

# **New Skills for New Futures Higher Education Guidance and Counselling Services in Greece**

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FEDORA Project

New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education in the European Union

With the support of  
the Commission of the European Communities  
under the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme



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in  
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A country report of a study on  
“New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education”  
carried out under the auspices of FEDORA,  
with the support of the Commission of the European Communities  
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## FOREWORD

This country report is part of larger study on "New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education". The study has been carried out under the auspices of the European Forum for Student Guidance - Forum Européen de l'Orientation Académique (FEDORA). It has been funded by the European Commission as part of its LEONARDO DA VINCI programme.

FEDORA provides a platform for counsellors and advisers in higher education to meet and exchange their experiences. Its activities have enabled practitioners to gain insight into the wide range of guidance methods and activities in Europe, and to benefit from the richness of this diversity.

In particular, the FEDORA Summer Schools have provided opportunities for practitioners to learn from each other's experience, and to relate this experience to recent theoretical developments. The Summer Schools revealed the strong demand for more systematic training in this field, and the potential benefits of responding to this demand at a European rather than purely national level. It was felt, however, that before planning any initiatives of this kind, a clearer map was needed of guidance and counselling services in higher education in Europe, and of current training provision for practitioners. A proposal for the study was presented to the European Commission, and the Commission agreed to fund it under its LEONARDO programme.

The study is of wide significance. For the first time, a comprehensive analysis is available of higher education guidance and counselling services across the whole of the European Union. In several cases, the study has provided the first such analysis even at national level. Because it is based on a common structure and methodology, the study also enables practices in each country to be contrasted with the others.

This report, together with the 15 other national reports on all Member States of the European Union and the synthesis report written by A.G. Watts and R. Van Esbroeck, is an important one both for FEDORA and for guidance and counselling in higher education in Europe.

This resource will be invaluable for international and national policy-makers, for higher education managers, and for guidance and counselling practitioners, as well as for employers in planning their higher education recruitment links. In particular, it enables the strengths and weaknesses of the different national systems to be identified, and is a powerful source of ideas on how the services in each country might be improved. It will also give clearer direction to the work of the European Commission, FEDORA and other European bodies in supporting such development.

Joachim Klaus  
President, FEDORA

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## **Preface**

To write a report on the area of career guidance and counselling which at present is still at a stage of development is a real challenge. During the six months of the present research the systems of career guidance services in universities and in the state sector have undergone repeated changes and development. We believe, however, that the report has captured on one hand the current stage of the career guidance and counselling services in Greece, giving a clear picture of these systems, and on the other the goals, trends and future developments under consideration.

The report has been written with the support of the Commission of the European Communities under the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme. Its methodology follows a uniform pattern for all EU countries taking part in the present project. This uniform pattern aims to facilitate cross-national comparisons with the goal of providing the basis for a FEDORA synthesis report on "New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education" in Europe.

The report was written on the basis of research conducted by the author and another Greek specialist, Irini Morava, whose experience and enthusiasm were essential for the realization of the project. Open-ended interviews with higher guidance and counselling staff, previous reports and national statistical reports were also used. Draft versions of the report were reviewed by a small working group of experts. Their comments are greatly appreciated.

## Summary

This report is the Greek contribution to the European project on "New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education"

Its aims are:

1. To provide an up-to-date overview of the current structure of guidance and counselling services within higher education, the roles of those who work in these services, and the training for such roles.
2. To identify the extent to which training provision exists within the European Union to equip those in guidance and counselling roles in higher education with the new skills they require to meet the changing needs of an increasingly diverse student body, within a European labour market.
3. To provide a basepoint for exploring the extent to which postgraduate and post-experience training modules might be made available across Europe, possibly leading to a European Master's degree in guidance and counselling in higher education.

The report is based on a common structure and methodology to facilitate the writing of a coherent synthesis report on all EU Member States.

In section 2, the Greek educational system, especially aspects concerning entrance to higher education, is presented. This is followed by a brief analysis of the demand for higher education, which is a prominent characteristic of Greek society and shapes the aspirations and the career decisions of young adolescents. This gives a better insight into the social context from which data for the present study have been collected, addressing the need for the expansion of the counselling services in Greek higher education institutions.

The existing main guidance and counselling services and systems within Greek universities are presented next. After a brief introduction and a historical background, special attention is paid to the main functions of the services, the extent to which the services are financed and/or managed by the institution or by the other authorities, the extent to which the services are part of the institution or external, and the stages in the student's career for which support is available.

There is also an additional brief discussion on the guidance and counselling services outside universities which offer counselling services to students at the secondary and higher education levels.

Section 3 covers the roles and the tasks of guidance and counselling staff in the main HE services outlined in the previous section. There is an indication of the main occupational roles which exist for each guidance and counselling service, the number of people currently occupying these roles and the type of guidance used. For each occupational role, a detailed analysis of the tasks performed is provided, indicating in some detail what is involved in particular tasks in particular roles.

A detailed profile with a more in-depth task analysis is offered for two occupational roles: career counsellor and psychologist/counsellor. These roles were chosen because they are currently the most prominent roles in the field of career counselling in Greece.

Section 4 provides a discussion on the training and qualifications of people working in the HE counselling services. Trends and needs for the training of the people working in the newly-established career guidance services (Liaison Offices) are identified. There is also a discussion on the programmes organized for the training of the people who are going to work in the career counselling services both in the public and the private sectors, at the secondary and higher education levels.

In conclusion, it appears that counselling and career guidance and orientation in higher education is still at an initial stage of development in Greece. Financial problems and problems of organization and administration are very prominent. Gaps occur in the provision of help and counselling to students with special needs and to minority groups. Enthusiastic individuals among the staff members of the universities and the university teachers themselves are trying to make up for such deficiencies to some degree. The realization of the new legislation for the creation of career guidance and counselling centres, and the new programmes for training of the people working in this field, will hopefully in the next few years begin to meet the great need for counselling and guidance which adolescents and HE students experience at present in Greece.

## 2. Structures

### 2.1 The Educational System in Greece

At present the structure of the educational system in Greece can be briefly summarized as follows. There are three main levels of education:

- (I) Basic education, which consists of 6 years at primary school.
- (II) Secondary education, which consists of: (a) the high school (three years), (b) the lyceum (three years), and (c) the vocational school (two years).
- (III) Higher education, which consists of: (a) the technological educational institutes and (b) the universities.

Attendance at primary school and at high school is compulsory. On finishing high school, the student has a number of choices: (a) to work; (b) to be trained at technical school; or (c) to attend a lyceum.

At the level of the lyceum there are three main types between which the individual can choose. The first is the general lyceum which provides general academic education; its main aim is to prepare pupils for higher education. The general lyceum is attended by about 80% of Greek students. Second, the technical-vocational lyceum concentrates on technical education and provides training for jobs requiring specific skills. In general, the technical lycea are considered to be of a lower educational standard, even though a lot of them offer a good theoretical technological education. Students who graduate successfully from the technical lyceum can enrol for university entrance examinations. In addition, if they graduate with an A average, they can transfer automatically to one of the technological educational institutes. The third form of lyceum is the *polykladiko*, a new type of lyceum, which combines general and technical education, adopting a philosophy similar to that of UK comprehensive schools.

In the vocational schools, which are run by the Manpower Employment Organization, students receive mostly vocational training. Special consideration is given to placing graduates in appropriate jobs after the completion of their studies.

In 1992, the institutes for professional education were established. These institutes operate at post-secondary level with the goal of covering the needs of professional training and education of students who have finished the lyceum.

Higher education is offered by 18 publicly funded and monitored universities (AEI: *Anotata Ekpedeftika Idrimamata*) and by 14 technological educational institutes (TEI: *Technologica Ekpedeftika Idrimata*). Universities offer both undergraduate and postgraduate education. Undergraduate education leads to a first university degree after a minimum of four years of study. The technological educational institutes constitute the latest form of higher technological education in Greece. The rationale behind their establishment was to respond to the needs of the economy for higher-level manpower, and to alleviate pressure on the universities (Dragonas and Kostakis, 1986). They are considered to be of a lower standard than the universities; in fact, enrolment in the technological institutes comes as a second or last choice after a student fails to be accepted by university. This attitude can have a negative effect on the adolescent's career decision-making.

To enter higher education, students have to pass the General examinations, a system of very competitive entrance examinations in specific subjects. In fact, at the end of the second year of lyceum, students have to state their preferences and assign themselves to one of four groups of studies (DESMI) which specialize in these subjects. Each group of studies has four different subjects. The students, depending on their choice of DESMI, are required to pass these four subjects in addition to all the other subjects in their third-year curriculum. After graduation, and in order to enter university, they have to pass additional tests on these same four subjects in the Panhellenic examinations.

Specified groups of schools/faculties of universities and technological institutes are assigned to each one of the above four groups (DESMI). Each candidate has the right to choose only one of the four DESMI and to apply for entry, in order of preference, to two of the corresponding groups of schools. The average grade for passing the entrance examinations changes every year in relation to the number of students applying, the number of places available and the overall performance of all applicants. However, although the flexibility in the choice of schools/faculties enables a candidate to apply for entry to diverse studies, at the same time it increases the competition for those whose choices are more specific. For example, a student whose first choice is to become a gym teacher can very easily be displaced by another whose first choice is medicine. For the latter, although his exam grades may not qualify him to enter medicine, they may be higher than the average required for

acceptance to study physical education.\* Studies have shown that Greek students deviate very easily from their first preference and are ready to attend other schools (Soumelis, 1978; Psacharopoulos, 1988). One of the most important reasons for this seems to be the high selection requirement the pupil has to satisfy in order to enter his or her preferred field of study. However, this change of preference also suggests that Greek students persist in their attempts to enter an institution at postgraduate level, even if they have to change their initial aspirations, since successful entry to any university is preferable to no entry at all.

### **The Demand for Higher Education**

A prominent characteristic of young people and their families in Greece is the high value they place on education and especially on higher education. This plays an important role in young people's career decision-making and for this reason needs particular attention from career counsellors and career advisors.

Studies in the 1980s and early 1990s have shown that the typical path Greek adolescents follow, as they grow, is to stay at school throughout secondary education and then to continue to higher education (Karmas *et al.*, 1986). Further education still means a better position in society in the future, and the offspring's success has come to represent the ultimate success of the whole family (Nassiakou, 1981; Georgas *et al.*, 1991). It is considered to be the surest way out of farming in rural areas, and perhaps the only means of ending up with permanent public-sector employment (Nassiakou, 1981).

Moreover, studies in the 1980s showed that the majority of adolescents reject, or are opposed to, technical education because of its low social status, and the fact that it does not offer a diploma equivalent to that of the university (Kassotakis, 1981; Karmas *et al.*, 1986). In fact, the preference ratio for academic versus vocational schooling was found to be 4 to 1. To be a "university student" was found to be the ideal in the eyes of the adolescent (Karmas *et al.*, 1986)

In addition, in reference to the social status that a university degree might offer,

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\* The system of entrance in HE is expected to change in the next three to four years. The new system is expected to be more flexible, the students will be tested on their performance at school and on several sets of examinations during the last two years of the lyceum

Similar studies have shown that, in a period of high unemployment among high school graduates, the belief in better job opportunities upon completion of a higher degree is still very strong (Gedeon and Psacharopoulos, 1982). This belief becomes even stronger as the majority of university graduates hope to obtain life-long employment in the public sector. Psacharopoulos (1988) has observed that nine out of every ten university graduates in Greece are employed by the government or by semi-government institutions.

Irrespective of the cause, the demand for education in general, and for higher education in particular, is strongly manifested not only in the number of candidates but also in the persistence of their efforts to enter a post-secondary educational institution. Thus, every year, there is a high number of graduates from secondary schools striving to enter university by passing the set of very competitive national examinations (see above). The competition increases as the number of places available in universities fails to keep pace with the ever-increasing number of candidates (Haniotis, 1968; Soumelis, 1978; Psacharopoulos, 1988; Kassotakis, 1990). As Papas and Psacharopoulos (1987) have noted, this results in a very restrictive system. It is, in fact, the most restrictive higher education system in Europe, with the exception of Portugal. However, since students and their families are still convinced that the rewards of getting a university degree are high, it is inevitable that they will strive to achieve this goal, regardless of the difficulties and the financial costs which they may have to face.

For students who have failed to enter university, there are three main alternatives. First, the student may continue studying the same subjects under the guidance of a preparatory school and try for a second time to take the university entrance examinations. Indeed, most students may do so for one, two or even three consecutive years since they can take the examinations only once a year. Of course, doing so means extra cost for families who have to support their children in these attempts. Second, the student can either accept registration at one of the technological institutes as a second choice, due to the fact it is considered less prestigious, or may enrol in a private post-secondary institution. Most of these latter institutions are non-accredited and require the payment of tuition fees. The third alternative is for the student to go abroad and register in a university of another country, thus satisfying personal and family aspirations. In fact, the number of Greek students studying abroad is increasing. For example, in 1969 there were ten thousand Greek students studying abroad; this figure grew to fifteen thousand in 1971 and over forty thousand in 1978. At present, they constitute about one-third of the total number of Greek students at university (Soumelis, 1978; Psacharopoulos,

1988). As was recorded in the Unesco Statistical Yearbook (1988), Greece ranks fourth in the world in the number of its students at a foreign university (Psacharopoulos, 1998).

However, there are conflicting views as to whether the demands for higher education of today's young generation in Greece reflect the adolescents' own aspirations or are the result of the influence of their parents' aspirations. Certainly, these aspirations are built on long-standing values pertaining to education and work (Soumelis, 1978; Papas & Psacharopoulos, 1989). Such long-standing values, however, may no longer reflect the present situation. Due to increasing unemployment and world-wide recession, it is possible that when younger generations are faced with the reality of not being able to embark on a professional career, they may reject the values of the past. At present in Greece, it is questionable whether the old beliefs and values affect individuals' attitudes towards their work or career choice. On the other hand, as Soumelis (1978) has noted, "the build up of parental and environmental social pressure on each pupil is so great that the pupil needs considerable courage to renounce university study and accept either a non-university field of study or to go directly to work".

### **The Current Situation**

Nevertheless, the number of students attending university is still increasing. According to a study by the Ministry of Education (Athens, 1995), in the academic year 1992-93 there was a 39% rise in the number of students attending university classes in comparison with the year 1981-82.

On the other hand, the unemployment rate of tertiary education graduates has risen dramatically in recent years. According to statistical data (Kanellopoulos, 1994), in 1981 unemployed youth were 29% of the total unemployed population, but by 1989 this percentage had risen to 52.4%. Unlike other European countries, in Greece in the late 1980s unemployment rates were high among the secondary and the tertiary education (AEI, TEI) graduates, the percentages being 12.9%, 6.6% and 9.8% respectively (Kanellopoulos, 1994).

Today, these rates are still on the rise and perhaps it is time to reconsider the benefits of tertiary education and the contents of the educational curriculum. The graduates' aspirations for employment in the public sector, which in the past was the

dominant employer, cannot be satisfied, since it has become hypertrophic and unable to continue absorbing tertiary education graduates.

It is also worth mentioning that there is a difference between the university graduates and the technological institute graduates so far as unemployment rates are concerned. Statistical data suggest that there is an increase in the percentage of TEI graduates who are employed in various economic sectors (with a yearly increase of around 6.2%) compared with the percentage of university graduates. Similar studies concerning the level of education of the employed youth show that during the years 1990-94 there was a clear increase (71,698 to 98,124) in the number of TEI graduates and a decrease in the number of the university graduates. These numbers reflect the changes that have taken place in the labour market during recent years and also the fact that these changes have been noted by young people, who have come to recognise that technological training is highly valued by employers.

The above-mentioned changes, on the other hand, mean that a profound reform of the educational system is imperative. A more versatile system is needed, which can offer contemporary knowledge and qualifications to meet the demands of the current labour market. This requires thorough and extensive human resources planning, taking into account the needs of the labour market. Until now, however, the social trend which regards higher education as necessary has made impossible any planning of this sort (Psacharopoulos, 1988; Soumelis, 1993). In addition, according to data from the Ministry of Education, all official educational advice bodies/organisations which have been asked to suggest possible ways of human resources planning remain inactive and suffocated by the bureaucracy of the central government.

In conclusion, it is necessary to realise that, in the face of all the above changes and needs posed by the present and future labour market, the educational system must evolve in closer association with the labour market. There is also an urgent need for the development of guidance services for students in higher education, in order to prepare them to meet the new demands.

## 2a. Main Guidance and Counselling Services and Systems

### 2a.1 Introduction and Historical Background

In Greece, the need for psychological counselling and career guidance in higher education was identified during the 1980s (Kalantzi-Azizi, 1987; Tzepoglou, 1985; 1989; Malikiosi-Loizos, 1989). In 1982, an educational law (1268/82) stated that in every university and polytechnic there should be "a service in charge of providing students with information concerning their course of study, of helping them in job-finding, of offering careers guidance, and of providing social care for those who need it". This statement has been followed by a number of plans which have been put forward to the government, with the goal of developing career guidance centres in all universities to provide the following services:

- \* Guidance and counselling to help in induction and adaptation to university life.
- \* Help for students in their choice of subjects for their chosen professions.
- \* Information about the requirements for obtaining professional qualifications while at university.
- \* Information about post-university opportunities in the public sector and in industry (Tetteri & Watts, 1986).

A number of initial efforts have been made to establish Psychological Counselling Centres and career guidance and orientation centres at several universities. These efforts, however, are still at an initial stage of development - not in terms of the existence of psychologists and career counsellors who could provide these services, but at the level of organization and formal establishment (see below).

Since 1993, in most of the universities and the technological institutes, a new type of careers office with the name "Liaison Offices" (*Grafia Diasindesis*) has been established. These centres are supported by a programme under the European Commission's Task Force for Human Resources. Their main objective is to operate as information centres for students and as a link between the universities and employers. Most of these offices are still in the process of development (see below).

Counselling services are also offered by the technological educational institutes (TEI) and by the Vocational and Technical Teacher Training Academy (*Scholi Ekpedeftikon Litourgon Epaggelmatikis kai Technikis Ekpedefsisis*: SELETE). The technological educational institutes follow the pattern of the universities, although the increase in the number of students attending (see 2.1) has increased the need for

psychological counselling and orientation, which until now has been offered unofficially to some students by psychology faculty members and social workers. In SELETE, psychological counselling has been offered to students in a more organized way since 1979. SELETE, which is a higher-level non-university institution offering training to those destined to serve as teaching staff in technical-vocational training schools, has created its own counselling centre in which psychological counselling and vocational guidance are being offered.

Another important activity which was undertaken by the Greek universities with the help and funding of the Ministry of Education is the Practical Training Programme for university students. Through this programme, which is part of the student's programme of studies, students can obtain two- or three-month work experience in jobs related to their course of studies. This activity was started initially in the years 1985-86 by the Department of Business Administration at the University of the Aegean, as an activity incorporated within the educational curriculum of the university. Later, the programme was extended to other university departments in a compulsory or a non-compulsory form. The first "Careers Offices" of some universities, as well as the Liaison Offices, have been involved in the programme and help students to find places for their practical experience.

Generally speaking, research and experience from the efforts so far to provide psychological counselling and career guidance in higher education have revealed the need for the development of guidance and counselling services in these institutions. In particular, in several studies it was shown that Greek higher education students are faced with many and varied problems, not only in the educational but also in the psychological and social areas (Malikiosi-Loizos, 1989; Kalantzi-Azizi, 1991; Georgas *et al.*, 1991). It was noted that students are faced with financial problems, accommodation problems, and problems relating to social recognition, interpersonal relations, relations with the opposite sex, independence and autonomy. It was also found that in the area of learning, students are faced with problems relating to exam anxiety, course and institutional adjustment difficulties, etc. (Kalantzi-Asizi, 1987; Georgas *et al.*, 1991). In addition, the increase in unemployment and the changes in the labour market, as well as the "European challenge" which opens new possibilities and opportunities for university students, have stressed the urgent need for the development of guidance services in higher education and for their close liaison with the world of work.

**Table I** illustrates the main higher education guidance and counselling centres now operating in Greece: the Liaison Offices, the Psychological Counselling Centres, the

Service for Students with Special Needs, and the Centre for School Career Guidance and Orientation. Most of the descriptive categories in Table I are self-explanatory, and are further commented upon in Section 2b. The category "level" refers to the holistic model used as the descriptive model in the present survey (see Gieles *et al.*, 1985; Van Esbroeck & Watts, 1997). It indicates whether the service is:

First-in-line (1): part of the formal teaching function.

Second-in-line (2): linked to the formal teaching function, but with some degree of specialization.

Third-in-line (3): separated from the formal teaching function, and offered by specialists.

## **2a.2 The Liaison Offices**

The Liaison Offices can be considered as the most developed system of career guidance and counselling in higher education in Greece. They were first created in 1993 and the term "Career Offices" was then used to describe them. This first attempt, however, was successful in only 3 universities: the University of Thessaloniki, the Pantion University of Athens, and the School of Economy of Athens University. In the rest of the universities, the lack of organization and funding, combined with a dispute concerning the function of and need for the offices, led to their decline and finally to their closure.

Since 1996, however, the Ministry of Education through the Programme for Professional Training and Development, and specifically through the 3.4 Act on "Linking Education and Production", has been promoting the development of Liaison Offices (*Grafia Diasindesis*). Use has been made of the experience of the previous Career Offices, as well as the results of the European project on "Linking Higher Education Institutes and Courses to Industrial and Socioeconomic Needs". The main goal of the Liaison Offices is to establish a direct link between the universities and enterprises so that information concerning the capabilities and the specialities of the graduates can be easily accessible to these enterprises. This will enable them to make the best use of the potential of their future employees. An additional task is to inform the students and their academic teachers about the needs of Greek enterprises concerning the number of staff, and also to inform them about future trends in technological advances in association with consumer demand. As a result, the knowledge provided in the academic institutions could become the basis of a technological revolution which will lead to economic growth, both for individual businesses and for the Greek economy in general.

In addition to developing a network of communication between the universities and enterprises, the Liaison Offices also aim to:

- (a) support graduates in their search for employment;
- (b) support final-year students in their search for practical experience;
- (c) support scientific research and technological development;
- (d) support the development of exchange programmes for students and academic staff between the E.C. countries.

At present Liaison Offices operate in 18 universities and 14 technological institutes. The number of staff members varies from university to university according to the funds given. In most centres the staff consists of one director who also plays the role of advisor, one or two secretaries, a placement officer, an information officer, an electronic computer advisor who might work on a part-time basis, and possibly one manager. The planning and scientific responsibility for the centres is given to faculty members within each university. In some universities, undergraduate and postgraduate students are also involved in the administrative committees. Although in almost all of the Liaison Offices the provision of counselling services is considered necessary, only a few of the centres have career counsellors or psychologists/counsellors on their staff.

The Liaison Office of Panton University of Athens seems to be the most developed one at the moment, and has undertaken the role of coordinator of all the Liaison Offices in the 18 universities in Greece. Within this role, one of its main activities is the training of the staff of the Liaison Offices in the other universities. Among its plans is the development of a network between the universities, the production of information material, and connection with the Internet. At the moment, the staff of the centre consists of five people (one director, one counsellor for career guidance, one career and psychological counsellor, and two secretaries). The centre also provides counselling and information on postgraduate studies and on scholarships and financial support. An important activity of the centre is the organization of "Careers Days" during which students have the possibility to come into contact with managers from various businesses, to hear about various ways of searching for a job, and to learn how to write a curriculum vitae and how to prepare themselves for a selection interview.

Apart from the Liaison Office of the Panton University, the Liaison Offices of the Athens University of Economics, the University of Macedonia, the National Polytechnic School of Athens (*Ethnikon Metsovion Polytechnio*) and the University of

Thessaloniki are in a satisfactory stage of development (see Section 2b below). Of these, the first two have in effect been in operation since 1993, when they were created as Career Offices. They have established close links with many enterprises, have helped a number of students to find jobs, have organized "Careers Days", and have a good information database. The Liaison Office of the University of Thessaloniki was created in 1996, and since then has made considerable progress in organization and development. There is great enthusiasm about its development and a network of communication with the different departments of the university has been developed. In the National Polytechnic School, the Liaison Office was created in 1995, and since then has developed a lot of activities. It has established contact with many enterprises, has created a database of information and has extended the programme for practical experience.

### **2a.3 The Psychological Counselling Centres**

The Psychological Counselling Centres were the first form of counselling services to be established in Greek universities. Initially, they were established at the University of Thessaloniki, the University of Ioannina and the University of Athens. The University of Ioannina centre has now ceased to operate, but a new centre has been established at the University of Pireaus. Throughout the years many studies have revealed the necessity for the creation of these centres. In particular, the frequency of psychopathological cases among the student population was noted (Navridis *et al.*, 1990). Other studies have investigated the way psychology lessons can affect students' thinking and behaving, the students' expectations from the psychological centres (Kalantzi-Azizi, 1991, Malikiosi-Loizou, 1992), as well as the tendency for independence during the post-adolescence period (Kalantzi-Azizi *et al.*, 1989). Although, however, there was such empirical proof of the importance of the services which these centres provide, their existence is still at stake.

The **University of Thessaloniki** Counselling Centre was established as early as 1986. Initially, the centre was founded as a branch of the Community Centre of Mental Health. Its main goal was to provide support and treatment to students facing psychological and psychiatric problems. The staff consisted primarily of psychiatrists trained in psychotherapy, with the collaboration of psychologists and social workers. The centre offered its services for three and a half years. During this period, 386 students asked for help. Of these, 118 students asked for psychiatric help, 74.6% of them were referred to the Mental Health Community Centre, while 25.4% were treated at the Counselling Centre (Vassilakos *et al.*, 1989). At present,

psychological help is provided at the psychological laboratory of the psychology department of the university. However, the organization of the centre is limited, and there is not adequate staff to meet the needs of the students.

At the **University of Ioannina**, the Counselling Centre started operating in 1989 (Navridis *et al.*, 1990). Its main objectives were to provide psychological support to students through psychotherapy, to conduct research and to organize prevention programmes. The staff consisted of two psychologists and two psychology supervisors. The problems reported by the students concerned relationship difficulties with family, peers and partners, psychosomatic problems, anxiety and difficulties with their studies. Until 1994, the centre was very active and offered help to a large number of students. The centre ceased to operate in 1994, due to financial problems. However, from the beginning of the academic year 1997/98, the General Secretariat of Youth has decided to provide economic support for reopening the centre.

At the **University of Athens**, the Psychology Department supported the foundation of a University Counselling Centre in 1990 (Kalantzi-Azizi, 1991). Its main objectives include: psychological support to students; research and development on intervention models; education and training of psychology majors; and conducting seminars and conferences. The problems reported by the students were similar to those at the counselling centre of the University of Ioannina: for example, problems focused on family issues, interpersonal relations, anxiety about autonomy and independence, as well as issues related to studies, e.g. difficulties in concentrating and in organizing their studies and the time available (Kalantzi-Azizi & Matsaka, 1992). Although it has faced intense financial problems from time to time, the centre is still in operation with a wide range of activities. During the last two years it has operated entirely through the help and voluntary work of some faculty members of the psychology department.

In 1996, a psychological counselling centre started to operate in the **University of Piraeus**. The centre had as a goal to provide psychological counselling not only to the University of Piraeus students but to all young people in the Piraeus area. The scientific committee of the centre consisted of members of the faculty, while the counselling staff consisted of psychiatrists, psychologists and counsellors outside the university. The goal was to provide help for any psychiatric and psychological problems (exam anxiety, phobias, depression, interpersonal relations, problems with self-esteem, adjustment problems, etc.), to provide career counselling and educational advice concerning the selection of subjects within the university, to

create helping teams, to develop links with the student political movements, to develop cooperation with the faculty members of the university, and to provide psychological support for students in facing the world of work. The centre began with many expectations; however, at present it faces organisational and administrative problems, and operates with great difficulties.

At the **University of Thrake** a new psychological counselling centre started to operate towards the end of 1997 with financial support from the General Secretariat of Youth. The centre provides psychological counselling and educational advice. It is supervised by the Children's Psychological Laboratory of the university. The staff of the centre consists of one psychologist and one social worker.

In 1994, a counselling social welfare service was established at the **TEI of Athens**. The centre provides individual and group counselling for personal problems, family problems, adjustment problems and problems of interpersonal relationships. It is directed and supervised by staff members of the institution. At present the centre is financially supported by the General Secretariat of Youth.

#### **2a.4 The Service for Students with Special Needs**

Within the Psychological Counselling Centre of the University of Athens, there has been a special concern for students with special needs. The centre, through participation in the E.U. HORIZON programme, as well as in the E.U. HELIOS programme, has established a programme providing practical help and support for such students. In this programme a career counsellor is hired on a part-time basis, providing support to university students with special needs, and helping them to find a job when finishing university. In addition, through research projects, the programme aims to record the problems of students with special needs in Greece, as well as the number of such students at the universities and the technological institutes.

#### **2a.5 Centre for School Career Guidance and Orientation**

In addition to the Psychological Counselling Centre, at the University of Athens, in 1991, the Centre for School Career Guidance and Orientation was established in the Pedagogics section of the Department of Pedagogics, Philosophy and Psychology. The centre aims to provide career counselling, guidance and information to the

students of all the departments of the university. Initially, the centre was staffed by three secondary school teachers specializing in career guidance. Now the staff consists of only one person who manages the centre, providing information and helping career guidance postgraduate students in the completion of their studies and practical experience.

## **2a.6 Guidance and Counselling Services Outside Higher Education Institutions**

In addition to the specialized services within the institutions of higher education, there are a number of other guidance and counselling services which have some relevance to higher education. These services are targeted either towards students at the pre-entry stage (the School Career Guidance System and the private sector) or at the exit stage (the Manpower Employment Organization). These services are initiated by national public authorities (e.g. ministries), local authorities (e.g. municipalities) and the private sector.

It is worth mentioning here that through the National Programme for Professional Training and Development (funded by the European Social Fund), a Career Guidance and Counselling Programme has started to operate from the beginning of the academic year 1997-98. The three main goals of the programme are: (a) the establishment of institutions for career counselling, including the establishment of Career Guidance and Counselling Centres in each municipality of Greece, and the establishment of Career Counselling and Guidance Offices within the schools; (b) the training of the people who work in the field of career counselling and guidance; and (c) the development of an information database.

### **The National Centre for Career Guidance and Orientation (EKEP)**

An important development in the area of guidance and counselling is the creation of the National Centre for Career Guidance and Orientation (EKEP: *Ethniko Kentro Epagelmatikou Prosanatolismou*). EKEP was created in 1993, initially as a national project through the European PETRA programme, and was incorporated later into the LEONARDO programme. It is under the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, and it is controlled by the National Institute of Labour. The creation of EKEP follows the decision of the E.C. (taken in 1991) for the creation of National Centres for Career Counselling in all the E.C. countries. The importance of the existence of

EKEP has been enhanced by the latest research in which it was shown that there is no control, coordination or inter-communication between the different institutions which provide services in career guidance and counselling in Greece (Koliva & Koutsaftis, 1997). On the other hand, it was noted that the changes in the labour market and the increase in the mobility of manpower throughout the E.C. countries have increased the need for providing career guidance and counselling not only during the individual's school life but as a life-long learning experience. It was also noted that there is a need for a central institution which will permit the development of networks between the services in private and state institutions and ministries, the development of training for the counsellors and specialists in the field, as well as the development of communication and liaison between educational institutions and the labour market. Thus the EKEP is called upon to play a supervisory, advisory and coordinating role.

In particular, the creation of EKEP has as its goals :

- (a) to undertake the management of career guidance and counselling services in Greece, and to become the centre where these services can cooperate;
- (b) to provide to the Ministry of Education the necessary information about the current situation of counselling in Greece and information about the needs for its improvement;
- (c) to initiate partnership with various E.C. projects and to disseminate in Greece the various guidance and counselling models which are now in operation in other E.C. countries.

### **The School Career Guidance System (SEP)**

Within the educational system, the Ministry of Education has organized the School Career Education System (SEP: *Scholikos Epaggelmatikos Prosanatolismos*), which is the main counselling system now operating in Greece. Through this system, career guidance is provided to the pupils of junior high school (gymnasia) and senior high schools (lycea). Career education in schools is mostly classroom-bound and didactic in style, and exists as a subject for pupils of the ninth, tenth and eleventh grades. Among the goals of the system is to give pupils the opportunity and experience of being actively involved in their educational and career decisions. The implementation of career education curriculum programmes has been allocated to career teachers who are primarily teachers of other subjects, with the guidance role taking up a minimum amount of their time. Although the work of career teachers is formally confined to classroom work, many of the more enthusiastic ones may offer individual advice informally. Career teachers are advised by professional advisors

who constitute the staff of 54 career centres established at local authorities (municipalities). Career advisors organize in-service training and supervise the implementation of the career education system in schools.

Despite its efforts toward careful planning and support, the SEP programme has been unable to acquire credibility not only among the university professors, students, and parents, but also among the general public. Consequently, the SEP programme has been unable, on the one hand, to provide meaningful assistance to secondary school students struggling to come to a proper decision as to their educational or occupational preference, or on the other hand, to implement the educational planning programmes of the Ministry of Education, which have to do with the promotion of occupational options in accordance with the demands of the job market.

### **The Manpower Employment Organization (OAED)**

The Manpower Employment Organization (OAED: *Organismos Apasxolisis Ergatikou Dynamikou*) offers services in career guidance and counselling, has a placement centre and an Occupational Information Centre, and from time to time offers training seminars for career counsellors. There are 18 similar centres in the whole country, although they are not developed and equipped to the same extent as the centre in Athens.

Vocational orientation and counselling constitutes one of the main activities of the centre. There are three specific levels at which vocational guidance is offered:

- (a) Vocational guidance and counselling to adults who have been made redundant. This includes: individual counselling, redundancy counselling and seminars for redundant workers preparing them for self-employment, and help in finding places in adult training schools.
- (b) Active vocational guidance and counselling for young people aged 15-18. Help and guidance is provided to find out what they want to do through practical experience. During the years 1983-93, 16,400 young people followed this programme.
- (c) Career guidance and counselling to young people who have finished secondary or higher education and have not yet decided about their career.
- (d) Young people going to vocational apprenticeship schools (organized by OAED), who need to discuss and choose their specialization. Entry to vocational schools depends upon the results of assessment tests.

The staff of the centre consists of university degree graduates (in psychology, social science or economics) trained in counselling through special training courses. At present, the centres do not function at their full potential. There is lack of staff (Zanni-Teliopoulou, 1994), lack of statistical data on its activities, and limited use of the services offered (Vretakou, 1990). The information database requires widening and updating in regard to its content and method of analysis of professions and employment positions. Furthermore, improvements are necessary in the adult vocational programmes, the use of new technology, and the development of new vocational training activities.

### **The Private Sector**

Career guidance and counselling, both at the secondary and at the higher education level, is offered also by the private sector. In particular, career counselling and guidance services have been offered by private centres for career guidance and orientation, and by the larger private schools, since the 1980s.

Private schools offer career guidance and counselling, in addition to the educational curriculum for career orientation and guidance which is required by the state. The staff of these centres consists of psychologists and counsellors with education and training in counselling, family therapy and psychotherapy. In order to prepare the individual's profile, they use assessment tests standardized for Greece. They have a database of information, especially concerning postgraduate studies in the European and USA universities. In rare cases they offer vocational guidance and counselling to people outside the schools.

The private centres for career guidance and counselling started operation at the end of the 1980s. They use assessment tests and they are addressed to both high school students and university students, and also to adults who want to change their career. They have a database of information concerning the different types of jobs and particularly concerning postgraduate studies abroad. During the last five years, in many private schools for foreign languages, a liaison system with universities from abroad has started to operate. Through this system, students can register at foreign universities after a foundation year in Greece. Some of them operate as placement centres, though this service is not considered as one of their main goals.

## 2b. Commentary

### 2b.1 Diversity

As is evident from section 2a, at present in Greece the beginnings of a national guidance and counselling service system are being developed through the Liaison Offices. This system operates as a third-in-line central unit, separate from the formal teaching function and offered by specialists. Most of the Liaison Offices offer guidance, educational information, and possibly placement. Career counselling in the form of sustained counselling and support for the individual does not exist in these offices, although the need is recognized by the scientific committees and the staff of the centres. The existing Psychological Counselling Centres operate in much the same form.

However, since both types of counselling (psychological counselling and career guidance) are at an initial stage of development, their operation, their stage of development and their staffing differ from university to university. Although the system of Liaison Offices had been designed with the same philosophy, some universities have developed them in different ways. In the University of Thessaloniki, for example, the Liaison Office has been designed with one central office and 4 peripheral branches, based in different departments of the university. Here and in the University of Macedonia and the National Polytechnic School (*Ethniko Metsovio Polytechnio*), the students play an important role in the administrative and executive committees of the centres. In addition, the Liaison Offices of the Universities of Thessaloniki, Patras and Macedonia, with the help of the Liaison Office of Pantion University, have already started a programme for training their staff.

In the smaller universities as well as in the technological institutes, the Liaison Offices are less well developed. It is expected that progress will be made in the near future, especially through the communication network which is due to be developed between the Liaison Offices, and through the education and training which will be offered by Pantion University.

The Psychological Counselling Centre of Athens University has developed some important activities concerning the training and education of psychology major students, as well as developing interaction models for use in therapy in relation to some of the psychological problems faced by students. The same centre has

participated in several conferences and has organized a 2-day meeting on Counselling in Higher Education.

## **2b.2 Control and Funding**

All the Liaison Offices are funded through a programme supported mainly by the European Union and the European Social Fund. For the period 1995-99, around six billion drachmas have been allocated to different universities for the creation of the Liaison Offices. The allocation of the budget differs from university to university, depending on their needs.

The Liaison Offices of some universities have also raised their own funds, or receive additional support from their university budget. For example, the Liaison Office of Pantion University is also supported by the Ministry of Labour, and probably will be supported by the Ministry of Education. It is clear, however, among the administrative committees of the Liaison Offices that their existing funds are only guaranteed to the end of 1999, and that they need to raise their own money if they want to survive and be independent.

All services operate free of charge and thus do not have their own revenues. When students do their practical experience in the various enterprises outside university, both these enterprises and the students are usually supported by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour.

The Liaison Offices operate as independent units within the framework of a larger administrative operation supervised by a control office located at Pantion University. Each Liaison Office has a scientific committee which consists of faculty members of the university. Its tasks include planning the programme, management and control of the programme, responsibility for relations with the state, and the final validation of the programme. There is also an administrative committee, the director of which is employed on a full-time basis and does not belong to the faculty. The number of the staff depends on the size and the needs of the university. The standard staff for a middle-sized university is: one director, one or two secretaries, a placement officer, an information officer, all on a full-time basis; and one computer analyst, possibly on a part-time basis.

### **2b.3 Links and Referral Practices**

The Liaison Offices are seeking to develop a network system for exchanging information between them. Each Liaison Office can develop its own links with foreign universities concerning postgraduate studies, as well as with private enterprises. Among the tasks of the people who are working in the Liaison Offices is increasing communication with the other departments of the university and with the members of its staff. Special day meetings and conferences are organized with the aim of presenting the goals, the future plans and the achievements of the Liaison Offices. The Liaison Offices are aiming also to be in direct contact with the student unions and student associations.

However, at present most of the energy of the Liaison Offices is devoted to developing links with private business and enterprises, and improving their placement services. Notable examples of these activities are at the University of Macedonia, the Pantion University, the Metsovion Polytechnion, and the University of Thessally. At the University of Macedonia, AISEC (an international association for students in the economics/commerce areas) has developed an impressive range of activities making connections and links with enterprises in Greece and abroad, organizing seminars, and providing information material.

In the Psychological Counselling Centres at the University of Athens and the University of Thessaloniki, the counsellors and the psychologists are in direct contact with specific psychiatric clinics for referrals. The University of Athens centre is directly linked with the university's Student Services and the Student Union. It develops links with schools, mental health institutions and other institutions for social welfare. Through these links, psychology students and postgraduate students in career counselling are helped to achieve their practical experience.

Additional efforts need to be made to forge professional contacts between the Liaison Offices and the existing Psychological Counselling Services.

### **2b.4 Stages in the Student Career for which Support is Available**

All the Liaison Offices have as a goal to provide guidance and support at the induction, on-course and exit stages. Career and educational guidance at the pre-

entry stage is not included in their services. This task is left to the services which provide career guidance and counselling at the level of secondary education (the school career guidance system). For the present, there is no link between these services and the Liaison Offices.

At the exit stage, both educational guidance and vocational advice and placement help are offered. Educational guidance is given in relation to continuing postgraduate studies abroad. Some universities (University of Thessaly, the Metsovion Polytechnic, the University of Macedonia, the University of Thessaloniki) have started developing a database system with information and links with foreign universities in relation to postgraduate studies. In the Liaison Offices, there is particular concentration on improving contacts with various enterprises and bringing students into direct contact with employers.

It is, however, the pre-entry and induction stages which need most attention. As was noted earlier, the demand for higher education, the limited number of university places, and the difficult system of entrance examinations, result in many students entering departments and faculties which do not reflect their choices and preferences. Thus when they enter university, in addition to the usual adjustment problems, they are disappointed, and often need psychological support to come to terms with the new situation, as well as educational advice which will provide them with information about the curriculum of the new subject and help in organizing their studies. In addition, they need career guidance and counselling which will help them to explore and re-evaluate their situation, to explore job alternatives which are relevant to their studies, and to examine other alternatives which may be available through postgraduate studies. This guidance and counselling may help them either to accept the type of studies they have entered and make good use of it, or to enable them to change it and to take the necessary actions to accomplish this change.

It is also worth mentioning here that although the students are willing to seek information and guidance concerning the world of work, there is still prejudice among Greek people regarding psychological advice and help. This attitude may hinder many students from asking for psychological help, or even counselling and advice. However, the experience we have from two psychological centres - at the University of Athens and the University of Ioannina - shows that when students are informed, they make use of the services which are offered. It is necessary for the public in general, and the students in particular, to be well informed and sensitized to the usefulness of the counselling centres, in order to offer their services, do away with prejudices, and help the students become aware of their needs and take advantage

of the help which is being offered. Students would then recognize that it was in their best interests to actively support the existence of the counselling centres.

In the private sector, students can seek educational advice and ask for vocational guidance and help at all stages of their studies.

### **2b.5 Counsellor-Student Ratios**

At present, 39 guidance and counselling services (32 Liaison Offices, 5 Psychological Counselling Centres, 1 Service for Students with Special Needs, and one Centre for School Career Guidance and Orientation) offer psychological help and vocational guidance to approximately 107,041 university students in Greece (data from the National Statistical Service). These services are still under development, and especially in the Liaison Offices new staff are continually being hired. For this reason is difficult to calculate a valid counsellor-student ratio.

### **2b.6 Guidance for Special Target Groups**

At present only the Service for Students with Special Needs, which is in operation in the University of Athens, offers psychosocial and academic support to students with special needs. No other specialized services for minority students exist. Psychological support, vocational guidance and information are available to them on the same basis as to other students.

### **2b.7 Internationalization**

Most universities have taken part in the European student mobility programme (ERASMUS) and have been involved in other European programmes (PETRA, SOCRATES, LEONARDO) designed to enhance the development of linkages between students and between the universities of Europe. Special Offices for International Education exist in 8 universities and technological institutes.

All Liaison Offices have as a goal to be in direct communication with the counselling centres and guidance services which exist in other European countries. The Psychological Counselling Centre of the University of Athens has developed an important network with the counselling offices of the other European universities through the help of FEDORA. The centre is also in direct communication with other European Universities through the programmes HORIZON, FEDORA-HANDI, and HELLIOS II for students with special needs

The increase of mobility between countries, developments in rapid communication, as well as the reshuffling and changes in the population of the third world countries, have increased the number of foreign students who study in the Greek universities. For these students, however, no special counselling or guidance services exist.

### 3. Roles and Tasks

#### 3a. Introduction

The following sections will be devoted to the analysis of the main occupational roles which at present exist in the Greek HE guidance and counselling services. The results of this analysis are presented in Tables 2 and 3. The variables used for the analysis include : the forms of guidance, the time spent, the type of tasks allocated in each occupational role and the range of involvement in each task (in reference to the occupational role under investigation). In Section 3b there is a more detailed discussion of what is involved in the particular tasks of particular roles, and how the type of guidance affects the task in question. There is also a discussion of the extent to which the nature of the tasks of the particular roles under investigation is changing in relation to:

- a more diverse student population;
- the challenge of the European dimension in guidance provision;
- the influence of new technologies in guidance;
- trends in the needs for guidance and counselling.

#### Task Classification

For each occupational role, a task analysis has been performed. For this analysis, the tasks have been defined and classified according to the following task classification developed by Watts & Van Esbroeck (1996). For each task a letter code is given which is used to list the tasks in Table 3.

1. **General management:** general administrative management, including service/programme planning and evaluation. Includes managing guidance activities within the institutional setting, and general liaison with external bodies (e.g. education institutions, guidance agencies, social services, official bodies and employers). (A)
2. **Information management:** the collection, production and display of information in relation to education and training opportunities, and/or careers, occupations and the labour market. (B)
3. **Information-giving:** providing relevant information to individuals or groups in relation to education and training opportunities and/or careers, occupations and the labour market. (C)
4. **Counselling:** helping clients to explore their own thoughts and feelings about their present situation, about the options open to them, and about the consequences of each option.

- 4.1. **Short-term individual counselling:** helping clients on a one-to-one basis in a single or limited number of sessions. (D)
- 4.2. **Long-term individual counselling:** as 4.1 but representing a planned programme over a longer period and more sessions. (E)
- 4.3. **Short-term group counselling:** as 4.1 but on a group basis. Tends to be in smaller groups than teaching, to be composed of individuals who share some common characteristics, to focus on their expressed needs rather than on predetermined learning aims, and to be organised to encourage active participation by all the individuals involved. (F)
- 4.4. **Long-term group counselling:** as 4.3 but representing a planned programme over a longer period and more sessions. (G)
- 4.5. **Facilitating self-help groups:** encouraging individuals to form themselves into ongoing groups to share experiences and to support each other. (H)
5. **Advice:** making suggestions based on the helper's own knowledge and experience and on assessment results. (I)
6. **Assessment:** making judgements about individuals' suitability for certain opinions, based on inventories, tests, observations, interviews, etc.
- 6.1. **Facilitate self-assessment:** supporting individuals in choosing their own assessment devices and drawing conclusions from them. (J)
- 6.2. **Diagnostic assessment:** selecting assessment devices, interpreting the results and making appropriate recommendations. (K)
7. **Referral:** referring individuals to services better equipped to deal with their problem. (L)
8. **Teaching:** programmes of planned experiences, designed to develop the skills, concepts and knowledge that will help individuals to manage their educational, vocational and personal development. (M)
9. **Placement:** into education or training programmes, and/or into employment.
- 9.1. **Liaison with providers:** liaison with employers and with education and training providers to obtain information on the opportunities they offer. (N)
- 9.2. **Coaching:** helping individuals to present themselves effectively (on application forms and in interviews etc.). (O)
- 9.3. **Vacancy information:** providing individuals with information on particular vacancies in education, training or employment. (P)
- 9.4. **Preselection:** preselecting individuals for particular vacancies in education, training or employment. (Q)
10. **Advocacy:** negotiating directly with institutions or agencies, within and/or outside own institution, on behalf of individuals, especially those for whom there may be particular barriers to access (R)

11. **Supporting other guidance sources:** providing training sessions and disseminating information materials to teaching staff and other guidance providers. (S)
12. **Feedback to providers:** collecting information on the unmet needs of particular groups, and encouraging providers of opportunities to respond by adapting and extending their provision. (T)
13. **Follow-up:** contacting former clients to see what has happened to them. Its purposes may include data for use with subsequent clients, evaluating the effectiveness of the guidance given, and offering further support needed. (U)

**Table 2** indicates (a) the main occupational roles which exist for each of the guidance and counselling services listed in Section 2, (b) the number of the people currently occupying these roles, and (c) the type of guidance used. Three types of guidance are distinguished according to the holistic guidance model (Gieles *et al.*, 1985; Van Esbroeck, 1995, 1997c):

Educational (E): guidance on choices of educational options, and learner support.

Vocational (V): guidance on choices of, and placement into, occupations and work roles.

Personal (P): guidance and counselling on personal and social issues.

In these terms, the focus of each guidance service/system is analysed on a 7-point scale. The allocation of the 7 points is based upon a combination of several variables: time spent, and how the focus is perceived by the counsellor, by the client and by the institution.

A distinction is made, where necessary, between part-time and full-time working staff (FTE: full-time equivalent). In most services, especially in the Liaison Offices, the work of some individuals cover more than one role. In these cases they are assigned to the role to which most of their time is dedicated.

In **Table 3**, there is a list of the tasks under investigation, represented by letter codes used in the task classification (see above). For each of the tasks listed, a rating of the importance of the task is given on a 0 to 4 scale on the basis of the level of involvement in the work normally carried out within the role :

4 - major involvement

3 - considerable involvement

2 - some involvement

1 - minor involvement

0 - no involvement

### 3b. Task Analysis: Comments

In total, about 94 individuals work in the HE guidance and counselling sector in Greece. Of these, only 14 have a professional counselling background and offer psychological or career counselling and guidance. Four of these work in the Liaison Offices, while the rest offer their services in the Psychological Counselling Centres. The rest of the people working in the Liaison Offices come from various educational backgrounds, with little or no experience in guidance, counselling or consultancy.

However, the above numbers are still provisional. Most of the Liaison Offices are in the process of employing more people, while some others are in a phase of reorganization and change of staff. On the other hand, there is a lot of confusion and instability concerning their function and their duration, as well as uncertainty concerning the role of people working in these offices. As they stated in their interviews for this project, they "have to do everything": from management and administration to educational advice, information giving, placement services or even offering personal counselling. The need for a career advisor and career counsellor is emphasized by most of the staff members. However, they do not exactly know what the nature of their work is, and how and what they can offer to the Liaison Offices.

As indicated in Table 2, the focus of the **Liaison Offices** is almost completely vocational, while the role of the staff is largely informational; educational advice is offered only in rare cases, although it is within the main goals of the centres. Educational advice is particularly offered in the centres which have organized a database of information for postgraduate studies abroad. At present, most of the Liaison Offices are composed of both full-time (director, secretary, career counsellor, placement officer) and part-time (information officer) staff. The role of the secretary is mainly administrative, while the roles of the rest, with the exception of the career counsellor, are largely informational. The tasks within their roles are mainly general management (A), information management (B) and information giving (C). Their focus and future goals are to improve their placement services, by developing liaison with employers and with education and training providers (N), and by providing information on particular vacancies in education, training or employment (P). Among their goals is also to improve the follow-up (U) of students who have been hired by various organizations, as well as the advocacy task (R) of supporting individuals in the process of seeking employment. They are also trying to promote to the various

enterprises the scientific capabilities and experiences of the students and the human resources of the universities (T). The Liaison Offices at Pantion University are developing teaching programmes through seminars and conferences to help individuals develop their skills in interviewing techniques, self awareness, writing of curriculum vitae, etc. (M, S).

As shown in Table 2, only 5 careers counsellors are working at present in the Liaison Offices. Their tasks vary from offering career and educational advice (I) and short-term individual counselling (D) to coaching (O), referral (J) and information giving (C). In some cases (Pantion University) assessment procedures have been developed and there is also involvement in the teaching programmes (M).

A problem which most staff members of the Liaison Offices face is the short-term contract by which most of them are hired. In general, they are hired for three years, which is the duration of the project. This type of contract causes a great deal of stress and instability. They feel that their existence is at stake. As a result they tend to shift the main focus of their activities from the needs of the students to how they can assure the survival of the centre. Thus they put a lot of emphasis on liaison with providers, on offering placement services, on the organization of seminars and conferences, and on the production of information material. In this way, they hope to make themselves known in the business market and more established within their own institutions. As a result they hope to be in a stronger position to request grants and support from the institution itself, the government or other organizations. However, this tendency results in less emphasis being placed on the needs of the students and on the counselling procedures.

In the **Psychological Counselling Centres**, the tasks of the staff are focused mainly on psychological counselling (D, E, F, G), although career advising and information giving (C, O) are not excluded. From Table 2, it seems that the staff of these centres consists mainly of psychologists and social workers. Their professional roles, however, are not clear-cut. Their tasks focus mainly on personal and social issues as part of individual (D, E) and in some cases group counselling activities (F, G). The tasks of the career counsellor in the **Service for Students with Special Needs** vary: as will be explained below in the career counsellor profile, the counsellor has a mixture of tasks, providing counselling help (D, E, I), educational and career advising (C), coaching (O), and referral (L), but without being involved in any kind of therapy.

### **3c. Detailed Profiles**

For this section, the profiles of two occupational roles will be given. The profiles cover the professional roles in the two main higher education guidance and counselling services, i.e. in the Liaison Offices and in the Psychological Counselling Centres:

- (a) Career counsellor
- (b) Psychologist / counsellor

These roles were chosen because they are currently the most prominent roles in the field of career counselling in Greece. The following sections will deal in turn with these professional roles and their tasks.

#### **3c.1 Career Counsellor**

The role of the career counsellor is currently the most prominent role in Greece in the field of career counselling, in either the private or the public sectors. His/her role is to provide personal counselling and vocational guidance through an interpersonal process focusing upon assisting the individuals to make an appropriate career decision and plan their future, taking into consideration both the social constraints as well as the individuals' personality constraints. However, until now the main area of intervention in which career counsellors offer their services is at the level of secondary education, i.e. students being in the transition stage either to continue their studies and enter higher education or to start working and enter the world of work.

In the counselling centres which are operating in the universities, only 5 career counsellors currently offer their services. Nonetheless, a more in-depth analysis of their tasks seemed worthwhile because we believe that their services may be used in the Liaison Offices, which at the moment cover not only liaison with the labour market but also vocational and educational guidance.

In this section we will try to give a profile of the career counsellors' work as it appears in the Greek higher education system, through a classification of the various tasks performed. The career counsellor in a counselling and guidance centre, either in the public or the private sector, is commonly viewed as a general educational, vocational and to some extent personal counsellor. It is possible in future, when more career counsellors offer their services in the higher education institutions, and when a general model of guidance and counselling is followed by the career

guidance and counselling centres, that the tasks of the career counsellor will be more clearly differentiated.

At present, the career counsellors who work in the Liaison Offices mainly provide career guidance, and educational and vocational help. Their main tasks include individual counselling, offered usually on a short-term or long-term basis (D, E), assessment (K), coaching (O) and follow-up (U). Through these main tasks the career counsellor aims to help the individual in the awareness and the definition of his/her problem, the evaluation of the best alternative solutions, as well as in the implementation of the decision taken.

In addition, the career counsellor is in good contact with the other staff of the centre and with the faculty members; has the right to make referral practices to other services (L) and be in contact with them; follows or takes part in the general planning of the activities of the centre (M); arranges meetings for the evaluation of the work (U); is in direct cooperation with the placement officer for information by supporting the preselection procedure (P); and also supports other guidance sources (S).

The importance of, and the need for, the career counsellor's work have been noted by all the staff members working in the Liaison Offices, and the potentialities of their work seem to be very large; however, since all the centres are at an initial stage of development, the areas in which career counsellors can act are limited. In addition, since the main focus of the Liaison Offices is to provide information and act as a liaison point between the university and the world of work, the task of individual or group counselling becomes less important.

The tasks of the career counsellor who is working in the programme for students with special needs follows the above-mentioned tasks. In this case, the counsellor takes particular care to help students to adjust to the university environment. This is achieved by helping them find the necessary equipment for their studies, and by organizing group discussions with the purpose of facilitating self-help groups (H). The counsellor is also prepared to be in contact with the family of the students, if necessary. His or her main focus, however, is to support students in finding jobs after finishing their studies. For this purpose, the counsellor provides individuals with information on particular vacancies (P), negotiates with the institutions or agencies for the various jobs (R), and helps students in their initial adjustment to their job (O). The counsellor is also involved in research, in cooperation with other staff members, concerning the position of students with special needs both in educational institutions and in the labour market. Through these activities the counsellor tries to

communicate his/her experiences to the academic staff to make them more sensitive to and aware of the problems of students with special needs.

Furthermore, as is evident from the interviews conducted for this project, the counsellors are aware that with the challenge of the European dimension, the increase in mobility among countries, the opening of the labour market to multinational companies, and the change from internal markets within each country to a more Europeanised or world-wide market, their role and their tasks are becoming more and more difficult. They are aware that they must be able not only to help the students in finding an optimal solution, but to help them to adjust to new situations, to be flexible, to make use of their own potentialities and to be aware of all the possibilities available.

In addition, the counsellors are particularly sensitive to the problems of students belonging to minority groups, to foreign students studying in Greek universities through the exchange programmes, and to older students who have registered at university for re-education and retraining. For these populations the counsellors suggest that special support should be provided to face adjustment problems, and to explore new work possibilities. Special counselling groups could also help them to adjust better and to cope more effectively with the university environment.

### **3c.2 Psychologist - Counsellor**

Psychological counselling is offered to university students by psychologists and counsellors (trained in personal counselling) in the Psychological Counselling Centres. Psychologists help students to overcome a great range of problems, especially related to interpersonal relations, accommodation, adjustment to the university environment and problems in social recognition, as well as problems related to examination anxiety and learning difficulties.

The tasks of the psychologists who work in the university centres include mainly the diagnostic assessment (K) and the provision of psychological help, counselling and therapy, either on a short-term or on a long-term individual basis (D, E, I), with less attention to career guidance and advice. The psychologist/counsellor's activities include also the conducting of research and studies on the psychosocial problems of students, the development of models of psychosocial intervention for the student population, as well as the training and education of psychology students in psychometric assessment and in counselling (M, S).

In the University of Athens Psychological Counselling Centre, short-term and long-term group counselling are also provided (F,G,H). Groups can be both educational and therapeutic, with the goal of helping students to face difficulties in interpersonal relations and examination anxiety, and to reinforce and facilitate self-assessment (J) (Kalantzi-Azizi, 1996). The model of intervention which is used for this purpose includes the participation of postgraduate psychology students either as group facilitators or as observers, and supervision by the director of the centre.

The psychologist/counsellor in a Psychological Counselling Centre also has the task of referring students to a clinic or to a community mental health centre where necessary (L). He/she is also responsible for the general management of the centre (A), being in direct communication and supervision with the director of the centre. Career advice and information (C) are given on a limited basis when needed.

## 4. Training and Qualifications

### 4.a Introduction

In this section, the problems concerning the provision and the nature of training of the people working in counselling and guidance services are discussed. Trends and needs for the training of the people working in the newly-established Liaison Offices are identified. Also discussed is the training given to the career counsellors until now, as well as the future programmes which are organized for training the people who are going to work in the career counselling centres both in the public and private sectors, and at the secondary and higher education levels.

**Table 4** indicates the training and qualifications of people working in the HE counselling services. Following the listing of the services/systems and of the occupational roles identified in Section 3a, Table 4 demonstrates the nature of the education and training experience that people working in the counselling centres of Greek universities have access to, as well as the possibilities for in-service training in guidance and counselling. Optional rather than mandatory training is marked by an asterisk (\*).

In general, an academic degree is the minimum requirement for people working in the HE counselling and guidance services; no formal training is necessary. Training of the people working in this field until now has been patchy. On an academic level, a Master's degree in Counselling and Career Guidance and Orientation has been provided by the Philosophical School of the University of Athens since 1994.

There is no specific professional association for counsellors or people working in career guidance and information services in HE in Greece. There is however the Hellenic Association for Counselling and Guidance (*Elliniki Eteria Symbouleutikis kai Prosanatolismou*), established in 1985, with the aim of promoting guidance and counselling at the psychological, educational and vocational level in the public and private sectors. Many other professional organizations and associations in counselling and psychotherapy exist, with the aim of training therapists, promoting research, and promoting the occupational title and the employment rights of their members.

#### 4b. Commentary

Most people involved in the recently established **Liaison Offices** are hired on the basis of their first academic degree and their personal interest in the specific role. No special training or experience in the field of guidance and counselling is required. As indicated in Table 4, in some cases the director of the Liaison Office and the placement and information officers may have, in addition to their first degree, a postgraduate degree at a Master's or Diploma level.

Moreover, most of the people working in the Liaison Offices have an economics or technological background. In some cases (e.g. University of Crete, University of Thessaloniki, Pantion University, University of Pireaus, Ionion University, University of Patras), the director, the placement officers and the information officers have a pedagogical or philosophical background. In one case, the Technological Institute of Ioannina, the director is a psychologist. In the University of Crete, the director comes from secondary education, whereas in many cases (in 12 out of 27 Liaison Offices) people working in the Liaison Offices belong to the academic staff of the institution.

In-service training for the people working in Liaison Offices has started at the University of Patras, the University of Thessaloniki and the Pantion University, from September 1997. This training is expected to expand to the rest of the Liaison Offices in the near future.

The small number of career counsellors who are working in the Liaison Offices have, in addition to a first university degree, been trained in guidance, and have some experience in counselling training through various seminars conducted in the private sector. Most of them have worked in secondary education, and were trained in career counselling and guidance through the Pedagogical Institute. More will be said about their training in Section 4c.

In the Psychological Counselling Centres, the psychologists who are offering psychological help or counselling have had, in addition to a first degree in psychology, a Master's or other training in counselling, or training in psychotherapy.

The social workers play an important role in the Psychological Counselling Centres, by providing social support to students and helping them to adjust to their university life. Social workers have a first degree in social welfare, usually from the

technological institutes; an intensive training experience is part of their curriculum programme.

#### **4c. Detailed Profiles**

##### **Career Counsellor**

This section goes into more depth on the qualification requirements and the training provided to the Career Counsellors until now. The newly-established training programmes, which were started at the end of 1997 by the Ministry of Education through the Pedagogical Institute, are also discussed in summary.

As was stated in Section 2a.5, the first training in career guidance in Greece was given to high school teachers, through the School Career Guidance System, which was the first career guidance system established in the country. During the years 1980-82, a series of 15-day seminars were given to high school teachers preparing to work in career guidance. This training was followed by a series of 5-month seminars in the years 1983-86. The training was mainly in vocational guidance, with the aim of helping the career teachers to understand the developmental processes of the individual's personality, as well as career decision-making processes. From then on, in-service training seminars were provided to career teachers by career advisors through the official responsibility of local authorities. A small number of career advisors took further training through the help of the Manpower Employment Organization.

As was stated above, a two-year postgraduate programme in Counselling and Career Guidance and Orientation, at Master's degree level, was established in 1994 by the philosophical department of the University of Athens. To get registered in the programme, students must have a first degree in psychology or pedagogics, with good knowledge of the fields of developmental, social and clinical psychology. The curriculum includes the following subjects: introduction to decision-making processes; theories of career counselling; sociology of work; theories and practice of counselling; adjustment difficulties at school; psychosocial problems; information technologies and career counselling; psychology of work; industrial psychology; methodology; counselling and guidance for individuals with special needs; and tests and assessment procedures. The programme accepts 20 students each year. The students are evaluated half on the completion of a set of written work, and half on their performance in the examinations. The practical experience is obligatory: it

includes 400 hours of practice in different settings (e.g. schools, centres for mental health, centres for people with special needs, centres for career counselling, etc.)

In addition, the National Programme for Training and Development (see Section 2a.5) prepares two large training programmes for career counsellors. The programmes are funded by the Ministry of Education and the European Commission. They are organized by the Pedagogical Institute and some universities. The first is addressed to professional career counsellors and offers a one-year postgraduate course in Counselling and Career Guidance and Orientation; it will be run by the University of Thessaloniki and the University of Athens. The second is addressed to the career teachers in high schools; it is a six-month course and will be held in several universities.

A special programme for the education and training of career counsellors who work with minority groups and people with special needs is going to start in the Pedagogical Institute; the programme is funded by the Ministry of Education.

In the University of Athens, within the Service for Students with Special Needs, a special training programme for postgraduate students working with deaf people was run during the year 1992-93. The programme included theoretical and practical education and training in the "movement language" which is used by deaf people. The programme was supported through the E.U. programme HORIZON.

### **Psychologist-Counsellor**

The Psychologist-Counsellor has a first degree in psychology, and additional training and experience in counselling and psychotherapy. Training is given to the psychology students through their practical experience which they should accomplish while they are in the university. Additional training is necessary after the completion of their first degree. This is achieved through the participation in various programmes offered by the different psychological associations.

## 5. Conclusions

From the above review, it appears that psychological counselling and career guidance and orientation in higher education are still at an initial stage of development in Greece. Financial problems and problems of organization and administration are very evident. In addition, the uncertainty and the instability of the continuation of the centres places high strain on the shoulders of the people who are working there and who feel a continuous pressure to function simultaneously at several levels. On the other hand, the results from various studies, as well as the limited experience we have from the operation of the existing counselling centres, show that the need for counselling at the psychological and vocational levels is very high. Students seem to need both psychological support in overcoming problems in interpersonal relations and identity formation, plus vocational support in issues related to their studies and to the job market not only at national but also at European and international levels.

Furthermore, the fact that in the same centre one person can play at the same time the role of administrator as well as the role of career counsellor, educational counsellor or career advisor, shows how difficult it is to develop a detailed profile of the main guidance roles which exist at this time in Greece, and upon which to organize their academic and training curriculum. As to whether it is possible to make these roles more clear, the answer is difficult under the existing circumstances. This is because the roles of the career counsellors and career advisors are very much defined by the context within which they work, i.e. the type and the size of the institution, and the type of the population, as well as the influences of the socioeconomic macro and micro environment. On the other hand, advances in technological development, changes in the labour market and in the trade and production trends, and the challenge of European dimension with its increase in the mobility of human resources, will demand a change in the focus of theories and practices of career counselling and guidance and a more global training procedure.

At present, in Greece, the training of the career counsellors mainly focus on facing and coping with the problems and the career decision-making processes of students at the secondary level. Professionals who have had this training are competent and can offer their services in HE. However, although the career decision making processes do not change at any stage of the individual's career development, the factors related to it do change, and additional training for those counsellors working at the HE level is needed. Counsellors in HE should become competent, in addition,

in adjustment to the university environment, and in helping students to meet the new challenges presented by the changes in the labour market in its European and worldwide dimensions. New issues, such as life-long learning, distance work, self-employment, reshuffling and changes in the population, and student mobility, as well as environmental and ethical issues, overload the counselling process and require from the counsellors new skills related to the complexity of the new demands involved in their role.

Under these circumstances, a European Master's degree in HE Guidance and Counselling will enhance the professional level of competencies of people working at the level of HE guidance and counselling in Greece. It will enlarge their perspectives, enable them to exchange views with colleagues in different countries, and equip them more adequately to meet the new international profile which is now demanded by university students. Today's students should be flexible and constantly negotiating new choices and working environments; they should be open to new cultures and to geographical mobility. For this to be achieved, counsellors of the future should adopt new flexible strategies towards career counselling, which are able to adapt to the new realities that may appear, and also to accept that there are different solutions to the individual's career problem according to the different ways they perceive and represent their problem. We believe that a Master's degree in HE Guidance and Counselling at a European level will help counsellors to understand these needs more fully and will keep them up-to-date regarding their own professional training and experience.

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