law deliberately made adequacy its priority, while also providing for significant measures

to free the system of inefficiencies and irrational practices dating back decades (e.g. occupational funds, Actuarial Authority, pension guarantees). For the elderly, the three key elements of inclusion strategy are as follows:

1. Implementation of the provisions of the law as the long-term response.
2. Income support for those on low pensions – the main tool being the EKAS supplement.
3. Emphasis on services for the elderly, in order to improve their quality of life and eliminate problems of access to services.

Consequently decisions *already* taken between 1996 and 2002 in the field of pensions offer the long-term response to the structural causes of poverty among the elderly. What is now required for the years ahead is, on the one hand, consistent application of the national insurance provisions and, on the other, a response to the problems of the *earlier* cohorts to whom these provisions will have less application.

C. Promoting access to employment

Both the Pensions Strategy Report and the National Action Plan for Employment refer to the increase in employment as the ‘development reserve’ on which the overall strategic approach is based. If the Lisbon objectives are attained, then the situation as regards employment, pension viability and the reversal of exclusion will be much brighter.

In achieving this objective there are two critical points:

- *First*, making work more remunerative and avoiding ‘poverty-’ or ‘inactivity traps’ (make work pay). Tough, in comparison with other countries, the structure of the benefits system makes this a less real danger, there is still room for improvement in respect of services for workers (e.g. family care), the tax system or non-wage labour costs.
- *Second*, transforming undeclared labour into regular employment. Curbing the extent of employment in the black economy leads to an increase in social rights and helps prevent disincentives and distortions in the labour market; it also limits non-wage labour costs for the whole labour force, especially the low-paid.

In the endeavour to promote employment, five population groups are key:

1. **Women:** The employment of women, and particularly those with children, is an objective of strategic significance, both for development and for social reasons. This is because the active involvement in employment of more family members is the surest safeguard against the risk of poverty, while the acquisition by women of their own social insurance entitlements will forestall future problems. In this context the problem of single-parent families – women bringing up children alone – is particularly acute, fully justifying the policy of making them a priority. The actions being promoted involve:
 - Reconciling work and family life – Child care facilities, family support.
 - Special actions for women under the CSF.
2. **Older workers.** Parallel action to stimulate demand on the part of employers as well as supply. Age is often accompanied by health problems and disabilities: Recent survey by the NSSG showed that 84% of individuals handicapped in some way by their physical condition do not attempt to seek work. Likewise, 35% of individuals over 65 face chronic health problems or disability. Apart from the psychological benefits to these individuals of active employment, their reintegration into work in a way that does not exacerbate their physical condition would bring numerous social benefits, for themselves as for their families.
3. **Preparing young people to the labour market.** The renewal of skills and identification and exploitation of the potential of the labour force depends on the way we handle the entry of young people into the labour market – what

qualifications they bring with them from the education system, what work they find and how to harness the innate energy of the young worker.

4. **The disabled.** The special survey carried out by the NSSG in 2002 as part of the Labour Force Survey highlighted the extent of the problems and obstacles to employment caused by health conditions. The active involvement of individuals currently excluded from employment would, here too, have many positive effects. Formerly the definition of individuals with special needs was based on a biological or medical model describing disability in terms of anatomical and physical criteria. Emphasis might instead be laid on the social inclusion and involvement of the individual both in the workplace and the broader social context. In the contemporary definition of a person with disabilities an attempt is being made to combine the two models, attaching greater weight to social factors.
5. **Immigrants.** Economic migrants, especially those from neighbouring countries, have played an important role in the country's growth over the last decade. Their involvement, and a drawing of attention to the qualitative aspects of their employment, should be more closely linked with prospects for further development, so that they do not continue to be seen merely as a pool of cheap labour.

Apart from the quantitative expansion of employment, development objectives can be met through the **upgrading of human resources** and emphasis on human capital. The programmes and actions of the 3rd CSF are designed to upgrade and reorient the skills of the labour force (where necessary), making it capable of adjusting to the continually changing conditions of demand. By the end of the CSF the labour force should thus be better prepared to contribute to economic and social development.

D. Quality of governance

It is evident from an enumeration of the areas of strategic significance that they share one common denominator, the need to upgrade the quality of state intervention – **Quality in Social Policy**. This is the key issue in the endeavour to restore the status and prestige of the welfare state.

More specifically, this objective can be broken down into four priority issues; a response has already been initiated in each of these areas:

- **Strategic** intervention to evaluate and prioritize problems. The Social-Welfare Map, currently being prepared, will provide a valuable tool to assist framing of social policy at strategic level, ensuring that strategy reflects identified sector needs and/or geographical inequalities.
- The evident need for **ongoing and structured dialogue with civil society** - in view of the complementary and multiplying contribution which can be made by the active forces within the community to realizing the objective of social inclusion – requires institutional and statutory initiatives. It is this which lay behind the founding of the National **Social Protection Commission**, which mobilizes not only the public sector agencies but also the social partners and NGOs. It also plays an important role in monitoring and evaluating the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion.
- **Decentralization of actions**, so that decisions are taken on a level as close as possible to the locus of the problem and specifically tailored measures can be initiated which will be able to utilize the synergy between agencies and actions. There has already been an important **transfer of responsibilities** at the level of the local authorities; this process is continuing, while they are

gradually being allowed more freedom to exercise social policy and provide basic social services.

- **Range and quality of services.** Already the Help at Home network is setting a high standard for quality intervention, while the major programme of infrastructures for transport, communications and health is now under way. The last point – quality services which introduce new standards without simply imitating the private sector – is the key objective for the current decade, and the most important element in the restoration of the status of the welfare state.

Improving access and quality of services will require *significant adjustments to the administrative network* through which both policies for the general population and policies of a more active and finely targeted nature are framed and implemented. *The Action Plan for Social Inclusion (chap. 5) refers to the Network of Social Services, which is designed to tackle the fragmentation of social services at the user level – i.e. first and foremost at the level of local government.* The network responds to the ‘horizontal’ need to establish structures and procedures for planning and supplying social services in order to attain the following objectives:

- *A comprehensive, inclusive approach* to tackling the problems of inclusion
- Reinforcing *complementarity* in the provision of services,
- Reinforcing *decentralization* in the provision of services
- *Rationalization* of the situation at the level of locally provided services
- Improvement in the quality of *information* and *service* for recipients.

Improvements of this nature involve deep-seated characteristics of the way the social services are run, entailing changes not only at the level of institutions and content of the policies being implemented but also in attitudes and established patterns of working.

These changes, then, do not depend merely on government decision – however much political courage the government may demonstrate. Precisely because these issues involve the ordinary citizen in his everyday contact with the functionaries of the welfare state, the endeavour to intervene and change the orientation of the way the whole welfare state functions must be the *culmination* of all the changes, decisions and programmes currently under way. It will be the product of many apparently unrelated initiatives. The attainment of this objective will set the seal on the whole project to modernize the welfare state. The changes in organisation and operation which are proposed in the Action Plan are capable of giving a significant boost to the welfare state in its efforts to respond more effectively to the needs of the community.

A key role in the success of this endeavour will be played by the **active involvement of the whole community**. This involvement is vital if the interventions are to be effective on the ground, if we are to avoid the danger of a ‘statistical fetishism’ in which we chase improvements in statistical indicators, which have little to do with real improvement in the lives of ordinary people. In our pursuit of active community involvement we shall, of course, need to shake off the legacy of decades of suspicion felt by ordinary people towards the State – the product of Greece’s historical development and the country’s lack of fully democratic procedures at a time when other countries were engaged in constructing their welfare states. It is a legacy which has led many to describe the Greek system as pathologically over-centralized, with action on the part of the state all too often stifling independent initiatives from below.

A National Action Plan cannot be merely a Government Action Plan. We must put in place a system of structured dialogue and cooperation between the state and the community at large, while also assisting meaningful activity by non-government agencies, through a recognition of their importance. **It will require structures, time and areas of collaboration for confidence in this process to be won.** The 2001-3

Action Plan – with its clear account of government intentions – was a first step in this direction, followed up by the legislation to establish the Social Protection Commission as a permanent statutory body providing the necessary framework for dialogue.

The mobilization of this Commission to assist in the definition and implementation of the major strategic choices of the current Action Plan is in itself a vital strategic objective.

Proposal for a compound indicator of social prosperity to measure quality of life in the countryside

Quality of life cannot be measured by financial data alone. The complex nature of the concept may be approached through the use of compound indicators. For example:

- Per capita income (or unemployment)
- Employed/Economically active women
- Proportion of population under 45
- Number of cars per capita
- Consumption of electricity per capita
- Telephones per capita
- Number of doctors per capita
- Health infrastructures (health centres, surgeries) per capita
- Kilometres of asphalt road per capita
- Percentage of area covered by sewerage system
- Schools per number of children
- Nursery and child care facilities per number of children (up to age 5)
- Open Care Centres for the Elderly per total elderly population

The constituents of the indicator and the weights to be used can be agreed through dialogue with interested agencies under the aegis of the Social Protection Commission.

E. National Social Targets for 2010

Combating social exclusion is a vital objective for Greek society. *Real* progress in this area is a necessary condition of success in the *overall* Lisbon strategy. For this to happen, for the pursuit of the objective of cohesion to be more than a pious wish, it will not be enough just to implement a series of measures – dedication and time will be required for them to bear fruit. To sustain the endeavour over the long term a key role will be played by the existence of points of reference and orientation– long-term targets and means of measuring the progress made.

Thus the priority attached by Greek society to combating social exclusion will be aided by the clear formulation of *quantitative* targets. These targets, according to the decision of the Copenhagen Council, must be achieved by 2010, in order to complement and support the objectives of the *other* Lisbon pillars – growth, employment, sustainability. The 2010 deadline will be a difficult challenge to meet; it is not merely a question of extending current trends, it raises the question of what past trends we must break with in order to achieve our final goals. If one of the measures is not bearing fruit, we will have to find another measure to take its place. **It is no longer enough to ‘do what we can’; we must now ‘do what needs to be done’.**

Commitment to *outcome* targets, rather than to a programme of action, represents an innovation in government practice for most of the EU states. To succeed, such initiatives require more than the simple formulation of ambitious yet realistic targets. They must be discussed in the community; serious thought must be given to the necessary conditions for their success; the instruments of measurement must be examined carefully to ensure that the targets correspond to real social progress. **Only thus will we ensure that our endeavour to meet the objectives is mobilizing the whole community with all its reserves.** The first task is to define the targets; then we must lay down detailed plans for their implementation.

The Action Plan proposes the pursuit of ten National Social Targets, in seven areas crucial to social inclusion⁹. Examination of the data presented in the Statistical Appendix will show that these targets are *unattainable* if the programme of real convergence fails to make headway – if rapid growth is not sustained, unemployment is not tackled and no progress is made on women’s employment. **Conversely, parallel and coordinated progress on all these fronts will certainly offer the best guarantee of success in meeting all the targets.**

1. **Numbers at risk of poverty.** By 2010 the percentage of individuals at risk will have been brought down to the EU-15 average. The average real income of individuals at risk will have risen by 2010 by *at least* a third.
2. **Improving position of those at risk.** One in three of those *currently* at risk will have escaped the risk by 2010, on the basis of the current poverty line.
3. **The elderly at risk.** The poverty risk for those over sixty-five compared with the average risk will be halved.
4. **Children at risk.** Decisive action to tackle the problem of child poverty. By 2010 the situation in Greece will be better than the average for the 7 best countries in the EU-15.
5. **Convergence of rural areas.** Differences in quality of life – taking account of economic and other factors - between rural and urban areas will be dramatically reduced by 2010, achieving a better quality of life than that enjoyed anywhere else in Mediterranean Europe.
6. **Children and mothers.** Meeting child care needs for all working mothers by 2008.
7. **Efficacy of interventions.** Radical improvement of efficacy of income interventions, through better targeting.
8. **Long-term unemployment.** The percentage of the population in long-term unemployment will be reduced by a third, attaining a better figure than the average for Mediterranean Europe.
9. **Access for individuals with special needs.** There will be real and measurable progress in the area of access for the disabled – both physical and digital.
10. **Promoting better Health.** Increase of two years in average life expectancy at birth.

A more detailed examination of the ten targets will be found in the Statistical Appendix.

CHAPTER 4

POLICY MEASURES

The national social targets for 2010 are not a wish list. Nor are they a mere extension of trends under way already, which we can sit back and watch as they come to fruition. They presuppose the existence and success of an overall plan for economic development, which will establish a reciprocal relationship with social cohesion. They also require the existence of a series of graduated measures designed *especially* to promote social cohesion.

⁹ Four targets on aspects of poverty, and one in each of another six areas.

The *critical* period is that between 2003-2006, covering the period of implementation of the 3rd CSF and the establishment of a growth trajectory leading to real convergence. The attainment of the 2010 targets presupposes *three* categories of action: (a) measures which *continue* to be implemented, (b) measures whose contribution is expected to be boosted. The end of the year 2004 will constitute a milestone for the programme, with implementation of the '**Greece 2004**'¹⁰ targets, laid down by the government and announced by the Prime Minister in September 2001.

The completion of this programme lays the foundations for (c) *new* initiatives, which will be planned in the framework of the Real Convergence Charter, included in the budget for 2004 and will begin to be implemented in early 2004.

The chapter which follows offers a concise analysis of the *strategic* responses to the common targets for combating exclusion, as formulated at the Copenhagen European Council. A detailed presentation of measures can be found in Appendix 3. Table 1 offers a partial inventory of the measures as they apply to population category and type of intervention.

Objective 1.1 Policy measures for employment

Facilitating participation in employment

In the context of the European employment strategy, and the implementation of the guidelines in particular:

- (a) To promote access to stable and quality employment for all women and men who are capable of working, in particular:
- by putting in place, for those in the most vulnerable groups in society, pathways towards employment and by mobilising training policies to that end;
 - by developing policies to promote the reconciliation of work and family life, including the issue of child- and dependent care;
 - by using the opportunities for integration and employment provided by the social economy.

A. Stimulating employment for the whole population

Employment is the most effective prevention of the risk of poverty. Given that poverty risk is measured on the level of the household (family), an increase in employment can have a multiple impact on the *overall* risk of poverty. For example, given that the cohabitation of the elderly with their offspring is a common phenomenon, an increase in the employment of the younger members of the family will stimulate the income of *all* members – the older generation and the children. Of particular significance here is the relatively low percentage of individuals in Greece living in households with no access to employment.

The success of a policy for social cohesion centred on employment requires, in order of importance: a) a **macro-economic** policy generating high rates of growth and laying emphasis on employment, b) an **employment** policy which seeks the best use of human resources, to limit structural unemployment and to activate 'employment reserves', and finally c) **special measures** oriented to various parts of the labour market and the special problems of groups at risk of exclusion or poverty.

Growth Policy. After the disappointing performance and intractable macro-economic problems of the early 90s, high rates of growth and rapid real convergence are now establishing themselves as the norm. The policy of real convergence is using factors as the 2004 Olympics and the CSF to create infrastructures which will increase productive capacity on a *permanent basis* and thus lay the foundations for sustained progress over the whole decade. The importance of small and medium-sized businesses is a qualitative element in growth, which favours employment and social

¹⁰ The 'Greece 2004' programme and its monitoring consist of actions by all ministries, mainly in the area of infrastructures and quality of life, with the end of 2003 as their time reference. The programme can be found at www.primeminister.gr.

cohesion. Preserving and increasing the dynamism of the SMEs is a central target of economic policy, and particularly of the CSF.

In this context the amendment and adaptation of the **Development Act 2601/98** is a significant step. The intention was to produce a unified, intelligible, convenient and effective instrument for attracting new investment, stimulating employment, further alleviating regional disparities and complementing many of the development incentives in the reforms of the tax system. In the area of social inclusion the following measures are of particular import: Increased grant for job creation, the possibility of 'presumed definition of profits', the increase in funds under the development act distributed to regions lagging behind, speeding up of disbursements, rationalization and improvement of procedures.

The special problems of the countryside, and especially the issues involved in regenerating rural areas, require a holistic approach. The objective of differentiation of income and the reversal of negative demographic trends in many areas requires an upgrading of life in the countryside and coordinated, mutually beneficial actions extending beyond the confines of agriculture *per se*. The coordinating role is played by the Ministry of Agriculture, overseeing a programme of parallel actions.

Measures for the countryside

- Establishment of young farmers, (one-off grant for those setting up in business): a total of 6000 farmers are expected to benefit over the period 2003-5.
- Early retirement for farmers aged 55-64, and their replacement by younger individuals. It is anticipated that 40,000 individuals will benefit from the scheme over the period 2003-2005, while there are special incentives for disadvantaged areas.
- As part of the **integrated programme for development of disadvantaged** areas of the Greek countryside: 1) **Differentiation** of agricultural activities and creation of alternative sources of income. The intention is to encourage farmers to implement investment plans in secondary and tertiary sector activities. (330 investment plans). 2) **Encouragement for tourist and light manufacturing** activities, with the emphasis on women's employment (430 projects) 3) Provision of basic services for rural population: (training in traditional crafts and skills, creation of activity centres and utilization of leisure time – 150 projects)
- Training programmes planned by the DIMITRA organization: for secondary education, ongoing vocational training, young farmers
- Upgrading of (Technical and Vocational Education centres and their workshops.

Table 1: Actions to combat social exclusion

	The elderly	Problems in the labour market		Families	Geographical dimensions	Vulnerable groups	
		Low pay	The unemployed			Physical condition	Other handicap
Financial condition	Pensions Minima EKAS OGA Law 3029/02	In work wage subsidy (Law 2874) Part-time employment	Unemployment benefit Long-term unemployment benefit	School allowance Family allowances Lifetime mother's benefit Tax relief (especially if more than 3 children)	Regeneration of countryside Income support in isadvantaged areas Primary OGA pension	disability benefits Tax relief Disability pensions	Special benefits policy Ex-convicts Repatriated Greeks
Integration into labour market	Employment for pensioners – Reintegration of elderly unemployed	Training	Training	Protection for mothers	Programmes for young farmers Integrated programmes	Creative occupation Entrepreneurship Individuals with special needs Centres for Support and Training for Individuals with Special Needs	Rehabilitation of Repatriated Greeks Legalization of status of immigrants Combating xenophobia
Health	Upgrading of NHS Open care	Social Insurance	Insurance for the unemployed	Upgrading of NHS Health insurance	Regional structuring of NHS Tele-medicine	Care in the Community	Emergency social service centres
Education		Special remedial programmes	Life-long learning	Vocational guidance Remedial teaching	transport of students	Special education - Diagnosis Evaluation and Support Centres (KDAY)	Literacy programmes Intercultural education Education of Muslims of W. Thrace
Housing	{High level of home-ownership} Heating allowances OEK housing allowance	OEK rent allowance OEK home purchase programmes		Rent allowance OEK programmes Special tax concessions	Natural disasters (earthquakes)		Gypsy/Rom programmes Repatriated Greeks
Other goods	Help at Home Open Care Centres Social tourism	Social tourism Workers' Hearth		Summer camps Workers' Hearth	Libraries (mobile libraries)	Accessibility	Integrated programme for Gypsy/Rom groups
Women's problems	Widows' pensions Interrupted insurance life	Reconciliation – Children day-care centres	Increased participation in training programmes	Child care facilities Help at Home for the elderly/ disabled	Women's entrepreneurship	Help for family	CSF
Future challenges	Very elderly	Digital illiteracy				Information society	

3rd COMMUNITY SUPPORT FRAMEWORK
SECTORAL AND REGIONAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL ACTION FOR PLAN FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION
(Co-financed ESF actions)

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES	PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PHYSICAL OBJECT (INTANGIBLE)						PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ECONOMIC OBJECT (AMOUNT OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE)	
	2000-2002			TARGET 2006			2000-2002	TARGET 2006
	STRUCTURES	BENEFICIARIES	OTHER	STRUCTURES	BENEFICIARIES	OTHER		
EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING	372	51.079	0	511	138.263	0	160.447.457	980.400.000
EDUCATION AND INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING	1.320	560.218	2528 DEPARTMENTS IN DAY-LONG SCHOOLS 164 PROGRAMMES TO SUPPORT INITIATIVES IN ASPECTS OF HEALTH ASSISTANCE 19 INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION	3.247	1.162.610	3.608 DEPARTMENTS IN DAY-LONG SCHOOLS 233 PROGRAMMES TO SUPPORT INITIATIVES IN ASPECTS OF HEALTH ASSISTANCE 61 INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION	198.091.457	816.292.506
INFORMATION SOCIETY	0	0	PRODUCTION OF 16 UNITS OF EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE	0	18.000	PRODUCTION OF 96 UNITS OF EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE	3.424.140	275.573.333
COMPETITIVENESS	0	275	0	0	5.605	0	0	29.230.000
HEALTH & WELFARE	9	2.361	0	245	103.360	0	6.680.944	283.440.390
REGIONAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMMES	851	40.528	0				173.718.370	8.000.000
TOTALS	2.552	654.461	-	4.003	1.427.838	-	541.362.368	2.392.936.229

OBSERVATION: The totals have been calculated on the basis of the available objectives. E.g. in the Regional Operational Programmes the target for the implementation of the economic object by 2006 is known at the Regional Operational Programme level. For the time being there is no possibility of determining total sums on the basis of Regional Operational Programme actions.

NOTE: There may be participation in more than one programme.

Employment Policy – The National Action Plan for Employment 2003. The Thessaloniki European Council agreed new specifications for the National Action Plans, which are now to be structured on the basis of three objectives and ten priorities. In the context of streamlining, this is closely linked with the Basic Economic Guidelines as well as the Action Plan for Inclusion. There are numerous points of contact between the two Plans: the third objective of the Employment Plan is social cohesion and inclusion, while the priorities include special areas such as disadvantaged groups, measures for the unemployed, etc. The National Action Plan for Employment 2003 will contain quantitative goals for employment, which must be attained if the objectives for social cohesion are to be achieved. Three key points deserve special mention, since they are vital to the strategy of social inclusion.

Point 1. The actions contained in the **Community Support Framework** are, in their cumulative effect, the largest intervention in the labour market in post-war economic history – a massive investment in human resources and social inclusion. They are designed to improve the quality of human resources, to improve the labour market infrastructures, and to respond to the individual problems of particular population groups. The **3rd CSF (Sector Operational Programmes and Regional Operational Programmes)** will make available **by 2006** a total of **5 billion Euro** for investments in human resources (employment, training, education, promotion of equal opportunities for women). Actions involving budgets of 2.3 billion Euro and benefiting more than 1.3 million individuals will be directly associated with investment in social inclusion (Table 2, detailed presentation in Appendix 3).

The scope of the cohesion investments in the 3rd CSF means that by 2007 Greece will find itself in a situation *qualitatively* different compared to the start of the investment programme. This qualitative improvement will pave the way for further development in the years after 2007.

Point 2. The success of the CSF interventions, especially in respect of vulnerable groups, is linked to the possibility of a **personalized approach** to individuals with employment problems. Throughout the period of the Action Plan structures and institutions will be put in place to permit a major expansion of this approach. By September 2003 the Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) will have set up and staffed 67 Employment Promotion Centres (KPA) across the country. The new system will allow the OAED employment counsellors to monitor the progress of each unemployed individual every three, six and twelve months, encouraging much more active involvement on the part of the job-seeker and the agency.

Point 3. Discouraging **undeclared employment**. While undeclared employment does admittedly create temporary areas of flexibility in the labour market, it entails inadequate protection and limited social entitlements for the worker involved, as well as unfair competition with the majority of law-abiding workers. The existence of provisions which are not enforced makes even the concept of employment protection problematic. The economy's chances of generating new jobs are maximized when there is a simple and transparent legislative framework, which must, however, be rigorously observed. Efforts against undeclared employment is already benefiting from two initiatives: *First*, the increasing computerization of the Institution of Social Insurance (IKA), which is now able to monitor the flow of contributions in real time and thereby limit contribution avoidance. *Second*, the legalization of immigrants. IKA figures show that already this year 505,000 foreigners have been contributing. *Third*, the upgrading of the Labour Inspectorate (SEPE), which can now carry out more systematic inspections to ensure compliance with regulations on pay, working conditions and workers' rights.

(i) Access to employment for the most vulnerable groups

A measure of particular significance is the application of the principle of **mainstreaming** in the CSF programmes for special groups (cf Appendix 3). Instead of there being dedicated programmes for individuals from vulnerable groups (which harbours a danger of creating administrative ghettos), provision is made for a specific percentage to be included in the *general* programmes. The measure is already being applied in the case of women, and there is a commitment that it will be extended to the disabled.

In the case of groups facing more acute problems of inclusion, provision has been made for **on-going support** (psychological and social support, boosting self-confidence, information, awareness-raising of employers and local community, job-finding techniques and vocational guidance). Access to employment in difficult cases is encouraged by **programmes of alternating training and employment**, which allow the individuals involved to gain valuable working experience.

The Statistical Appendix provides ample evidence to support the assertion that in Greece **self-employment** is a critical for social inclusion. Small and very small businesses themselves contain individuals at risk of poverty (e.g. older businessmen and shopkeepers), but also offer employment to individuals, especially women, who are themselves on the periphery of poverty. This is why entrepreneurship support programmes for vulnerable groups and women, play a central part in the CSF. For example, the Young Entrepreneur Desks provide a one stop shop for these individuals to acquire useful information.

To provide support for **women**, the General Secretariat of Gender equality has drawn up a National Action Programme for gender equality 2001-2006. A key element in this programme is the 'Manual to the Application of Gender Equality Policies' in the 3rd CSF projects. It provides a tool for evaluating the degree of mainstreaming of equality in the Operational Programmes.

(ii) Reconciling work and family life

Greece exemplifies what has been called the 'Mediterranean paradox' – the coexistence of a low birth rate with an equally low rate of employment on the part of mothers. Careful examination of the data shows that, compared with other European countries, the low rate of participation in employment is concentrated in mothers with more than one child. It is vital to draw these women into employment if we are to exploit the 'employment reserve' required by pensions strategy, necessary to avert the risk of poverty and, more generally, to the success of the Lisbon strategy.

The activation of women of these age groups will necessitate adjustments to social models and attitudes. Women themselves need to be persuaded that the child care services offered are of the necessary quality. For work and family life to be reconciled it is essential that there be flexibility in choosing working hours, so that conflicting demands are not made on the mother's time. Finally, child care and care of the disabled and elderly also place demands on the time of older women (grandmothers) and probably lead to their earlier withdrawal from the labour market.

The Greek labour market today does not offer tempting opportunities for the working mother. Though provisions for parental leave, maternity leave, etc, are comparable with those elsewhere in the EU, there still remains the problem of working hours: part-time jobs are few in number and confined to specific sectors (mainly retail trade – although the extension of part-time working in the public sector will expand the opportunities available). Child-care is provided either through the family itself, or by State or municipal child-care centres, or by the private sector. It is noteworthy that the increased participation of women in employment during the 90s coincided with the influx of immigrants, many of whom provide precisely these services.

It is unclear to what extent the low participation of mothers in the labour market is due to inadequacies in infrastructures or should be attributed to the preferences of the women themselves, who may feel that their personal involvement in the raising of their children is well worth any sacrifice. In other words, even if a full support infrastructure was in place, we cannot be certain to what extent it would be utilised.

Women will never be drawn into employment if they are not persuaded that the services on offer are of sufficient quality not to compromise the interests of their children. The child-care services sector which is currently being established must demonstrate from the start that: (a) it is maintaining high standards, (b) it allocates places on transparent criteria and (c) it is not simply a last resort.

The development of structures for the reconciliation of work and family life has been and remains a key priority:

The **Help at Home** programme. (cf Chap. 6). **Also 1)** Child-care centres and nurseries, placed by Law 2880/2001 under the supervision of the local authorities. At least 100 centres will be established in disadvantaged rural areas **2)** 180 Family care centres, the responsibility of the first-tier local authorities. **3)** Children's Summer Camps and Holidays. **4)** Children's Creative Activity Centres. **5)** Open Care Centres for the Elderly and Day Care Centres for the Elderly. The latter are established under the Regional Operational Programmes of the 3rd CSF **8)** Institutions for Social Support and Reintegration of individuals with special needs. **9)** Sheltered accommodation. **10)** Centres for Support and Training for Individuals with Special Needs **11)** Children's Creative Activity Centres – for children with special needs.

All-day schools. At these schools the students can remain after lessons are over, until 4pm. The purpose of the arrangement is both educational and social: 1) preparation for next day's lessons, 2) introduction to new subjects, 3) supervision in a protected environment. In the current school year there were 2,600 day-long primary schools, and 1,600 day-long kindergartens. In addition there were 28 pilot day-long schools, with a programme continuing till 4pm for all students. An expansion of the scheme is planned for the next school year, with a total of **5,200 primary schools and kindergartens, serving 250,000 families.** The Ministry of Education plans ongoing evaluation of the scheme and continuing expansion – already under way.

(iii) Exploiting the potential of the social economy

A bill will be presented to parliament this year on part-time employment in the framework of the development of a **network of services of a social character**. The legislation will introduce part-time employment into the broader public sector, in combination with the provision of social services. The employees will be recruited from social groups, such as the unemployed, people under 30, mothers of children aged up to twelve, individuals with disabilities. The needs to be met include care for the elderly on low incomes, child-care at home, social inclusion of immigrants, guarding of school buildings, etc. It is thus hoped to meet social needs while employing individuals who, for various reasons, are unable to work a full working day. The scheme will offer financial support and provide a chance for those nearing retirement to make up the required number of national insurance stamps.

iv Prevention of interruptions to working life – active involvement of the unemployed, measures for the labour market

B. To prevent the exclusion of people from the world of work by improving employability, through human resource management, organisation of work and life-long learning.

The working life of the individual may come under stress at times of transitions or adjustments – on first entry into the labour market, during intervals of unemployment, after voluntary withdrawal to bring up children, on retiring from work to take up a

pension. It is during such interruptions that an initial financial hardship may turn into a permanent social problem. In Greece these problems are particularly acute on entry into the labour market, hence the concentration of unemployment among the younger age groups. Likewise the high concentration of unemployment among women and their withdrawal (and discouragement) indicate that here too there is a problem. However, the phenomenon of unemployment due to redundancies affecting individuals aged 25-45 (usually identified with unemployment due to deficiencies of effective demand) is relatively limited – as the National Action Plan for Employment 2003 concludes unemployment is largely a matter of *supply-side* of the labour market. The growth of new technologies and the advance of globalisation will lead to situations in which most workers will be obliged to change direction in mid-career.

The response to these issues must be sought in two directions: a) measures to help individuals in specific circumstances (e.g. young people, long-term unemployed), structures for life-long learning and training, and b) measures to assist the labour market to absorb individuals in these categories.

In order to promote life-long learning draft legislation is ready to set up a national system which will link initial and ongoing vocational training and education with employment. The system will enhance coordination and eliminate overlap between the various agencies involved. A key feature is that each citizen will have the opportunity to gain certification of his skills and qualifications – regardless of how they were obtained. This certification of qualifications and skills both guarantees the quality of the professional services offered and will promote new professions in the labour market. As part of the Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training of the CSF **Centres and Offices for Counselling and Career Guidance** are being set up across the country, serving 20,040 students of the schools of initial vocational education and training, currently engaged in practical work experience schemes, and 125,000 school students. As part of the same Measure 200 collaborative schemes with businesses have been set up, creating 10,000 new work experience places.

There is a series of measures to assist the reintegration of the **long-term unemployed**. Actions such as the Manpower Employment Agency subsidy for the creation of new jobs or new businesses, work experience programmes and those for training, re-training or alternating training, will continue (cf Appendix 3)

As for the **labour market** a major factor in the process by which problems of transition are perpetuated is the existence of the ‘poverty traps’ or ‘unemployment traps’. In these situations the combination of welfare provisions and tax regulations may imply that it is not in the unemployed person’s financial interests to return to employment. The emphasis laid in Greece on active measures, together with certain features of the benefits system, means that the problem of non-remunerative employment is not particularly severe. Changes in the income tax system have boosted incentives, especially among the low-paid, which means that the problem will be focussed henceforth mainly in the area of non-labour costs.

With regard to the **functioning of the labour market**, the basic legislative intervention remains Law N.2874/2000, which involves measures to promote¹¹:

- 1) Limiting the obligation on workers to work extra hours.
- 2) Regulating the annual working time through collective agreements.
- 3) Reducing non-labour costs for low-paid workers

¹¹The impact of the law appears to have been limited; in a sample of 2,016 businesses, of those which had recruited workers (in the 12 months between June 2001 and July 2002) only 6% attributed this to the provisions in the legislation. According to IKA figures, 10,500 employers benefited from the measure reducing insurance contributions (Law 2874 article 6), while 31,000 low-paid workers received a subsidy of 10,000 drachmas (Law 2837 article 14)

4) Incentives for promotion of part-time employment and reintegration of long-term unemployed.

5) Rationalization of restrictions to mass redundancies.

Law 2956/2001 enables the establishment and operation of **Temporary Employment Companies**, whose salaried staff can provide temporary work for other companies. This law is part of the endeavour to increase the mobility of labour and supplement the existing complex of incentives and disincentives designed to encourage employers to hire instead of resorting to overtime by existing staff.

Finally, what has perhaps the greatest (albeit indirect) impact on the workings of the labour market is the **mobility** of the labour force. Considerable improvement of the situation is anticipated from the resolution – in Law 3029/02 - of a number of outstanding problems in the field of social insurance and pensions: the harmonization of regulations, merging of funds, financial guarantees – all mean that workers will no longer be ‘trapped’ by loss of pension entitlements when changing jobs. In the longer term, changes in the housing market (e.g. lower transfer taxes, interest rates, mobility) can remove one of the chief impediments to the geographical mobility of the labour force.

On a positive note, the Manpower Employment Organization figures for 2002 already show an increase in mobility: New hires increased by 4.6%, dismissals were down by 1.2% and voluntary departures increased by 8.3%. The net difference over 2001 amounts to 71,000 individuals.

Objective 1.2 Facilitating access to resources, rights, goods and services for all

a. Benefits policy – The solidarity network

- «a) To organise social protection systems in such a way that they help, in particular, to:
- guarantee that everyone has the resources necessary to live in accordance with human dignity;
- overcome obstacles to employment by ensuring that the take-up of employment results in increased income and by promoting employability ->

(i) General strategic approach.

The guarantee of minimum resources – the ‘*safety net*’ – is a fundamental social objective. Such a safety net provides a helping hand in times of need so that a temporary misfortune need not have permanent consequences and the individual can be helped to overcome the problems which led him into difficulty. Traditionally this role was played for the most part by the family and the informal networks of support. The objective of social policy is to support the family in this role in an effective way which should neither create dependency nor violate basic rights of the beneficiaries.

There exist two strategies towards the objective of the creation and operation of this safety net:

The *first* strategy, which characterises the present situation, is the creation of the **Solidarity Network**, i.e. the gradual approach and progressively expanding guarantee. This strategy is proceeding by specific and prioritized steps: *First* assistance and full support are channelled where there is *both* identified need *and* a mechanism for ascertaining and serving that need. At the same time the information and service provision infrastructure is set up to allow the problem to be confronted through an individually tailored approach. A key element is decentralization – transferring the decisions and administrative responsibility as close as possible to the person in need –the municipality. A concrete example of this approach is, that, given the importance of old age as a key factor in the risk of poverty, priority has been

attached to income support for the elderly and the disabled. New benefits covering other areas of need are being planned and implemented, alongside the structures which will supply them. The **Social Services Network** transfers to the local level the ability and skills to diagnose the specific problems and respond to them in the most effective way.

The *second* approach proceeds through the introduction of a **generalised guaranteed income**, whereby *anyone* declaring an income below a certain level will be entitled to some amount. This is without doubt the measure most likely to command public attention, since it can to exhibit great decisiveness thanks to the equally great disbursements involved. It saves, however, on administrative capacity (in its simplest version, at least) since it does not entrust the issuing of the benefits to a dedicated mechanism.

It is a basic principle of the Action Plan for Inclusion that such an approach in current conditions would run counter to the best interests of the citizen in need and could bring the concept of social solidarity into disrepute. This would be because of three mechanisms: mistargetting, the bureaucracy caused, the threat to individual rights.

- Information on income can only be derived from income tax. If this information is supplied 'blind', i.e. not supplemented by other details (e.g. age, existence of children, home in disadvantaged region) or possibly liabilities, then it can lead to payments to many whose 'real' situation is far removed from their apparent plight. It is significant that, *below the same dividing line*, the tax figures show a threefold number of individuals at risk.
- Payments to large numbers of people (or the verification process), if not carefully planned, would lead to bureaucracy and widespread inconvenience. This could end up deterring those in real need, while many of those not really in need would claim.
- Finally, unless great caution is exercised, the systems designed to combat abuses may lead to breaches of individual rights.

It is, therefore, our conclusion that in a premature and 'blind' generalised guarantee, the major losers would be precisely those in real need. The idea of constructing an effective welfare state would also suffer in credibility.

A *genuine* and functioning safety net cannot simply be legislated. It must proceed on the basis of programmes already in place, enriching the benefits already offered. At the same time it must be creating the administrative capacity and social infrastructure needed for its own steady and effective expansion to meet more needs. In this way there can be properly coordinated progress towards the shared final objective: the meaningful provision of functioning social guarantees.

(ii) Income guarantees for the elderly – the pension system

The pension reform law 3029/02 laid particular emphasis on the question of adequacy, restoring, *inter alia*, the protection of minimum levels for workers who began work after 1993 and introducing a series of measures designed to breathe new life and dynamism into the system. As the Strategic Report on Pensions explains, this legislation, together with the application of OGA primary insurance, provides adequate long-term responses to the structural causes of pension inadequacy. Attention must now focus on *today's* elderly, whose pensions (because of the immaturity of the systems, lack of access to insurance cover) are low.

In this respect the Pensioners' Social Solidarity Supplement (EKAS) has proved an effective tool for 360,000 beneficiaries, the majority of whom draw the full amount, currently worth € 111.2 per month. Income policy for today's pensioners has recently generated real increases higher than increases in wages and salaries, allowing those

on low pensions a share in general prosperity. The basic OGA pension, drawn by some 40,000 individuals of insufficient means and with no other insurance, is currently worth €170.8 per month. It is the government's intention that this rising trend should continue.

ANALYSIS OF ESSPROS DATA ON NON-CONTRIBUTORY EXPENDITURE

These figures from the ESSPROS system are indicative of trends in non-contributory benefits and income support, which serve as part of the safety net. In real terms they have increased by 66% since 1995, with an especially large increase in welfare pensions, as well as in benefits in kind paid to families (child care facilities) and vocational training

Tables : "Safety net Spending" as recorded by the ESSPROS system

A. At constant May 2003 prices (million €)	1990	1995	1997	1999	2001	Change 2001/1995
Allowances	90	134	170	280	335	150%
Other (Institutions)	244	157	185	218	289	84%
Total Disability	334	291	355	498	624	115%
Total Old-age – Survivors	68	101	124	137	181	80%
Family Allowances	318	797	737	747	753	-6%
Child care	538	465	537	569	527	13%
Benefits in kind	788	685	788	972	962	40%
Other	245	225	250	318	407	81%
Total Family-Children	1,889	2,173	2,313	2,606	2,648	22%
Unemployment benefits	461	505	571	567	524	4%
Vocational training	382	401	511	850	1,095	173%
Unemployment Total	885	941	1,115	1,491	1,797	91%
Home-ownership benefits	187	264	471	467	455	72%
Other rent allowances	8	29	31	37	38	29%
Housing Total	195	294	502	504	493	68%
Other actions	228	279	317	637	629	126%
Old age pensions to the Uninsured	36	46	54	63	89	93%
EKAS			159	347	393	
'Welfare Pensions' Total	36	46	213	410	482	944%
General Total	3,635	4,123	4,939	6,283	6,853	66%
B. As % of GDP – by ESSPROS function						
Disability	0.32	0.26	0.29	0.39	0.44	40.1%
Old-age – Surviving spouses	0.06	0.09	0.10	0.11	0.13	99.7%
Family – Children	1.78	1.92	1.92	2.02	1.88	5.2%
Unemployment	0.84	0.83	0.93	1.15	1.27	52.4%
Housing	0.18	0.26	0.42	0.39	0.35	89.8%
Social Exclusion	0.21	0.25	0.26	0.49	0.45	107.2%
Welfare Pensions	0.03	0.04	0.18	0.32	0.34	913.5%
General Total	3.43	3.64	4.10	4.86	4.85	41.5%

Source: Social Spending ESSPROS

(iii) Other guarantees

One of the major interventions in the 2001-03 NAPincl was the introduction of three new targeted income guarantees for three particular groups: 1) poor households in mountain and disadvantaged regions, 2) long-term unemployed aged 45-65, and 3) poor households and single-parent families with children under 18. The pilot application of the measures in 2002 and 2003 has identified and resolved the difficulties. The measure targeting disadvantaged regions has already benefited **47 thousand families by an amount of €450 per family, while 13 thousand families with children under 18 have received an average of €600.** The measure

envisaged in Law 2837/00 (support for the low-paid) has been applied by IKA in **31 thousand cases**.

For the long-term unemployed, the pilot application has allowed the enhancement and extension of protection through three significant changes. (1) It has increased benefit by 33% (to €200), (2) it has increased the income ceiling (from 3,000 to 5,000 Euro), and (3) it offers the chance of inclusion in the measure to those who can demonstrate continuous unemployment for 12 months before submission of the application, in addition to the 12-month regular benefit from the Manpower Employment Organization and regardless of how long they have been receiving this benefit.

In the **countryside** a measure of particular social significance has been the **deficiency payments** to farmers in mountain and disadvantaged regions to improve incomes by compensating for the unfavourable natural conditions. Over the period 2003-2005 some 160,000 farmers will be involved each year, receiving an annual payment of between 3,800 and 5,500 Euro, depending on their circumstances (higher amounts for those in mountain regions, the Aegean islands and young farmers). An increase of 10% in the deficiency payments is planned for 2003.

b. Access to housing

«b) To implement policies which aim to provide access for all to decent and sanitary housing, as well as the basic services necessary to live normally having regard to local circumstances (electricity, water, heating etc.)..»

As was noted, Greece has a high rate of owner-occupation, particularly high among groups at risk of poverty. Taking into account figures for housing debt in the form of mortgages and home loans (Bank of Greece survey) makes no essential change to the picture, since this kind of borrowing usually finances the acquisition of a first home and was taken out mainly by middle-income individuals. For owner occupiers, then, concern about housing is not narrowly financial, but refers to the degree to which their accommodation (a) meets their needs for space and other needs, and (b) whether it imposes constraints on other decisions (e.g. formation of new households, adapting the home to the increasing needs of a young family, making it suitable for the elderly and for the disabled, etc.).

Nevertheless, the workings of the rental market remain of critical importance, especially for tenants in urban areas. The complete deregulation of this market in the 1990s was achieved without especial problems, while rents are a significant boost to the income of many individuals themselves at risk of exclusion. At the same time the sharp fall in interest rates following EMU has made both modifications to the home to track changing needs and the purchase of a first home much more affordable.

Problems of access to – and quality of – housing are faced by special population groups such as the Rom (cf text box) and immigrants (in both urban and rural areas). In the case of the latter group there has been a steady improvement in living conditions and in income levels over the period of their residence in Greece. There are no accurate figures for the number of *homeless*, but a rough estimate suggests the national figure is no more than a few thousand.

The **Workers Housing Association** (OEK) is the main instrument for intervention in the housing market and addresses its efforts mainly to its own insured wage-earners. It provides rent subsidies and rent-for-purchase schemes on special terms, while through its own construction projects it can play a crucial role in the housing market and influence the urban planning fabric of an area. It has special programmes for Rom groups, earthquake victims, repatriated Greeks, etc.

With regard to **access to basic services** like electricity, heating, water or communications, the deregulation of recent years has *not* led to increases in price – in fact there have been reductions in many cases. Ensuring equal access to general interest services across the country is a basic criterion of progress in all the structural changes currently under way. In the case of **heating**, a special heating allowance is paid to pensioners, while the introduction of natural gas into many urban areas is increasing the range of options and provide a new, safe and economical primary energy source.

Finally, improving the quality of **public transport** and keeping fares at reasonable levels – with the emphasis on the best interests of the user – is a priority policy which benefits mainly those at poverty risk. The disabled face special problems in this area. Recent years have witnessed the renewal of the fleet of city buses, the opening of the Athens Metro, and the completion of a number of major road-building programmes across the country. The result has been a cut in journey times and an increasing use of public transport. In the countryside and the islands the issue of good transport connections is of vital importance, especially for vulnerable groups who do not enjoy the use of a car.

c . Access to health care

«c) To put in place policies which aim to provide access for all to healthcare appropriate to their situation, including situations of dependency..»

Two issues are key **(a)** ensuring equal access to services in **geographical** terms. **(b)** ensuring that no one is excluded from high-quality healthcare, whatever his economic situation

Strategic Planning: In May 2002 the Ministry of Health and Welfare completed its 'GENERAL STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL ACTION PLAN for implementation of the Package of Reforms 'HEALTH CARE FOR THE CITIZEN – 2000-2006'.

- **Health & Welfare Map:** The first phase has already been completed and will be put into effect in the summer of 2003. The map, based on GIS technology, allows searches using geographical criteria for a host of structures such as hospitals, health centres, regional medical practices, Regional centres for counselling and guidance, diagnostic centres, private clinics, first-aid centres, heliports, airports, IKA structures, mental health structures, etc., while the inventorying of other health agencies is still continuing. The map also shows other geographical and administrative data, such as settlements, the road network, etc. The user can directly extract whatever information he needs from the map.

Evening surgeries. By 31/05/2003 more than 280.000 patients had visited the doctor of their choice or undergone tests at public hospitals during evening hours. The programme so far has shown positive results in reducing waiting lists, making better use of hospital equipment and increasing hospital revenues.

New infrastructures. All across Greece the massive programme of renewal of hospital infrastructure, which began in the 1990s, is now bearing fruit¹². The Programme of NHS Infrastructure Upgrading 2000-2006 is under way at 16 hospitals in Athens and Thessaloniki, while significant interventions and expansion programmes are being implemented at other hospitals around the country, as well as a programme to procure new equipment. Autonomous **Emergency Units** are being set up at 68 of the country's hospitals. By the end of 2003 there will be 574 new beds in intensive care units, most of them in the country's regions. There is also a nationwide programme to upgrade the material and technical infrastructure of the country's **Health Centres**, while construction work is proceeding on new Urban

¹² E.g. new hospitals in Alexandroupoli, Grevena and Serres, Argos, Thebes, the Attic Hospital in Athens, the Papageorgiou in Thessaloniki. Thebes and Pargos by the end of 2003.

Health Centres. A special clinic is being built to serve the Athens Olympic Village, and after the Games it will also function as an Urban Health Centre.

Staffing. Quality services can only be provided and the best use be made of the infrastructures if the appropriate staff – well trained and selected on merit – are recruited. By March 2002 more than 4,500 personnel in various categories had been hired on fixed-term contracts, as well as more than 350 doctors, while the recruitment will soon be completed of the 5,000 personnel approved in 2001. 195 associate doctors have also been hired to fill vacancies in sensitive and remote regions. Plans have been drawn up for increasing the staff of the NHS throughout the course of 2003 (e.g. Attic Hospital, first-aid service, mental health, Manpower Employment Organization stage, etc.).

PSYCHIATRIC REFORMS

So far €165m have been made available, with 210 projects included, worth €95m and expenditure amounting to €4m. 19 of the 64 Chronic Patients Hospitals in Athens have undergone development, and progress on the remainder is expected by the end of 2003 (see below: Development of Infrastructures, Legal Entities in Private Law). Mental Health Units: 643 new staff positions were approved in 2002 for Axis 2 – Development of Infrastructures. Studies have been commissioned and are being prepared for infrastructure development in Legal Entities in Public Law (construction and lay-out of Mental Health departments within General Hospitals) as part of efforts to speed up development. The purpose: Deinstitutionalization..

Of vital importance to the elderly population of the rural areas is the provision of primary and post-hospital care. Programmes of this kind are already being run by the local authorities. Provision of appropriate services will make it easier for pensioners to retain contact with – perhaps even move back to – the region they originally came from.

The **Social Insurance Funds** are responsible for financing health services as well as primary care. By 2008 the **unified system of primary health care** will be in place, operating in accordance with the following principle: the Ministry of Health and the private sector *produce* health services, the insurance funds *purchase* health services. The central objective is that the system be pluralistic, easily accessible to the citizen and efficient. The first steps have already been taken. The Ministry of Health is planning construction of Urban Health Centres and these, together with the 208 Health Centres of all kinds and the multiple surgeries to be created as needed and the 140 IKA group practices will constitute the pillars on which the system will rest. Measures are also being introduced to link up the existing structures of the broader public sector and introduce cooperative operational arrangements where possible.

The **IKA** services are particularly important in the overall picture of the country's health services. The new Health Service Demand Management System (telephone appointments) is gradually being introduced and currently serving 35,000 patients each day. Patients phone in to make an appointment with a doctor, while there is also provision for emergencies. IKA is also offering a pilot home nursing scheme.

In order to further the process of Mental Health Reform, the insurance organizations are offering new structures of mental health care (special home mental health care units, mobile mental health units, psycho-social rehabilitation programmes, in social reintegration centres, and special rehabilitation and vocational reintegration units).

Four innovative initiatives by the insurance funds

1. Development and provision of care services for the elderly – especially those suffering from chronic health problems and unable to travel to health facilities – to assist them to maintain their independence and stay out of residential care. At present such services are only provided to those insured with IKA, in the form of emergency care including home visits by doctors, physiotherapists and nurses. This should reduce the phenomenon of private clinics functioning as elderly care homes, while the expenses are covered by insurance organizations. With regard to health care provided by other insurance funds, apart from IKA,

over the next three years there will be **more coverage of the expense of care services** provided at home to patients who cannot travel, owing to chronic and serious conditions, and also of new kinds of services involving the psycho-social health of the individuals insured with the funds.

2. Extension of IKA **family doctor** system to cover whole country.

3. Upgrading and expansion of scope of IKA **medical services management system** to cover all medical services.

4. Linking (initially on pilot level) of IKA **health facilities with OGA** (rural areas), to promote their use by those covered by OGA and thereby facilitate access to high-quality services outside the urban centres. This represents a decisive step towards the broader objective of unifying primary health care services for all citizens, whatever fund they have contributed to.

C. Access to services for the uninsured. The philosophy of the National Health Service is to provide open and user-friendly services. Those without insurance and the indigent are entitled to a special health book which can be used for regular treatment at all health facilities, with the cost paid out of the state budget. Economic migrants, who are covered by a public insurance agency, also have equal access to all health services. As for refugees, they are offered full medical and pharmaceutical care on their entry into Greece by structures in the public and social sector.

D. Preventive Care – Health Promotion. The aim of the Greek National Health Service – like any advanced health-care system – is not to accumulate as many beds and pieces of equipment as possible, but to reduce to the minimum the number of patients in hospital. It is in any case axiomatic that prevention is more effective, less painful and less expensive than cure.

The new legislation lays the foundations for a modern Public Health system designed with innovative specifications. Public Health policy comprises of a multisectoral range of activities to safeguard the health of the population and respond to possible threats. The philosophy behind the legislation is focussed on health (rather than treatment), improved quality of life and an increased life expectancy; it relies on coordinated measures and activities at the centre and in the regions, and encourages the involvement of local authorities. As part of the endeavour to promote preventive medicine and encourage a healthy lifestyle, many hospitals are already operating quit-smoking clinics, diet advice centres, programmes on rational alcohol consumption, on mental health, diabetes and cardiovascular problems, pain management clinics, respiratory disorder clinics and departments educating the public on issues of public health and prevention.

d. Access to other goods

- « d) To develop, for the benefit of people at risk of exclusion, services and accompanying measures which will allow them effective access to education, justice and other public and private services, such as culture, sport and leisure»

Access to Education

One of the characteristics of poverty in Greece is its very close association with the level of education. We can draw considerable comfort, then, from the greatly improved educational level of the younger generation, relative to their elders, and from the relatively good performance of Greece in such indicators as that measuring early school-leaving (Laeken indicators 8, 18). The combination of these two factors may mean that we can look forward to significant improvement trends over the long term, especially if progress is made in tackling youth unemployment.

Special Educational Needs

The **Education of Individuals with Special Educational Needs** should a) be tailored to the individual educational needs of each student, and b) be provided in an environment as little confined and cut off from normal schooling as possible. Individuals with special needs are taught 1) integrated into regular

classes in ordinary schools, 2) in special integration classes within ordinary schools, 3) in special educational schools, 4) in exceptional cases – in hospital or at home.

Support for education of the disabled is provided by the Centres for Diagnosis, Evaluation and Support, of which 22 are already operational and another 32 are being staffed. During the school year 2002-2003 there were 1,074 special integration classes, 283 special schools and 50 Special Vocational Education and Training Workshops (EEEEK).

Over the last three school years some 600 **Integration Classes** have been set up around the country. Since 2002 46 new special education schools have been opened and 212 new integration classes. This progress will continue over the next few years. There are already plans to open – in the year 2003-2004 – 206 new integration classes and 6 all-day Special Primary Schools.

Each year primary school teachers receive further training in special education from the Special Education Departments, and it is planned that the programme will soon extend to teachers in the secondary system, where there are serious gaps to be filled. As one of the 3rd CSF programmes the Ministry of Education intends to train, by 2004, no fewer than 10,000 teachers in aspects of children with special educational needs. The Pedagogical Institute has undertaken to prepare curricula for the creation of educational material for all categories of disability.

Finally, it is important to note that provision for disabled **access** is now an indispensable specification in designs for all new school and further education buildings.

V. Access to other goods

Social exclusion is not an exclusively economic issue. The full involvement of the citizen in the life of the community depends on utilization of free time, while ensuring access to cultural goods raises the quality of a person's life.

This factor, the quality of life, is of particular importance in the **countryside**. Two new initiatives are expected to have a broad impact in this area:

First, the establishment at the OGA of a **Rural Hearth** Brabch (Law 3050/02), corresponding to the Worker's Hearth in the cities. The purpose of this account is to create and distribute organized programmes of social tourism (holidays and excursions) or the free provision of tickets for theatrical performances and the provision of free books.

Second, for many small farmers a holiday can never be more than a dream. Provision is now being made for **replacement services when farmers are absent** from their land, whether the farmer in question is unwell, wishes to take a vacation or has some other pressing reason for his absence. The caretaker farmer who steps into his shoes will be properly qualified in the activities involved. Over the period 2003-2006 5000 agricultural holdings are expected to take advantage of the scheme.

In the area of **culture** provision has been made for the development of a network of 20 general interest **libraries** in remote rural areas. Wherever the construction of a library is not feasible, the role of the mobile libraries will be strengthened. 32 **mobile libraries** are already lending books to schools in remote areas. The new system of **Information Centres** within public libraries provides facilities for access to the internet and the library staff are available to help the public search for information.

In association with various municipalities, the General Secretariat for Sport is organizing **popular sports programmes**. They will provide sporting activities for all, regardless of age or ability, in order to improve health and quality of life. A total of 9,170 sections have been approved for the period 2002-2003. Particular emphasis is being laid on the development of special programmes, such as: sport at work, Gypsy encampments, areas with a high population of repatriated Greeks, Muslim and immigrant communities – where activities are organized in association with their own community groups. The goal is to have at least 5% of the population signed up within the next three years.

The holding of the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004 presents a superb opportunity to make real and lasting progress in the areas of inclusion and quality of life. The Games will give an enormous boost to the idea of voluntary action while the

infrastructure projects in Athens and the other Olympic cities will have a permanent impact. Nevertheless, it may well be that the holding of the **ParaOlympics** in the same year will be of even greater psychological and symbolic importance for the integration of the disabled.

The **Workers' Hearth Organization** specializes in the securing of access for its members to cultural goods and leisure activities. For example: social tourism vouchers, excursions, theatre tickets, purchase of books, creative activities. A number of insurance funds finance such activities as children's summer camps, spa treatments, etc.

Objective 2 Prevention of the risk of exclusion

- «a) To exploit fully the potential of the knowledge-based society and of new information and communication technologies and ensure that no-one is excluded, taking particular account of the needs of people with disabilities.
- b) To put in place policies which seek to prevent life crises which can lead to situations of social exclusion, such as indebtedness, exclusion from school and becoming homeless.
- c) To implement action to preserve family solidarity in all its forms.»

A. Tackling the digital gap and electronic exclusion

The new ICT are now described as 'infrastructure technologies', as their development and dissemination affect all aspects of human life and activity. Yet there is a danger that their use and the exploitation of their potential will not be evenly distributed among the population, that there may appear a 'digital gap'. This might manifest itself in a number of ways, critical among them the gender dimension, the question of access for individuals with special needs and the use of new technologies in education.

Four e-Inclusion Actions

A. Women and the Information Society, The Operational Programme 'Information Society' has a twofold strategy: It includes measures of a *general* nature to facilitate the dissemination of technologies and information science (e.g. in education, in very small businesses) and measures *specially* designed for women. Projects have been designed with a positive discrimination quota in favour of women (70/30), such as programmes to develop skills in new professions.

B. For the participation of the disabled a Working Group on 'Universal Access and Ease of Use in the Information Society' was set up in 2002 to put together a general framework. The following actions have been proposed: advanced Eurozone services for disabled individuals, special education data banks, special education school equipment, promotion of equality of access to health services and development of health information systems for the elderly and for the disabled, development of educational programmes, provision of telecommunications services for the disabled, involvement in the process of creating a national network "e-accessibility.gr".

C. Introduction of new technologies into education. The Ministry of Education is coordinating a number of measures to ensure that the potential of ICT is assimilated into the day-to-day teaching process. The initiative is designed along three axes: 1) Development of equipment 2) Development of digital content 3) Further training of teachers

D. For the rural areas, grants are to be paid to young farmers to allow them to purchase computers and internet links.

B. Support for the family – Actions for the elderly and for the disabled

The family and informal support structures in general have always offered – in an effective and human manner – the core of care and support in Greek society. To continue to play this role as effectively in the future they need the support of more formal structures. This formal support must fill any gaps and offer help where needed, but should *not* try to supplant the family. The family is central to the philosophy of structural changes in the area of welfare; *care in the community*

necessarily goes hand in hand with a meaningful role for the family, and avoidance of paternalism.

In recent years a number of structures have begun to operate and are gradually extending their reach to cover the whole population:

Inception of the **Social Support Services Network**. 25 Services are already operating in the same number of municipalities, while another 75 programmes have been approved and are currently recruiting staff. The invitation to tender will be published for about 70 new projects. **Restructuring of National System of Social Care** (Law.3106/2003): The necessary executive instruments for implementation and reorganization of the services are being prepared. **Help at Home: 953** units are operational; it is estimated that the total number will exceed 1100 by 2004, while 620 multi-purpose vehicles have been made available to as many municipalities. **65 Elderly Day Care Centres** are operational and the process of incorporating 20 new projects is under way. **40 Creative Employment Centres for Individuals with Disabilities** are operational and the process of integrating 5 further projects is under way. 298 new **Children's Creative Play Centres and Nurseries** are operational, and a new invitation to tender is being prepared. **Centres for Social Support and Training: 20** of the 24 Centres are operational and staff are being recruited for the remainder. The inclusion process is being completed for the construction of 17 new Centres in the same number of prefectures.

C. Geographical Exclusion and regeneration of rural areas

Integrated urban development interventions are intended to tackle social, economic and environmental problems, such as opportunities for productive employment, the low level of social infrastructures, access to training and the integration of socially excluded groups. They include action providing advisory services, employment and the creation of child care centres, and will begin to be implemented in 2003.

Reform of CAP and Social Exclusion

The recent reform of the CAP introduces radical changes to the nature of support for agriculture, introducing the provision of an integrated subsidy partially independent of the volume and type of production, on condition that certain criteria are met in the areas of the environment and the safety and quality of food produce. Reduction in support is also envisaged for specific products such as cereals, beef, olive oil and tobacco. An important element of the new CAP is the progressive reduction in subsidies for holdings in receipt of annual subsidies of over €5000, while part of the money saved will be spent on measures for rural development, with the emphasis on quality of food produce and the improvement of conditions of production.

According to some analyses, the above decisions, together with the expected review of support structures for Mediterranean produce and cotton, may lead to a decline in the level of viability of certain holdings, especially those in lowland areas. However, the small family-type holdings situated mainly in mountain and disadvantaged regions are not expected to be seriously affected and may well even benefit, if, of course, they make use of their comparative advantages and produce quality products.

Given the above, and the impact of limiting rural produce in the processing sector, it is likely that certain rural areas specializing in the growing of heavily-subsidised produce may face a period of adjustment. In this context it is deemed necessary to promote, in the regions in question, policies for greater differentiation in the local economy, as well as cohesive measures to confront phenomena of social exclusion which may affect those who find it impossible to adjust to the new state of affairs.

Local integrated interventions for rural development are being implemented. **Integrated Programmes for Development of Rural Areas** (Axis 7 –Regional Programme for Rural Development and Regeneration of Countryside) and measures in the “Leader Plus” Community Initiative are promoting improvements in social and economic prosperity of the populations of the rural mountain and disadvantaged regions.

D. Special concerns - Overindebtedness – Conscripts – Social Insurance for divorced women

Households in excessive debt. The rapid rise in consumer and mortgage loans (32% in 2002, 40% in 2001) has prompted concern at the threat of excessive debt driving households into poverty. For this reason the Bank of Greece conducted a survey in 2002-3 on outstanding household debt. The results are encouraging (not surprisingly, if we take into account that the 'opening up' of this market is relatively recent): 48% had no loans, a percentage higher (65%) among low-income households—below 15,000 € per annum. Loans are higher, however, among higher-income groups, while the average amount owed by those who have taken out loans is less than the average annual income. In general terms the borrowing recorded seems to resemble a 'consumer good' rather than a 'recourse of the desperate'. The Bank concludes that there is no serious problem of overindebtedness, though it notes that for a minority of individuals in the middle-income range there is an issue of *consumer loans*¹³.

In the immediate future a legislative initiative will tackle the problem of the **social insurance cover of divorced women**, who after their divorce are deprived of the insurance cover they were entitled to while married. The package of provisions being promoted seeks to safeguard the participation of divorced women in the social insurance entitlements of their former husband. This will put an end to the particularly significant social problem which in the past has left women *either* trapped in unsatisfactory circumstances *or* facing intractable problems of poverty.

Social policy for conscripts

The country's conscripts are a critical group. The fact that military service is obligatory allows for the identification and timely resolution of a series of social problems. The **Ministry of National Defence** has introduced a series of measures to make the best use of the period of military service to generate permanent social benefits:

- **Financial support for vulnerable groups:** Some € 65m are made available each year for financial support to conscripts from vulnerable social groups (children of long-term unemployed and young men living in mountain and disadvantaged regions). The support given is € 100 per month and it is estimated that there are some 5000 beneficiaries. This action complements other actions to support the offspring of large families or single-parent families.
- **Career guidance and training:** Basic computer skills for 2000 conscripts in various Institutes of Vocational Training around the country. Inclusion of conscripts in Ministry of Labour programmes.
- Tackling **illiteracy** through participation of conscripts in 'Life-long learning' programme of General Secretariat for Adult Education at Ministry of Education.
- Libraries. Creation of 40 libraries at border posts.
- 45 Internet Centres and 56 gyms.
- Psychological support helpline. Open on 24-hour basis. Based at Penteli Psychiatric Hospital..
- Drugs prevention centres sited near barracks. Memorandum of cooperation with OKANA for research at centres for new recruits.

Natural disasters. Operational upgrading in Law 3013/2002 of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection to respond to emergencies. The purpose is to upgrade the actions of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection through a series of measures such as the development of data bases on disasters and available means of protection, the use of the GIS in disaster management. Issuing of the new General Plan for Civil Protection 'XENOCRATES', better communication with the public and provision of information and detailed instructions for self-protection in each category of danger.

¹³ Regulations concerning the so-called 'compound interest' – new rates of interest imposed on old loans – will nevertheless lighten the burden on those with old loans.

Objective 3 To help the most vulnerable.

- «a) To promote the social integration of women and men at risk of facing persistent poverty, for example because they have a disability or belong to a group experiencing particular integration problems such as those affecting immigrants.
- b) To move towards the elimination of social exclusion among children and give them every opportunity for social integration.
- c) To develop comprehensive actions in favour of areas marked by exclusion.»

a. Institutional measures for the disabled

2003 is the European Year of the Disabled. The Greek EU Presidency during the first six months of the year took advantage of this fact to point to real progress in the way in which equal opportunities are ensured for Europeans with disabilities. The detailed resolution (10244/03) which Greece laid before the member states in June 2003 calls on them to intensify their efforts to implement provisions which will sever the connection between disability and handicap. Among other things, the member states are called on to apply the principle of mainstreaming in their action plans, to lay emphasis on accessibility, both physical and digital, etc. To implement these principles on the national level, the National Action Plan for Inclusion incorporates **6 new statutory measures**:

1. Introduction of national legislation countering discrimination and promoting equal opportunities
2. Operation of National Observatory for Disabled (article 10 Law 3106/2003).
3. Preparation for provisions on access, with deadlines and supervision of implementation. Use will be made of the valuable experience of Law 3057/02 currently being applied in Olympic cities.
4. Preparatory work on provisions for access to websites and new technologies, especially those funded by the Op. Programme 'Information Society' and other Regional Operational Programmes in the 3rd CSF, and from public funds.
5. Action Plan, with other ministries involved, the Central Association of Municipalities and the Association of Prefectural Authorities for implementation of UN Standards for equal opportunities for the disabled.
6. Emphasis on tackling problems with the administration, drawing on the experience and functions of the Ombudsman in the case of the disabled (application of existing legislation, tackling problems of negative discrimination and irregularities).

Finally, recognition of the strategic significance of the application of the mainstreaming principle in tackling the problems of individuals with special needs.

b. Immigrants – Multiculturalism

The question of immigration is of critical significance for Greece, and for the EU as a whole. The Greek EU Presidency laid emphasis on the issue with the achievement of a political agreement on the Draft Directive related to the reunification of families. The smooth integration of immigrants and the promotion of a multicultural society are not only positive values in themselves, they are necessary to economic growth and the country's good relations with its neighbours.

Law **2910/2001** attempts a comprehensive set of provisions to regulate the issues of the entry into the country, and residence, of aliens. After the first immigrant census some 715.000 foreign nationals from third countries sought a residence permit here. The Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization is proceeding to create a register of immigrants; by the end of the year all the foreigners living in the country legally should have been entered. On the organizational level, Immigration Directorates have been set up at the Interior ministry and the regional authorities – currently being staffed.

The register of immigrants and the organizational structure makes possible the planning of an **operational programme for immigrants**, for their smooth integration into society, which will manage resources of € 260m (over 2003-6). The initial planning is complete: a) Information, advisory and support services for immigrants b) Development and promotion of opportunities for integration into the labour market c) Cultural integration d) Upgrading of provision of health and preventive medicine

services for specific groups of immigrants e) Creation of support structures to respond to emergency needs for reception and temporary housing of immigrants. A new institution, the **Institute for Migration Policy**, has begun operation, with broad representation and inter-ministerial coordination.

Corresponding problems of cultural adaptation are faced by repatriated Greeks. Specifically, for the **education** of foreign and returning ethnic Greek children in the regular schools the Ministry of Education provides: 1) ease of registration in the school, 2) reception classes, which are held during the regular school timetable, for students who need to learn Greek, 3) extra coaching classes in specific subjects outside school hours, 4) the possibility of a second teacher, bilingual where necessary, working in the classroom, 5) the option of using adapted educational material, sometimes bilingual.

During the current school year there were 426 reception classes and 231 extra coaching classes in the primary system, and 47 reception classes and 44 extra coaching classes in the secondary system. Under the second Operational Programme for Education and Initial Training the University of Athens is implementing a programme 'Education of Returning Ethnic Greek and Foreign Students', which seeks the integration into the educational system of children with cultural differences, to ensure their proper reception by the educational community, to supply teachers with the necessary knowledge, educational material and technical resources, to offer psychological and social support to the families of the students and to raise the awareness of those employed in educational administration.

Muslim minority

As a complement to the measures in the first National Action Plan, the University of Athens is implementing a programme, during 2002-03, on 'Education of Muslim children'. The purpose of the programme is to continue the spectacular improvement seen in educational indicators:

1. The production of material for secondary education. The total material already in use amounts to about 2900 pages.
2. Further training material for teachers
3. In-service training for primary and secondary school teachers
4. Expanded timetable for junior high schools to assist in language learning and generally improve performance.
5. Identification of key factors in school performance (study of levels of language proficiency, inventory of progress at school of all minority students in junior high schools of Xanthe and Rhodope, to discover the causes of the drop-out rate, and study of the factors inhibiting good performance at school.

c. Integrated programme for Gypsies/Roms

Work is continuing on implementation of the Integrated Action Programme for the Social Inclusion of Greek Gypsies, responsibility of a Joint Ministerial Committee coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization. The basic principles are: respect for cultural differences, encouragement of active involvement, promotion of cooperation on the local and regional level, respect and understanding for the attitudes of local communities. The programme is designed along two axes: the creation of infrastructures to tackle the housing problem of the Rom population and to provide services in the areas of training – promotion of employment, education, culture – sport, health - welfare.

a. **Housing** The objective is that all Greek Gypsies should lack permanent housing. It is anticipated that by the end of 2005 no Greek Rom family will be living in tents or makeshift accommodation.

- 1,510 prefabricated houses have been made available in 33 areas and families have moved into them. 187 permanent homes have been constructed and handed over in 4 municipalities in various regions of Greece. The provision of another 850 prefabricated houses has been approved, as well as the financing of infrastructures for another 17 regions.
- The process of making available 3,500 home loans has begun. So far 2,160 loan applications have been lodged with the Loans Committee (Ministry of Interior). Procedures have been simplified.

- Legislative provision is under way to transfer plots of land into full ownership of the Rom.
- Planning is under way for building on public plots of land in two regions.
- b. Education. Actions already implemented**
- The programme for Rom children has led to a decline in the primary school drop-out rate from 75% five years ago to 25%.
- The travelling child card has been issued to 3,500 children.

The programme is continuing as part of the 3rd CSF. The intention is to extend use of the card to all areas where the Rom are living, and especially in encampments.

c. Health-care. The objective is to implement programmes of preventive medicine and vaccination for those living in encampments. Health interventions have been carried out – preventive examinations, referrals to hospital, vaccinations – in 15 areas where Gypsies live. Tenders are being invited currently for the creation of 50 medical-social support centres – doctor, nurse, social worker etc. – to operate in areas where the Rom are living in encampments.

d. Culture. The main objective is to record and promote the cultural heritage of the Rom population. At the same time it is necessary to familiarize them with Greek culture. The Ministry of Culture (Popular Culture Directorate) is implementing programmes in two municipalities: creative activity, theatre workshop, photography workshop. The creation of 80 Houses of Culture and Clubs is to be included in the Operational Programme 'CULTURE'.

d. Juvenile delinquents.

Juvenile delinquents are a key target group in efforts to combat social exclusion. Actions being taken focus on three areas:

1) *Prevention of criminal behaviour.* (a) **Societies for Protection of Minors** are dedicated to setting up special homes for minors. (b) The **Juvenile supervision services** of the juvenile courts are the main agency for treating minors outside institutional care. The services monitor indicators which are associated with the prevention and containment of juvenile crime in the court's area of jurisdiction.

2) *Containment of criminal behaviour.* The Volos Boys' Institute accommodates minors who have engaged in unlawful activity or are facing problems of social adjustment. Two **Special Treatment Units** will be opened to help drug users.

3) *Post-custodial care.* The Ministry of Justice in association with the Manpower Employment Organization is implementing programmes to subsidize new jobs and new businesses for ex-prisoners and young offenders or young people at social risk.

E. Drugs.

In December 2001 the **National Action Plan to Tackle Drug Addiction 2002-2006** was approved, with the following main axes.

- More understanding treatment of users by the penal system
- Development of actions to prevent abuse and their linking with the school community to raise prevention awareness among 20,000 teachers.

OKANA (Organization against substance abuse)

- **Prevention Centres:** There are **8 new Centres**, with another 8 in the pipeline.
- Rehabilitation programmes, both independent and in association with the Centres for Counselling and Guidance.

KETHEA (Centre for Treatment of Addicted Individuals)

- **Development of programmes:** Since 2002 5 new programmes have been in operation:
- Programme to treat **alcohol** abuse in Athens.
- Awareness-raising of local communities and investigation of best geographical solution for development of regional programmes

Development of programmes in the 18 ANO and ARGO programmes (Athens and Thessaloniki)

Package of measures for alcohol abuse and alcoholism:

- Agreement between producers, advertisers/clients and the Ministries of Health and Media on a **plan of self-regulation** in advertisement of alcoholic products.
- Legislative measure by the Ministry of Health and Welfare on the **structure of alcohol treatment services in the NHS.**

Poverty afflicting **children** undermines and threatens their future. Poverty in childhood transmits social and economic problems from one generation to the next. Its prevention is a social investment. In Greece, poverty among children is the field where family solidarity has the greatest impact. Solidarity means that the risk of

poverty is much lower if consumption is used instead of income, while in contrast with other countries the existence of children is a factor which reduces instead of increasing the risk of poverty. Yet these observations give no grounds for complacency. Apart from income support and measures guaranteeing access to goods such as education, health and culture, special treatment is needed at moments critical to the future and rights of the child. An important step in this direction has been the establishment of a special **Children's Ombudsman**.

CHAPTER 5

INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

5.1 Monitoring - coordination

a. At the local level

The major challenge in implementing actions against exclusion involves the points of contact between the individual at risk of exclusion and the agencies responsible for providing services. An inflexible bureaucratic approach, insisting on forms and procedures, risks repelling and alienating even further individuals at their moments of vulnerability. If such a state of affairs persists, it may have two results: a) that those really entitled to help will not seek it, b) that the services will continue to be used by those who have learnt to 'work' the system. Thus the efficacy of the interventions is diminished and the social acceptance and legitimacy of official solidarity are both undermined.

Modernization of Administration

The modernization of public administration, through interventions planned and implemented with the introduction of e-government and the measurement of performance and efficiency, in order to improve the quality of services to the public, but also to improve public access to services.

A. E-government Actions have been initiated to train and network the various services. The Operational Plan of the Ministry of the Interior has been completed, as has the process for the procurement of equipment for the operation of the KEP (Citizens Service Centres), while the Development and Operation of a Central Information System for the KEP is being developed. 700 KEP are now operating around the country, and we are advancing towards the target of 1000 KEP to provide full nationwide coverage. The MIS for the Regions is currently under development.

B. Promotion of legislation on **performance measurement** and efficiency of public administration. The objective is the ongoing evaluation of services to the public, to increase public confidence and the degree to which its needs are met, to improve transparency, to make use of the available resources and in general to ensure that public administration is carried on in the best interests of the citizen.

For this reason it is of vital importance that the social infrastructure at the *local* level, which comes into contact with excluded individuals, should be able to tackle their problems in a personal way, to diagnose the root of the problem and direct the individual in question to the services which offer the best chance of positive results.

B. At the strategic-planning level

A. Statistical information. The NSSG has already taken significant steps to improve the provision of statistical information, upgrading the ESSPROS system and carrying out special surveys. It will play an essential role in future, since the Open Method of Coordination demands a constant flow of improved and comparable statistical data if it is to perform. The combination of data by the NSSG on demand for services at the local level (e.g. demographic structure of municipalities, regional economies, etc.) with data on infrastructures (e.g. municipalities, institutions, health structures) in the framework of Geographical Information Systems, will provide a particularly valuable tool.

Response to policy structure and networking at all levels. The network of social services

A. Creation of Social Service at level of municipality (KYD) or *inter-municipal* cooperation, on the basis of population criteria (municipalities with over 10,000 inhabitants, in prefectural capitals, and regions with acute social problems). This service will offer a reference point for the activation of the emergency social care network.

The **Social Welfare Map** – will form an important basis for the creation of suitable structures.

The KYD will have carried out the necessary analysis of local needs and planning, with the participation of the municipal service providers (child care, elderly care, etc.) whose operations it is to support, but also in association with the local branches of state agencies, prefectural services and NGOs active in the area. This will encourage partnership relations on the local level. The purpose is reciprocal provision of information, cooperation and complementarity.

The KYD will provide advice, support, information on rights and opportunities, promotion and monitoring of demand for services and benefits from other administrative levels or specialist agencies. In this latter area it will cooperate with the Citizens Service Centres which have already been set up on the municipal and prefectural level.

The social actions of the municipalities will be framed by *minimum specifications* and *mandatory services* – which will be centrally defined. But beyond these the local authorities will be able to undertake initiatives as they see fit.

To further cooperation there will be the necessary *preparation of the workforce* with the relevant training and awareness-raising on the local level.

B. The prefectural level – where most of the state structures are located, with the decentralized public services and the branch offices of large organizations – will provide a further **level for the introduction of cohesion and global vision** in the provision of services. This level will draw up a picture of the overall situation as a basis for planning and complementary action in the event that there are significant disparities among the local authorities in the prefecture (in size, available resources and services, etc.). It will take measures to create and upgrade the network of social services to cover the whole geographical area of the prefecture on the basis of minimum specifications to be centrally defined, and also to further cooperation among prefectural and local services, among the prefectural services themselves, and, where possible, will establish a programme to accommodate services in the same facilities.

This process will be assisted – through a collective consultative body on issues of social policy, under the chairmanship of the Prefect – by the services and agencies located at the prefectural level and representatives of certified NGOs active in the relevant fields.

C. The Regional Authorities will undertake the role of funding, supervision, control and evaluation on behalf of the state (e.g. compliance with specifications, legality of decisions, etc.). This will involve monitoring of the situation at the regional level and planning, with the emphasis on identifying gaps and overlapping and the responding to possible disparities between prefectures in respect of the social services provided. Social planning will be part of the overall regional planning framework and will involve the participation of all social policy agencies, of the local authorities and NGOs. Within the context of the existing regional council there will be a more specific formation, with broader representation – the Regional Council for Social Protection, under the Secretary General of the Region.

The decisions of the regional authority will be based on the specifications and directions laid down by central government and on the information and analysis of the situation derived from the services at prefectural and municipal level.

D. At the central level, where most responsibility lies for strategic policy making, together with the expertise for its support, the conditions will be established for integrated policy making and linking of the individual policies and directions. In addition to the already established national **Commissions for Employment and Social Protection**, uniform minimum specifications will be set through the corresponding expansion of the powers of already existing agencies.

For an overall approach to policy against social exclusion, a *horizontal coordinating structure* will be used, operating on the political level and corresponding to the National Commission for Social Protection. It will include ministers from the social and other appropriate ministries. The priorities of social policy will be defined and an impulse will be provided for greater cohesion among government actions.

5.2 Engaging the active involvement of society – The Social Protection Commission

As stated in chapter 3, mobilising the society is key in developing a coherent policy against exclusion. Such an enterprise must first and foremost foster relations of mutual confidence and cooperation among State and local agencies and the public at large – must create a culture of cooperative partnership. In the past these relations have been occasionally marred (for political and historical reasons) by suspicion and hostility. Although this phenomenon is gradually disappearing, the active involvement and cooperation of civil society in the fight against exclusion still has a long way to go. The success of the enterprise will require a collaboration that proceeds with careful and concrete steps and is, above all, **structured**. The main instrument in this direction is the Commission for Social Protection, established by Law 3144 along as its counterpart the Employment Commission.

The Commission for Social Protection

Established by Law 3144 /2003—«Social Dialogue for the promotion of Employment and Social Protection». The purpose of the Commission is to promote Social Dialogue to combat poverty and social exclusion, the development of the Network for Social Protection and Social Inclusion and the provision of expert opinions on the framing, monitoring and evaluation of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion.

The National Commission consists of the Minister for Labour, his deputy the Deputy Minister for Health and Welfare, and the General Secretaries of the Ministries of Economy and Finance, Interior, Development, Education, Labour, Health and Welfare, Equality, and the NSSG. It also includes a representative of each Social Agency (Association of Prefectural Authorities, Central Association of Municipalities and Communes, the Church, Federation of the Disabled, TUC, General Federation of Businessmen and Industrialists, Confederation of Greek Industries, National Confederation of Greek Commerce, and the NGOs). The members serve a two-year term.

The Commission dedicated its first meeting, in July 2003, to a comprehensive discussion of the directions and objectives of the current Action Plan for Inclusion. The Plan's implementation calls for the active involvement of the Commission for Social Protection as the way to enlist the engagement of local agencies and organisations in a joint undertaking to tackle exclusion. During the next six months the following action will be taken under the auspices of the Commission:

- Concrete definition of the actions and general directions contained in the present document, by agency and area of responsibility.
- Discussion of general directions, updating, introduction of monitoring structures, briefing, communication.
 - In respect specifically of local government, in cooperation with the Greek Association for Local Development and Local Government, a search for new methods of transferring good practices among municipalities and internationally. Examination of application of versions of open method of coordination between municipalities and prefectural authorities.
- Concrete definition of general directions in which objectives are formulated concerning the form of presentation of statistical indicators.
- Discussion with the Church on maximizing synergy with its charitable activities.
- Beginning of a fruitful, structured dialogue with NGOs.
 - Procedural discussions with organisations currently recognized by the EU
 - Dispatch of questionnaire to record views and activities of NGOs in the area of solidarity.
 - Discussions on form and structure of permanent cooperation with NGOs.
- Organization events to raise public awareness of Action Plan for Social Inclusion. The success of the National Commission will pave the way for the establishment of similar committees at the prefectural or municipal level.

The culmination of the whole endeavour will be the publication of the Social Protection Charter by the end of 2003.

CHAPTER 6

GOOD PRACTICE

1. Local Development and Social Policy: The Municipality of Arkhanes

The case of the Municipality of Arkhanes (Prefecture of Herakleion) is a noteworthy instance of good practice, by both Greek and European standards. Its philosophy involves the creation of a strong local community, through full utilization of human resources and strengthening of social cohesion.

Through a comprehensive development plan, based on cooperation among the municipal authority, the Herakleion Development Corporation and the other agencies in the region, an attempt was made to differentiate the local economy and create new small and medium-sized businesses. As a result, the rural area in question has enjoyed significant rates of growth over the last ten years, as well as substantial increases in employment. At the same time the Municipality has implemented a comprehensive, integrated social intervention plan, intended to end social exclusion and improve the local quality of life. The plan in question involves:

Policy measures on employment:

- Through the programme 'Local Social Capital' support actions have been promoted for entrepreneurship and self-employment for vulnerable groups threatened with exclusion from the labour market (the disabled, members of single-parent families, the young, immigrants, etc.).
- The Centre for Creative Activity for Children has promoted employment for unemployed individuals who can offer the specific skills required, as well as creative leisure activities for local children.
- The creation of a child-care centre has helped local women to reconcile the demands of work and family life.
- The local Social Support Services Office offers vulnerable groups support in finding work and educational opportunities, as well as other advisory services.

Measures for access to resources, goods and services:

- A fully equipped and staffed regional health centre.
- An Elderly Care Centre, currently approaching completion, which will offer pre- and post-hospital care.
- Local cultural events.
- Opening of an open-air municipal cinema, offering entertainment to local people at very low prices.

Measures to prevent social exclusion:

- The local KAPI and – especially – the Social Solidarity Action provide economic, social and psychological support services to the elderly.
- The Help at Home programme offers social, medical and psychological assistance to housebound elderly people.
- The local Accompanying Support Services Centre implements actions to cultivate team spirit, strengthen self-confidence and provide social and psychological support to the unemployed aged 45-65.

Finally, it should be noted that in order to ensure the coordination of the health and social care services, and to guarantee the additionality of actions, the Municipality of Arkhanes has set up an Organization for Social and Communication Policy.

2. Citizens Service Centres: Public access to the public administration

The Citizens Service Centres (KEP) are organic units of the local government authorities in which they are established (Regions, Prefectures, Municipalities and Communes) and are responsible for providing administrative information to the public and resolving problems or transacting business the public may have with the authorities. The KEP inform the public, drawing the information they provide from:

- The data bases created centrally at the Ministry of the Interior, General Secretariat for Public Administration, or
- Other data bases and sources, local or otherwise.

The central website www.kep.gov.gr created by the Ministry of the Interior to further the objective of provision of information through the KEP and also to offer direct information to citizens with access to the internet, contains information mainly on administrative procedures and dealings which can be transacted at the KEP. There is a full account of all such transactions, with details of the necessary documentation, time and cost, etc. For each transaction there is also an electronic application form with all the details necessary on how to fill it in. New information is regularly added to the site, as well as new forms for various administrative applications useful to the public.

Through the Internet the KEP can also cull information from websites of other agencies and pass it on to the public. For example, the KEP have access to the websites of the National Printing Office, ASEP (Senior Civil Service Recruitment Council), etc. and can allow the public access to publications of the National Printing Office, invitations to tender and application forms for participation in ASEP recruitment procedures.

The KEP can also offer the citizen more personalized information: contact details of the officer handling his case; what stage of the procedure his case has reached; when he will have a final answer; if additional details should be submitted, and if so, what details, etc. The KEP employee requests these details from the appropriate government department by any means expedient.

So far 756 KEP have opened– in municipalities, prefectural, provincial and regional authorities. There are already 791 administrative procedures which can be handled at the Centres, and the goal is to raise this figure to 1000 by the end of the year. It should also be noted that 14 Joint Ministerial decrees simplified and streamlined 326 administrative procedures vital to serve the public.

3. Investing in services: The Help at Home programme

The objective is: *«That the elderly and disabled should be able to remain in their familiar physical and social environment; that the cohesion of their family should be preserved; that the use of institutional care should be avoided, as should situations of social exclusion; that they should be ensured a decent and healthy life and that the quality of their life should be improved ».*

Each service provision unit in the programme consists of a social worker, who is responsible for coordinating the programme, one or two nurses and one to three home helps or community carers. These people apply the principles of team work and community planning. A fixed day and hour is set for the monthly and weekly planning and accounting of the team. The members of the team must keep a daily record of the services carried out, handing in a weekly bulletin to the programme coordinator to update the monitoring system. The monitoring system for progress and results of the work is determined by the Project Management Team.

The programme is part of primary community care services. The action expands in quantity and quality the primary care services available. Social work, nursing care and family-domestic help services are provided to meet basic needs. Priority is given to the care of the elderly living permanently alone, or left alone for certain hours in the day, and who cannot take adequate care of their own needs. Similarly to the care of disabled living alone or with their families and facing the risk of isolation, or whose families are being placed under excessive strain, and who may be prevented from resorting to institutional care.

In both preparatory and implementation stages the programme involves: training of staff, adaptation of plan to special local features, determination of timetable, selection of tools and techniques, procurement of necessary material and equipment, selection of method of internal evaluation and statistical processing for needs of monitoring and external evaluation, and submission of reports on accomplishment of programme.

Main phases of measures

1. Social mapping of area of responsibility and broader community.
2. Investigation of needs of elderly served by programme.
3. Determining priorities of needs of elderly and disabled in population to be served.
4. Cooperation with local agencies or networks, with priority attached to public health services and welfare services in public and private sectors, as well as church and NGO welfare programmes, in order to keep them informed and to explore possibility of collaboration and coordination of community care services offered to those served by the programme.
5. Briefing, awareness-raising and preparation of the community on the special features and needs of the elderly and the disabled and the content of the programme.
6. Development and reinforcing of voluntary activities by public.
7. Provision of primary community care services to elderly and disabled, such as: advice and psychological – emotional support, primary nursing care, domestic help and meeting of practical living needs, care for personal health and cleanliness, health education and prevention, adaptation and improvement of use and accessibility of home and home equipment and external environment, facilitating needs in respect of movement, information and communication.
8. Development of secure and confidential system for recording and monitoring those served by programme and system of gathering statistical data for updating needs of responsible Project Management Team, Directorate of Ministry of Health and Welfare, Management Committee in Regional Administration, Mayor or Deputy Mayor in charge of social issues and finally the needs of self-assessment and planning of the group running the programme.

The programme is implemented by local authorities through Municipal companies. The Municipality is obliged to provide accommodation, preferably within or close to the Open Care Centre, as well as the necessary equipment, and every facility required by the programme staff for smooth provision of services to their clients.

Already:

- More than 800 units operate in municipalities up and down the country.
- Some 3000 individuals are employed by the programme.
- The Ministry of Health and Welfare has given the municipalities offering the programme 500 multi-purpose vehicles to meet the needs of the programme, and 250 additional vehicles are shortly to be delivered.