

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

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NATIONAL PLAN OF GREECE

In Greece –like in most developed countries– the percentage of people above 65 years is increasing. The demographic situation is characterized by low-birth rate and at the same time increase in life expectancy.

Ageing is not manifested in its biological dimensions but it has acquired dimensions of social phenomena. The Ageing Society can be explained as a successful result of social and economical development of our country as well as an amelioration of the quality of life. As a result of these phenomena people live longer and better, and remain active members of society. The Elders constitute an asset for every society and our attitude towards them is a measure of our civilization.

The Greek Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity has developed and implemented a network of Services and Programs which have as their main goal the social, and from a certain degree, the financial support of Elderly, the assurance of their autonomous way of life their staying in their familial environment and the maintenance of their psychosomatic balance.

The Greek Ministry established a Network of Social Solidarity: It organized Services which ensure the combination of the activities of the concerned Domain and the up-lifting of the role of the Municipal and Regional Government.

Also, the Greek Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity promotes the Voluntarism and the cooperation between the Domains of Governmental Agencies and the Volunteering Organizations, the NGOs with the Government assuming all the responsibility.

The Greek Government has made contracts with Units for Elderly Care which have a non-profit character focused on economically weak elder persons and persons

without social security. This Bill is covered from the Budget of Regions which has been sponsored by the Regional Government.

The specific Programs, which have been implemented in Greece, are listed below. These Programs cover two main Domains of Services: a) The Open Care and b) The Close Care. The Open Care Approach is more attractive and more up-to-date. It helps old people to get up-to-date information. This Open Care includes, for instance, one of our last programs: a totally free of charge Telephone Line which offers various information around the whole country.

1. Centers of Daily Care for Elders.

These Centers are located in urban and semi-urban regions. The Units are functionally connected with KAPI. The KAPI are open programs where every person above 60-65 years old, can actively participate without any prerequisite. The main goal of these KAPI is the socialization of Elderly People. These services are offered free of charge. The Centers of Daily Care for Elders offer daily hospitality and care to the Aged people, *who* cannot support themselves and whose relatives are unable to help them because of work or economic difficulties and/or health problems of their own.

These Centers of Daily Care have been established and are run by Public Companies, Trans- Municipal Companies, Unions of Municipal Companies, Non-profit Sectors. All these Sectors are interconnected in the functional level with the KAPI in the corresponding Region. In addition, these Centers of Daily Care collaborate with local centers, which also offer Social Services and apply similar programs, and with Units or Services of Health. These Units have been established in the frame of the Third European Social Support Program.

2. Social Help in the House

This very attractive Program is the continuation of the already implemented Program <Social Help in the House> now with new Units established all over the country and targeting especially the rural mountain and island areas. It offers considerable services to Elders, to Disabled Persons to Lonely Persons and to Persons who lack adequate services and whose income does not allow them to afford Public Services.

Up-to-now, 1,163 Units <Social Help in the House> have been established in 849 Municipalities and Counties. Of these, 91 Units of this <SOCIAL HELP IN THE HOUSE> belong to National Governmental Program. The sponsoring takes place with the collaboration of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity and the

Ministry of Interior-Public Administration and De-Centralization. The annual expenses for the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity are 834,000,000 Euros and the number of serviced persons is 9,500.

62 Units of the Social Care are sponsored by the Second –Social Support European Program and they still continue within the frame of the Third Social Support European Program.

880 Units of the Program <Social Help in the House> continue to be sponsored from the Third Social Support European Program.

For the efficient functioning and support of the Program, 612 cars, specially equipped to transport elderly people, have been given by the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity to the Greek Municipalities and 46 cars have been given from the Olympic Establishments.

Also, with the Greek Law /3106/2003 many other Domains and Authorities have the right to apply for Programs for the amelioration of the situation and status of the Elderly and the claim of their Human Rights following the Madrid Declaration <A Society for All Ages>.

Greek Society has adopted and totally embraced the Program Social Help offered in the House.

3. Tele-Assistance

From the year 2000, the application of the Pilot Program <House Tele-Assistance> has started in the district area of the Municipalities together with the program <Social Help in the House>. The main goal of this pilot program is the possibility of direct communication of Elders and lonely persons with their relatives and also with the Social Services

The annual budget of this Program is 53,000,000 Euros. The Program offers Tele-Help and Tele-Assistance and support to 300 persons.

4.Pension to Persons without Social Security

To 1,101 Persons an extra-pay of 244 Euros monthly is offered.

5. Programs of Camping and Water-Therapy all over the country have been organized and implemented. They are part of the programs targeting elderly citizens, organized by regional and municipal governments and supported by the Greek

Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity. These programs offer free vacations and water therapy in specific locations in the municipality of Athens and in other Greek cities during the summer time.

6. Units of Care for Elderly People

In the effort that the Elderly are in a sustained position enjoying their independence, the Greek Government with the financial assistance of the EU started to build and support independent Units of Houses where five persons above 65 years old with kinetic as well as with various other health problems can live independently and safely. This Program is an alternative to Classical Nursery Homes.

In Greece, there is the traditional system of the Nursery Homes which are operated as National Organizations under the Greek Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity. However, it also has to be mentioned that a considerable number of these Close Care Centers belong to the private Sector.

Demographic ageing requires active policies which will be focused on the physical and social well-being of elderly.

In accordance with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) and the Ministerial Conference in Berlin (September 2002), a National Policy for the Greek aged population has been developed in Greece in the last years.

As the main axes has:

1. The establishment of a National Committee of Ageing with the invitation of Members of the Greek Parliament from all the Political Parties.
2. A permanent Committee has been established inside the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity and is working on Aged Population Issues.
3. The Greek Government is aware that age is necessarily linked to health and care dependence AND no One Sector alone can give satisfactory answers to the rapidly changing and evolving new problems of the Elders.
4. The cooperation of Government with the Municipalities and the Regions as well as with the Civil Society-NGOs and the Private Sector is vital.

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