



WORK-ORIENTED INNOVATION IN GREECE

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WORK-IN-NET

Labour and innovation: Work-oriented innovations – a key to better employment, cohesion and competitiveness in a knowledge-intensive society

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1. Preface

This report is based on a survey realized in 2006 by DEMOKRITOS and the General Secretariat for Science and Technology in Greece as being members in the WORK-IN-NET project.

WORK-IN-NET is a four-year (2004-08) project with the full title 'Labour and Innovation: Work-Oriented Innovations – a Key to Better Employment, Cohesion and Competitiveness in a Knowledge-Intensive Society'. The project is funded within the ERA-NET scheme of the Sixth Research Framework Programme of the European Commission. The overall aim of WORK-IN-NET is to set up sustainable communication and cooperation channels in Europe between the still fragmented national and regional research activities in the area of work-related innovation issues. To cope with the lasting innovation, productivity and employment challenges in European countries, the focus of WORK-IN-NET lies on three key themes:

- qualitative human resource development,
- corporate social responsibilities and cultures, and
- regional development alliances.

Innovative interactions of all – national and regional - stakeholders and extended development coalitions are vital for achieving the goal set by the Lisbon European Council – to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and with greater social cohesion. Within the economic and technological changes towards globalization the regional dimension is gaining momentum.

The following pages offer an overview about the discussions during the workshop on regional research programmes. The main objective of this first meeting of regional experts was to foster a systematic exchange of information and good practices concerning existing regional research programmes on work oriented innovation and innovative development coalitions.

Claudio Zettel
- Coordinator -

2. Introduction

As it will be made evident within this report, the programs that are related to the WORK-IN-NET objectives ,qualitative human resource development, corporate social responsibilities and cultures, and regional development alliances in Greece are not solely executed by one public body but by a number of different bodies. These bodies are mainly supervised by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Health and Social Insurances that entitle research institutes to carry out research and take part in a number of projects. The aim of those projects is to depict the current situation in Greece in the relevant sectors regarding the working conditions and to identify potential for improvement.

The following report aims to offer a comprehensive insight into the existing situation concerning the working conditions that are prevalent in Greece. An effort has been made in order to achieve a clear account of the research studies and national programs that offer support to both employees and employers and that can be regarded as best practice approaches.

Furthermore, there is a reference to a common protocol between the Ministry of Public Administration and Decentralization, the employer organizations and other employer bodies from June 2006 targeting to promote equality at work along with a concise description of the contribution of social services to this goal.

Additionally, the priorities that have been set in Greece are presented and their contribution to the improvement of the working life of Greek employees.

Also, an report by INE-GSEE/ ADEDY (Institute of Labour - General Confederation of Labour/ Confederation of Public Servants) is included that focuses on the structural competitiveness and makes a reference to the new law concerning maximum working time and working time arrangements that require a prior reached agreement between the company and the company trade union or work council.

Moreover, as far as the health and safety in workplaces is concerned, statistics are provided by the Social Insurance Foundation and the Labour Inspectors about the

provisions that are taken by the companies for this issue. In relation to this, research is carried out by researchers of the Athens School of Public Health on “the potential working hazards of surgery-sterilization”, “the occupational stress” and the corresponding implications and impacts. And there is research pinpointing the occurrence of “baker’s asthma”.

Simultaneously, there exists research and reports by the Greek Institute for Hygiene and Safety (ELINYAE), concerning issues related to the protection of health of workers and the measures that are taken on behalf of the organizations for safety at the workplaces.

Included is also research carried out by the Institute of Employment (INE) in the following thematic fields: “flexibility of employment and the effects of it in Greece and Europe”, “working relationships in Europe and in Greece during the Economic Monetary Union”, “employment and working conditions in Greece”, “reality, trends, prospects of destitute and underpaid workers in Greece” ,“inequality of payments of men and women in Europe”, “employment and working relationships of disabled people in Europe”, “job insecurity of Greek youth”, “European Union”, “competitiveness and Industrial policy - the services sector”, “competitiveness and employment - lifelong learning and training scenarios of professional training in Europe until year 2010 - the Greek situation”, “ensuring the quality of European training - tele working - health and work security - productivity measuring - creation of a quality system for the services sector”.

Beyond, further studies carried out by Greek researchers are integrated such as research by C. Ioannou on fundamental elements that modern work organizations lack from Southern European public policies. This is accompanied by the results of the project funded by the European Commission on flexibility and competitiveness, in particular about “Labour Market Flexibility, Innovation and Organisational Performance” implemented by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens - Center of Financial Studies, on the part of Greece.

Finally, new forms of work organization that are promoted and funded by GSRT, General Secretariat for Research and Technology, are presented to partners from public sector organizations and private companies.

3. Working conditions in Greece – best practices promoted by specific institutions

In Greece, there are certain specific institutions supporting activities and promoting themes related in general to the national working conditions.

- **LAEK Special Fund for Employment and Vocational Training of the Greek Manpower Employment Organization:** was introduced in the 1991-1992 and 1993. The National General Collective Labour Agreements is an account which is financed via a special contribution from workers and employers and is aimed at funding training programs and developing programs at enterprise level to promote employment, protection and support for unemployed people.
- **KEPEA Information Centre for Workers and Unemployed:** was created in 2000. Apart from the consultative services it provides on employment and social insurance issues and rights (with an emphasis on the rights of economic migrants) it also mediates in the job-seeking process. To this end an electronic database has been created which prospective employers as well as unemployed people may access. In this way unemployed people can receive information on jobs being offered.
- **EQUAL / Ministry of Employment and Social Protection:** As a national thematic network on reconciliation of family and working life the project "Alkistis" focuses on promoting the reconciliation between family and working life through counseling and provision of information several issues related to the working population.

- **An Integrated Mentoring Plan for the Local Effective Management of Employment with New Technologies PROJECT - IMPLEMENT**

The project refers to the prevention and treatment of the repercussions of economic restructuring at the Periphery of Attica. The main objective of the project is the treatment of the restructuring repercussions to female employment, (employed and unemployed women) and its support towards sectors that take advantage of this restructuring (Information Technology, Tourism, Health – Welfare).

The sectors appear to have an increasing demand of qualified human resources, at the same time that female unemployment appears 17% higher than male unemployment, and the women employed in this sectors occupy low and middle work positions, and are, in the long run, threatened by unemployment.

The suggested project aims at the reinforcement of employability of unemployed women, but also of employed in low and middle work positions women, occupied in sectors that take advantage of the restructuring.

In this context, an innovative system of female personal development (addressed to both unemployed and employed women) and based on Mentoring methods, is designed and assessed. It is expected that the development and implementation of this system, in combination with new tools and training methods, constitutes a new effective way for the integration and professional encouragement of thousand of citizens leaving and working in the European Union. Thus, it is expected that the innovative tools and methodologies, which will be developed in the frame of the present project, can later be transferred and replicated to other economic sectors at local, regional and national level in the countries of the European Union.

The objectives of the project are summarized in the following:

- Promotion of unemployed women of the Periphery of Attica to positions in the sectors of Information Technology, Tourism and Health – Welfare, through the enhancement of their skills and competences.
- Development and customization of innovative mentoring methodologies and tools, towards the enhancement of women's socioeconomic status, through their promotion to qualitative positions.
- Improvement of women's adaptation capabilities in order to assure their "employability", especially in positions in the sectors of Information Technology, Tourism, Health – Welfare.

- Adaptation and adoption of innovative tools and human resources development methodologies, mainly addressed to women employed in Information Technology enterprises.
- Identification of good practices and integration of these new tools and systems in the Activities Human Resources Management and Development.
- Dissemination and Integration of the project's products at regional, national and European level.

3.1 Protocol to promote gender equality at work

On 2nd of June 2006, the Ministry of Public Administration and Decentralization, the employer organizations and other employer bodies signed a cooperation protocol on the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women employed in companies. Signatories on the employer side were: the Federation of Greek Industries, the General Confederation of Greek Small Businesses and Trade, the National Confederation of Greek Traders, the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality has made a commitment to provide funding to conduct relevant research and studies.

3.2 Social services contributing to the improvement of working conditions

Levels of expenditure on social public services are low (compared to the EU average). The current structure was established after the fall of the dictatorship in 1974 and subsequent attempts to modernize social and welfare systems. There exists a lack of a systematic service policy to inform the development of social public services, with an emphasis on the treatment of social problems rather than prevention. The state has been described as outdated and dysfunctional, with the dominance of an administrative rather than a service culture. The highly centralized state sector is increasingly being replaced by decentralization; a mixed economy provision including private and non-profit organizations involved in service delivery and local government have recently become important agencies for partnerships between central and local government and between the public and private sector.

3.3 Peristeri Preparation Centre

Funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) employment initiative, it targets young unemployed people who have either dropped out of school or that have low levels of qualification and skills. The Centre provides individualized information, advice, guidance, vocational training and assistance in job searching, employment support, information and guidance for setting up small businesses, and participation in creative and leisure activities.

3.4 Information and Advice Network for Unemployed Young People

The Network is a project set up by the Work Institute, the research agency of the Confederation of the Greek Trade Union, with funding from the EU under the Employment Initiative of the structural funds. The network consists of eight information and advice offices and a wide range of local partners.

There are three distinctive elements of the Network, which distinguish it from traditional services for the unemployed in Greece. The first element is their focus on local labour markets and socioeconomic environment and on the specific characteristics of the client group of young unemployed. The second is the active involvement and participation of the client group. The third is the mobilization of local communities through the mobilization of volunteers, political partnership and the involvement of local actors.

This is clearly a bottom-up approach which creates conditions for establishing responsiveness to local conditions and needs and for the empowerment of users. The choice of staffing the Network with young graduates represents an additional element of involvement and participation as they also belong to the young unemployed group they are in a different socioeconomic position from the young unemployed targeted by the Network.

3.5 University Job Link Service

The Job Link was set up on a pilot basis in 1991 by the University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens. Its services include individual career guidance and advice, job trainee placements for university students, yearly career days, where employers are invited to present job opportunities available and interview individual

graduates, advice and guidance for post-graduate studies, in print and electronic form, job information for employers and students and a service matching job supply with demand. The job matching service involves the setting up of a data base with information about the graduates of the university and the operation of a regular communication network with employers of the private and the public sector.

4. The priorities of the Greek government to improve the existing situation of employment and working conditions

There is a multilayered approach by Greek government to tackle with the problems of employment and the improvement of working conditions. The priorities in this field of activity are the following:

1. New working time arrangement
2. Mobility of jobs and production
3. Decentralization of services
4. Innovation in work organization
5. Growing importance of small and medium enterprises
6. Human capital development
7. Research and technology
8. Work - life balance
9. Reconciliation of the demands of working life with family
10. Life-long learning
11. Time for recreation
12. Social cohesion
13. Ageing and demographic change
14. Inter-generational solidarity
15. Health and care
16. Economic and cultural integration of migrants

4.1 Consequences and contributions:

The above described activities lead to the following consequences and contributions:

- Develop the activities of research, debate and information dissemination
- Focus on a limited number of key policy themes
- Develop work in light of practical experience within the workplaces, companies, etc
- Include a sectoral perspective (private and public sector) aware of the demands of the National General Collective Labour Agreement in Greece. This agreement between the Greek General Confederation of

Labour (GSEE) and the employer organisations includes the following issues:

- Protection of workers in 'atypical' (non formal) forms of employment
- Protection of part-time employees
- Measures to prevent violation of the rights of fixed-term contract workers in the private sector
- Statutory guarantee of teleworkers' labour and insurance rights in accordance with the European Framework Agreement on Telework, etc.
- Reconciliation of working and family life: protection from dismissal of parents availing themselves of reduced working hours in order to care for a child, measures for single-parent families, ability of a working father to work fewer hours in order to care for a child in the event that the mother is not availing herself of this right, whether she is working as an employee or is employed in any manner outside the home
- Protection of surrogate mothers, etc.
- Protection of workers nearing retirement
- Protection of workers with disabilities
- Protection of workers in the public sector, bodies governed by public law, banks, public enterprises and enterprises subsidized by the state: abolishment of the upper limit on compensation, etc.
- Promotion and assurance of workers' physical and mental health, regular annual check-ups, prevention of harassment, etc.
- Protection of workers against collective dismissals: obligation for enterprises carrying out collective dismissals to submit a social plan, obligatory consultation with workers, agreed dismissals (voluntary exit) taken into account when calculating the number of collective dismissals, etc.

5. The INE-GSEE/ADEDY report on the establishment of structural competitiveness

Institute of Labour (INE) of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE) and of the Confederation of Public Servants (ADEDY).

The report proposes a strategy focused on structural competitiveness, through the creation of a new development model oriented towards the knowledge economy changeover to the 'knowledge economy', through the development of knowledge-intensive activities and creation of the conditions for developing innovations and integrating them in the production of goods and services; the development of modern management culture and practice in private companies and in the public sector, so as to ensure their productive operation; the creation of a 'social fund for cooperation aimed at working out and implementing development strategies on the regional and local levels; the strengthening of the country's development potential through restructuring and reorganizing the system of production, with the development of sectoral policies and the creation of integrated clusters (e.g. agricultural food chains, an industry-tourism cluster or an agri-tourism cluster, etc) at regional and local levels; and an improvement of the status of labour both through improving workers' knowledge, recognizing their experience and broadening their responsibility, and also through conducting at all levels employment policies that support development strategies and protect the labour force from unemployment and obsolescence of their knowledge and skills.

5.1 New law on maximum working time and working time arrangements.

According to this law, both the working time arrangements require agreement between the company and the company trade union or works council. In case no agreement is reached, or when there is no company trade union or works council and when the company's employees have not given their consent, the arrangements are decided upon by a five-member committee made up of one labour inspector, two employer representatives and two employee representatives.

This Working Time Arrangements Committee is competent to examine requests for arrangements and takes the final decision on whether or not to implement the proposed arrangements.

6. Health and safety

6.1 Statistics provided by the IKA (Social Insurance Foundation) and the SEPE (Labour Inspectors)

The aim of IKA and SEPE is to monitor the implementation of the provisions of labor legislation. Their statistics were used by the Institute of Employment (INE) which carried out research in 2003 for the health and safety legislation in Greece by providing a questionnaire to 324 people of various specializations.

Over one third of respondents (35.8%) stated that there were no health and safety provisions in the company or that they were not aware of them, almost half (48.7%) stated that, to their knowledge, there was no doctor assigned to the company.

Only 32.4 % declared that there was a health and safety committee in place in their company. Regarding the existence of a written occupational risk assessment in the company, over half of the respondents in the construction sector (53.5%) and in manufacturing (58.9%) said that their company had "such a document" whereas most respondents in the public sector (66.1%) said that their organization did not.

In reply to the question concerning the employee's knowledge of the relevant labour legislation, most respondents (66.9% to 79.9%) answered that they knew little or nothing about basic labour legislation, while a minority (21.1 % to 33.1 %) said that they had good or very good knowledge of it. When asked about the effectiveness of labour legislation, 66% gave a positive and 34% a negative answer. The relatively high percentage (42.6% to 59.3%) of respondents who did not answer the question asking for their proposals to improve the existing legislative, institutional and monitoring framework is striking, and is probably related to the fact that they are not familiar with the labour legislation.

6.2 The Athens school of Public Health, Department of Occupational and Industrial hygiene

The Athens school of public health has carried out several studies in the field of occupational and industrial hygiene. The most important for our context are the following and thus shortly presented in their main results.

- ***Surgery-Sterilization-Working hazards***

Researcher Karakostas Constantine, 2004-2005

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of sterilizing means in hospitals, their possible harmful side effects to the staff and the protection measures needed for their well being.

Results-discussion: In this study mostly women participated (78% of the total sample range), individuals from the age ranges of 21-40 years old, married to a 76.5 per cent of which most originated from the nurse education subdivision with a high school education and a two year cost or technical institution. Most facilities used more often pressurized steam (95.1%), while in most facilities the workers came in contact with alcohols (56.9%). Personal protective measures where used by 74.8%, mainly gloves. As far as symptoms, 23.6% of the subjects states that cough was rarely observing during the last six months. 78% of the subjects states that the place of sterilization has main air conditioning. 79.7% of the subjects were not trained or educated in treating the harmful effects. The opinion of 93.5% of the subjects is that there should be precautionary physical exam, especially for the side effects, check ups (91.1%), allergy tests (1.6%) and gas volume measurements in the room (0.8%) should be conducted.

- ***“Occupational stress”***

Researcher Karantzoula Evagelia, 2006

Occupational stress has been established as a major issue for both companies and workforce since it is amongst the often occurring health problems related to work. It means a financial burden, lost working hours, medical expenses and reduction in productivity. The development of work related stress may be due to the personal

characteristics of the employee, the organization of the work place or the combination of the above-mentioned elements.

At the same time, distress is increased owing to shift work that disturbs sleep and circadian rhythm. Gastric distress and heart diseases arise, moreover, family and social problems. In this research effort has been made to investigate the relation between stress and shifts and the negative effects on employee's health.

The research was conducted from September till December 2005. Questionnaires were used that had already been distributed to the employees of an Oil Refinery Company. (n=106).

Apart from the description of the data as a method of statistical analysis, the analysis of variance has been used as well as the χ^2 test.

The employees were men aged 31-60 working 7-hour work shifts, 76.4% were married and 78.8% technical school graduates. With regard to smoking habits 24.8 were smokers, 27% ex smokers and 47.7% have been smoking 20 cigarettes per day for an average 20-year period, 58.5% consume 1-3 glasses of alcohol per week. 71.7% recognized shift work as the main source of stress, 67% the lack of collage solidarity and 62.2%work competition. In order to compact stress 98.1% of the above sample try to relax off-work, 95.3% to reduce work load, 94.4% to complete tasks within work time and 94.3% to organize time.

In relation to health distress 34.9% refer to pain or stomach burning, 31.1% digestion problems, 40.5% feel disgust, 25.4% appetite problems, 58.1% always pay attention to daily menu to avoid stomach problems. To a further 17.8% gastritis has been diagnosed and to an 8.5% ulcer.

21% stated that they feel flapping, 30% complained about step-climbing difficulties whereas 44.3% suffer from light transmitted diseases.

The most important results of the specific research are focused on the following issues:

1. Shift work as the major stress source.
2. Employees with high-level of stress suffer from insomnia.
3. Shift workers appeared to have an increased level of gastric distress as well as cardio respiratory system.
4. Due to easily transmittable diseases such as flu, cold etc. a high rate of morbidity has been found.

- ***“Baker’s asthma” research by Patouhas Dimitris 2004-2005***

Baker’s asthma has long been recognised as a serious occupational disease among workers in the baker industry and the number of cases increased significantly the last years with the annual incidence was estimated to be 290-4000 cases per million. The first scientific description of baker’s asthma was given by Ramazzini in 1700 in “De Morbis Artificum Diatriba” and the first systematic investigation in the bakery trade was done by Baagoe in 1933.

The most important allergens for the development of respiratory allergy in bakery workers are wheat flour and other cereal species, fungal amylase but also soybean flour, storage mites and baker’s yeast.

In the present study an effort has been made to detect respiratory symptoms in relation to groups of bakers that live and work in the city of Patras. To this end, a questionnaire and spiro meter has been used. The group was divided into the bakers that deal exclusively with the making of bread and those who make and sale bread.

In conclusion, the group of bakers that deals exclusively with the bread making compared to those who deal with making and bread sale were 0.7 older (44.89 vs 44.19), worked 2.3 years more (23.27 vs 20.98 years) worked less 0.8 years per hour a day (8.97 vs 9.75 hours) smoke more 3.83 pack/ years (35.67 vs 31.84) and had higher percentage symptom relevant to work (61.1% vs 57.7%). Therefore they had higher decrease in FVC (16.6% vs 12%), and received treatment more often. (27.7% vs 7.4%)

Prevention should be based on the harmonious collaboration of the occupational doctor and the safety technician with the aim of reducing the exposure to the dust of flour and the periodical checking up of the respiratory function of workers. This could be achieved by the application of local ventilation systems in the areas where the flour is diffused and by the implementation of preventive medical examinations, as spiro-metry and thorax radiograph. All the above can be implemented under the condition that an occupational doctor is employed, which is mandatory according to the Greek legislation in enterprises with less than 50 workers.

6.3 ELINYAE - The Greek Institute for the Hygiene and Safety in the Workplace

The Greek Institute for the Hygiene and Safety in the Workplace participates in the following research programs and projects.

- A research project within the 6th European framework program on new emerging dangers for hygienic and safety.

The main focus is:

- on the complex interactions in the working environment, the work organization and work related stress.
- on new and emerging dangers of different production sectors.
- on the integration of innovative approaches of the research programs.
- on the development of ventures for the promotion of viable research co-operations, along with 11 national institutes, coordinated by the Finish institute. for Professional Health (FIOH).

- ELINYAE has initiated a venture of research institutes with the European Organisation for Health and Safety at Work. This cooperation deals with the new thematic centre named "working environment". The participants are: Finland, Germany, Poland, France, Hungary, England, Italy, Denmark, Belgium and Holland.
- ELINYAE also participates in the European research program for the assessment of the application of the law for temporary workers or those that

work with temporary job contracts. The main role of ELINYAE is the assessment of the national law for health and safety in workplace issues in order to ameliorate the already taken measures that target at the promotion of safety and health of the temporary workers.

- The ELINYAE, within the framework of the program of European Agency for the Health and Safety at Work, participates in the program with the title: "Topic Centre on Good Practice, Systems and Programs" aiming at the selection and promotion of good practices that had been successfully applied in different countries of the European Union for the improvement of the health and safety at work. In this program, many institutes, universities and public sector organisms participated. (Finland, Denmark, Germany, France, Portugal, United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Greece).
- The ELINYAE had undertaken the gathering and process of information from the agriculture sector. Simultaneously, took part in the preparation of the European Week that was devoted to the problem of noise in workplaces.
- ELINYAE had undertaken the gathering of good practices for the prevention of working hazards for new workers in the framework of the European Week 2006.
- It was also member of the team that had undertaken an bibliographical overview for health and safety issues concerning new workers.
- It had additionally collected good practices for the prevention of working hazards for the elderly workers.
- ELINYAE has also undertaken the accumulation of good practices for the prevention of working hazards for the muscle and skeletal diseases in the framework of the European Week of 2007.

- It also partakes in a bibliographical review about the issues of health and safety in the business sector of hotels and nutrition.
- It is as well involved in the gathering of good practices for the prevention of working hazards in the business sector of hotels and nutrition.
- Additionally, it contributes to the selection of prevention policies, concerning health and safety, in Europe, for the hotels and nutrition business sector.
- Moreover, has a record of good practices for the prevention of noise in the entertainment business sector.
- Another European project of which ELINYAE is a partner among 15 other European research institutes is the project for the assessment of the application of the law for the mobile construction sites and the labelling of health and safety in Greece. During this research project interviews were carried out with the Ministry of Labour, the labour inspectors, the Ministry of Constructions, the GSEE, Labour Unions, Labour Centres, etc.

Furthermore, site visits in metal construction sites of big, middle and small size were carried out in various Greek areas. After the end of the project the ELINYAE composed an assessment report on the part of Greece.

7. INE (Institute of Employment) research on working conditions in Greece

The INE has carried out a lot of research activities on working conditions in Greece. The most important thematic areas covered by that will be depicted below.

- **The flexibility of employment and the effects of it in Greece and Europe**

Research about the meaning and the content of job flexibility, the range of its development in Europe and in Greece and the social effects that it has

- **The working relationships in Europe and in Greece during the Economic Monetary Union (EMU)**

Research on the development of working relationships in Europe and Greece from the Maastricht agreement onward to the EMU, in which the tendency of degradation of work under the pressure of increasing flexibility is being pinpointed.

- **Employment and working conditions in Greece. Reality, trends, prospects.**

Research in 2000 Greek companies with an overview on the registration of the employment policies and the working relationships during the period 2001-2002, the future tendencies and the evaluation of the new Greek law "Gianitsis" for working relationships and employment.

- **Destitute and underpaid workers in Greece**

Comparative research – a report carried out by INE for destitute and underpaid workers in Greece in 18 European countries.

- **Inequality of payments of men and women in Europe**

Comparative research in 16 European countries carried out by the INE within the European Observatory of Working Relations on the phenomenon of inequality of payments of men and women in 16 European countries.

- **Employment and working relationships of disabled people in Europe**

A comparative research - a report carried out by INE within the European Observatory of Working Relations with the aim of recording of employment policies and working relations of disabled people in 16 European countries.

- **The job insecurity of Greek youth**

Research on the phenomenon of insecurity among young people in Greece, the reasons for its occurrence and the effects in the framework of a intergovernmental European research with the participation of five countries under the title: "The insecurity of young people in Europe".

- **European Economic Union, Competitiveness and Industrial policy**

The problems that industrial policy has to face was studied, the new conditions that have been created after the participation in European Monetary Union while the Greek Economy persists being confronted with the problem of structural competitiveness.

- **The services sector, the competitiveness and the employment**

The distinctive way by which the competitiveness and employment is treaded by service sector companies has been thoroughly studied.

- **Lifelong learning and training**

A depiction of the views and attitudes of workers and unemployed people on lifelong learning.

- **Scenarios of professional training in Europe until year 2010. The Greek situation**

Research Program funded by the European Centre for the Development of the Professional Training (CEDEFOP) and the Institute of European Training. It was carried out simultaneously in 10 countries for the creation of 3 alternative scenarios for the Professional Training in Europe until year 2010. Participating countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Luxemburg, Belgium, Poland, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom.

- **Ensuring of the quality of European Training**

Research for the development of best practices to ensure the quality of the in-house corporation training.

- **Tele working-Health and Work security-Productivity measuring**

Three studies in progress in the course of the accomplished Community Initiative EQUAL, which are focused on issues related to the application of the tele-working systems.

In particular, the tele-working study examines the sectors and the specialties that tele working can be implemented and on which terms. Also, the research about health and safety examines the current situation in the corporations at a regional level and it is going to be in the focus of the new findings concerning health and safety and new threats that may rise from the new types of tele working for human health.

As for the study measuring the productivity levels, this will lead to conclusions that are related to the factors that can measure productivity levels and their assessment in the event of tele working.

- **Creation of a quality system for the services sector.**

The study aims to contribute to the creation and development of a flexible and “open” Quality System for the Services that offer Guidance and Employment. The main focus of the research is the investigation of the structures that exist and through the guidance support can assist socially deprived minorities to integrate into the job market. Furthermore, the identification of critical points that can have a fundamental or detrimental effect on the operation of organizations so as to create the aforementioned quality system.

8. Further studies on the topic carried out by Greek researchers

- **CHRISTOS A. IOANNOU - “*What is Modern Work Organization Lacking from Southern European Public Policies?*”**

The Case of Greece

This research examines the effectiveness of “top-down” EU policies and processes with regard to new forms of work organization in Greece. It argues that, at the EU level, work organization has lacked a stable policy framework and work organization has been a contested terrain. On national policy-making and implementation the analysis of the European Employment Strategy (EES), the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in relation to the Greek National Action Plans (NAPs), and the weak coordination of the EES and the European Social Fund, explains why work organization issues continue to be neglected. The reciprocal influence of the national social partners in work organization in Greece is also considered.

In spite of the supposed benefits arising from new forms of work organization, and successive national legislation initiatives, traditional work organization persists. In the context of weak and conflicting interaction among the EU national policymakers and the social partners, modern work organization continues to be lacking from convergence policies in Greece.

Also in Greece in 1997-2002 the use of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), and the weak coordination of the European Social Fund (ESF) and the EES, resulted in work organization issues being less influential in national policy-making and implementation. Despite successive legislative initiatives on part-time work, fixed-term contracts, and working time flexibility, the ESF has focused mainly on subsidies (training and wages) not linked to work organization improvements, while the NAPs for employment have mainly focused on pre-existing activities.

In the framework of the EES and the NAPs for employment, in order to examine the chances of reciprocal influence and contributions by the national social partners, it is assessed their ability to influence and shape the public policy agenda on work organization in Greece. The conclusion is that their weak, though centralized,

representation undermines their influence to shape the legal regulation of national industrial relations by reaching agreements on major work organization issues. The social partners also lack the ability to undertake effective initiatives at the branch and workplace level, especially in SMEs that are not at the core of their formal structures and processes. Institutional and policy mismatches between public policy discourse and actors on the one hand, and the new forms of work organization requirements on the other, leave little room for effective coordination at national or plant level.

Finally, as Greece has achieved an impressive productivity performance since 1999, the work organization scenario is assessed emerging from a set of unsuccessful policy initiatives concerning working time, overtime and part-time work that have resulted in a limited dissemination of new forms of work organization and the persistence of traditional ways of organizing work. In conclusion, in spite of the supposed benefits from new forms of work organization, and EU and national initiatives, work organization remains a missing link in the catch-up, or convergence policy in Greece. The explanation lies with the weak interaction of the two levels of policy-making, the EU and the national, with the social partners.

- **Flexibility and Competitiveness research: “Labour Market Flexibility, Innovation and Organisational Performance” (Flex-Com)**

Participants:

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens - Center of Financial Studies

Ethniko Institutouto Ergasias (NLI)

Research Institute of the Finnish Economy (RIFE)

Technische Universiteit Delft (TUD)

Trinity College Dublin (UDTC.ERU)

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Project funded by the European Commission DG Research

in the framework of Contract HPSE-CT-2001-0009

The aim of the project was to investigate the implications of the rapidly increasing labour market flexibility in Europe, which is the result of mainstream theory and its policy implications. It is suggested that there are potential adverse effects, which may

occur in the longer term or may arise from idiosyncrasies in specific environments. Not all economies are similarly receptive to all types of flexibility and thus generalised benchmarks may be an oversimplification. The research focuses on small open economies, using the examples of Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Greece. The main topic of this investigation is the relationship between flexibilisation, the European Social Model and long term competitiveness. It is argued that if, instead of studying direct linkages, one takes into consideration the effects to/from each of them to innovation the resulting effect becomes more complex and needs further investigation.

This project offers econometric evidence that (without denying traditional views that under certain circumstances numerical flexibility contributes to the decrease of unemployment) numerical and wage flexibility in the medium to long term may lead to deteriorating economic performance and a reduced capacity to innovate. In addition, it was evident from the research that legal enforcement alone is insufficient for making markets more flexible. If social acceptance and trade offs for labour are not in place, the new legislation will not succeed in changing social routines. Even worse, if the introduction of formal rules triggers social resistance, it may even be counterproductive.

The fundamental changes in world production and trade suggest that the new economy requires more sophisticated models than those we have already experienced. Industrial relations are likely to be radically modified in the future. The lesson learned from the small countries is that there is a need for a refined approach in the enhancement of flexibility in Europe. Instead of looking for a generalised and standardised adoption of flexibility it is important to identify the key issues and challenges by type of country and adopt the measures that suit best each economic environment. European diversity calls upon a differentiated approach. This is best illustrated by the three out of the five small European countries studied, in which competitiveness and innovation were achieved with limited flexibility and consensus labour market policies. If this does not go against orthodoxy, at least it complements it, and thus raises doubt whether the mainstream view is the only viable option. There is no doubt that more flexibility is needed, but of what kind and for which circumstances it is more difficult to ascertain. Thus, new forms of flexibility, which

would be a result of social experimentation, are needed. Unfortunately we identified a quasi absence of social experimentation in our case studies as elsewhere.

- **New forms of work organization**

Sewage Management through network applications and systems

Application of innovative human resources management approaches in the maritime sector

Pattern for the assessment of the hygiene and safety in the workplace

The use of mobile technology in the supply chain

Information technology system for the management of new working patterns for SME'S

Knowledge management for the Greek companies

Organizational Change Management and Business transformation

The creation of customized stock market products using network technologies

- **E-LEARNING training programs applied by the “Greek Organization of External Commerce” and the University of Athens that concern marketing approaches for export commerce for SMEs**

In the context of the training methods that the Greek Organization of External Commerce uses for the improvement of the SMEs , in cooperation with the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens that has a high technological level of expertise in the field of e- learning assisted training, 8 programs in total are carried out in issues concerning export commerce for SMEs with the implementation of marketing approaches. In particular, the thematics of these programs are “How to put into practice a realistic export marketing plan and what is the importance of it for the development of SMEs exports” and “A step by step approach of the market, the role and the importance of the representatives network and the company’s culture to this”.

9. Conclusion

It can be well understood from all the aforementioned facts that the WORK-IN-NET objective concerning innovative human resource management for improving quality of working life and labour productivity in Greece is being applied by the LAEK, the

KEPEA, EQUAL-projects and the “IMPLEMENT” project that aim at promoting innovative work methodologies. Also by the centres that promote gender equality at work, the social services, the Peristeri Preparation Centre, the Information and Advice Network for Unemployed Young People and the University Link Service and the actions that the Greek government initiates in order to improve the quality of working life. In addition, the research mentioned focuses on this topic as well as the reference to the Greek government’s priorities for ameliorating the labour’s productivity and working life.

In addition, the INE-GSEE report for the establishment of structural competitiveness are targeting towards implementing policies and innovative production systems along with the improvement of worker’s knowledge. The IKA and SEPE along with ELINYAE researches depict the current working conditions situation and the projects that are carried out by ELINYAE aspire to the implementation of development coalitions for carrying out sustainable innovation systems with job creating effects by promoting safety and health at work and the improvement of working life.

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Bonn/Athens, April 2007

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