

## Greece

### Introduction to Work-Life Balance

For the project's needs, both field and desk research were conducted. In the field research, the responders were 4 women who worked from home during COVID-19. They talked about the situation in Greece and the policies but also about their mental health, burnout, and what is missing from the legislative system.

#### Desk Research

In general, Eurofound's research shows that Work-Life Balance indicators have decreased through the years. In 2011, 48% of respondents in Greece reported "difficulties fulfilling family responsibilities because of the amount of time spent at work at least several times a month", rising to 50% in 2016, while the level of those reporting "difficulties concentrating at work because of family responsibilities at least several times a month" increased from 20% in 2011 to 28% in 2016. (<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/greece#worklife-balance>)

Work-Life Balance in Greece is affected also by gender inequalities regarding housework, children and grandchildren care, and maternal/paternal leaves. More specifically, women are more involved in household activities, and on average they spend 13-14 hours per week more than men on children and grandchildren care and housework. ([https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_publication/field\\_ef\\_document/ef20059en.pdf](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef20059en.pdf)) Additionally, the gap in the legislation system regarding childcare makes things even more difficult for them. The research mentioned above conducted between 2011 and 2016 shows the gender differences in Work-Life Balance. Although being "too tired from work to do some of the household jobs which need to be done" at least several times a month has decreased from 73% in 2011 to 67% in 2016, the proportion for women remain stable.

(<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/greece#worklife-balance>)

Regarding the Work-Life Balance during the COVID-19 pandemic, Greece increased levels of both long working hours and work intensity. Additionally, there is an increase in



unemployment rates and the economic instability of Greek people that were affected negatively by it, not only their life quality but also their mental health.

More specifically, Greece was one of the countries with the highest proportion of respondents who lost their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 18% of people inactive after that. Also, 15% of people responded that they were afraid of losing their job. Finally, regarding the resilience of workers, Greece was one of the highest proportions in Europe (20%), while it was also one of the most pessimistic countries with only 31% recording as optimistic

([https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_publication/field\\_ef\\_document/ef20059en.pdf](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef20059en.pdf))

Another research conducted by EY Greece, Hellas EAP, and the Experimental Psychology Laboratory of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens during the COVID-19 pandemic shows that there is an imbalance between personal and professional life. Specifically, 3 out of 10 participants said that they do not maintain a Work-Life Balance at all, while only 4 out of 10 said that they stop thinking about work after their working hours.

Regarding the support of employers, 39% of the participants stated that their organisations/companies support employees who face mental health problems while 45% referred to support programmes and actions about mental health and well-being. However, there are some differences between the private and public sectors; only 4 out of 10 of the private sector's employees and 1 out of 10 of the public sector's employees believe that their organisation supports them in terms of mental health and well-being. Finally, 34% of the private and 21% of the public sectors stated that their managers/employers do not contact them often to see how they feel.

Regarding gender differences, the research shows that in general women employees were the most affected in terms of mental health and Work-Life Balance. Specifically, women show higher proportions of anxiety, depression, and somatisation than men, while having a lower quality of life; 51% of women and 38% of men start their day feeling tired.



(Ερευνα για την ψυχική υγεία και ευεξία των εργαζόμενων στην Ελλάδα 2021)

## Field Research

The field research shows that all of the participants felt loneliness, fear about their future, stress, and insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The working conditions changed while communication and cooperation with colleagues were more difficult. House – which used to be a personal space for personal and family time – was not anymore, a separate space from work and became a “stifling” place.

Due to the economic crisis that followed the COVID-19 pandemic, employers did not hire new people and employees were forced to work more intensively and more hours without being paid extra. Also, there was the fear of unemployment.

Additionally, only one of the three participants who worked in Greece was provided with the equipment to work from home and access to necessary platforms and files. Lack of equipment and training regarding remote education/work caused extra mental health problems for employers. The most important result was that there was not any support from the employers and managers in terms of mental health. Psychosocial support existed only on a personal level through colleagues but not from the Greek system or the employers. One of the participants mentioned that in general there is not mental health-sensitive perspective in the workplace. Another participant used to work in Belgium, and it is important to mention that even though the welfare system was supportive regarding burnout (e.g., the right to long leaves), employers and management do not listen to the employees’ requests (experience of those who have suffered burnout).

## Policies / Research on the effects of WLB

Greece has implemented several European Community Directives regarding maternity leave, parental child-rearing leave, family medical leave of absence for dependent family members, and single-parent leave. Also, the legal framework includes provisions for all-day schools and pre-primary schools, children’s creative activity centres (KDAP), day centres/cares, and



citizens' service centre (KEP) which support and help employees to find a balance between their personal and professional life. Finally, there were three more strategic policies that supported Work-Life Balance but they are not implemented anymore: a) the "Help at Home" programme which provided free services at home, b) the elderly day care centres (KIFI), and c) the project "Work-Life Balance" from the National Strategic Framework (ESPA) that provided funding to children care centres.

The most important legal framework is the Greek employment **L. 4808/2021** which contains a whole part (III) regarding "Balance of work and family life" and it incorporates EU Directive 2019/1158 which includes provisions applicable to all employees of the private and public sector who are parents or caretakers. The specific law refers to **maternity leave** (9 weeks), **paternity leave** (14 working), **parent leave** (4 months with extra financial support), **caretaker leave** (5 working days), **leave for reasons of force majeure or medical reasons**, **flexible employment rules** such as remote working, flexible work-schedule or part-time employment, **childcare**, and **school leave with special conditions regarding disabilities, health and hospitalisation, wedding leave**, and **single parent's leave**. What is missing from this law, is that it refers only to parents without considering the rest of the employees that need personal time by themselves, their friends, and/or family.

From the employers' side, there is also a law in the Greek legal system which promotes Work-Life Balance. **L. 3850/2010** refers to the employers' responsibilities regarding psychological risks and introduces the term occupational doctor, a doctor who is responsible for providing counselling services to the employers and employees and preventing health – and mental health – issues that are related to work. Employers must conduct a written risk assessment which refers to the psychological risks arising from work. They include work organisation (intensification, monotony, shift work), psychological factors (atypical work, mobbing), ergonomic factors (non-ergonomic workstations), and difficult working conditions (work with unsuitable equipment, work in adverse climatic conditions). It is useful not only for the employees but also for the self-control of the employers and the health and safety



committees on keeping their rules at the workplace. There is no gender perspective in this law.

Except for specific Laws, there is also the Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Security and its agencies which are responsible for gender equality and equal opportunities, employment services, social integration of foreign workers, social protection and rehabilitation of special workers' categories, helping people with disabilities, vocational training, prevention of occupational accidents and diseases, the management of HR funds and the representation of Greece in the International Labour Organisation (ILO). However, it does not refer to Work-Life Balance or mental health support exclusively.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were some amendments to labour legislation regarding working hours and flexibility, remote working, and preventing violence and harassment in the workplace. Additionally, the statutory minimum wage update was completed in 2021 with a 2% increase (from €650 to €663 per month?).

## Initiatives

### “Neighbourhood Nannies” Project

<b>Topic/ Area</b>	Childcare Services
<b>Title</b>	Neighbourhood Nannies
<b>Type of Initiative</b>	Services
<b>Date released</b>	2020
<b>Partners/ network</b>	Greek Government
<b>Description of the methods/ approach</b>	Piloting included: financial support for parents and working opportunities for unemployed childcare professionals. It also includes a specialised platform to ensure the safety of the children.



**Purpose/Aim** Certified nurses provide childcare services for children up to 2.5 years old with the prospect of universal implementation throughout the country between 2021-2027.

**Evaluation (results) of its effectiveness (if applicable)** Not yet available

**Web link** <https://ntantades.gov.gr/>

### Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP)

**Logo**



**Topic/ Area**

Support of employers and employees

**Title**

Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP)

**Type of Initiative**

Crisis Management Services

**Date released**

2005

**Partners/ network**

European Union

**Description of the methods/ approach**

An interactive tool for guidance, counselling, and support to all employees with 24/7 Support & Crisis Line, Face to Face Counselling Sessions, Leadership & Management consultation, and on-site counselling.

**Purpose/Aim**

Workplace Culture Optimisation

**Evaluation (results) of its effectiveness (if applicable)** Not yet available

**Web link** <https://www.hellaseap.gr/en/our-services/>

**References/ online sources** [https://www.hellaseap.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/mental\\_health\\_report\\_2021.pdf](https://www.hellaseap.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/mental_health_report_2021.pdf)



## The Children's Home Foundation

### Logo



<b>Topic/ Area</b>	Care Services
<b>Title</b>	The Children's Home Foundation (PAIDIKI STEGI)
<b>Type of Initiative</b>	Day nurseries
<b>Date released</b>	1931
<b>Partners/ network</b>	
<b>Description of the methods/ approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operation of four day-nurseries: "Argentios", Kynosargos, "Papastrateios Athens", "Papastrateios Piraeus".</li> <li>• Cultural training of children with theatrical play, dance, visual interventions and constructions, visits to museums.</li> <li>• Medical care and treatment of children with speech therapy, dentist visit, expanded pediatrician presence. Support and information in cases of widespread viruses.</li> <li>• Gymnastics and specialised movement for preschool children</li> <li>• The three daily meals are consistently controlled by a nutritionist</li> </ul>



- Psychological support for children, parents and staff for specific issues and search for solutions for daily and current problems, quarterly information for parents.
- Integration of the children of immigrants into Greek society.
- Supporting single-parent families and contributing to solving intra-family problems.
- Cooperation with the University of Athens in the context of the development of intercultural education and the offer of internships to students
- Employment of personnel with special skills

**Purpose/Aim**

The purpose of the foundation is the care and creative employment of preschool children from two months to five years and its goal is to serve and support the working mother with limited financial resources.

**Evaluation (results) of its effectiveness (if applicable)**

Every year it provides care to almost 500 children.

**Web link**

<http://www.paidikesteges.gr/>

Finally, there are some good practices from private companies that provide their employees with psychosocial support and counselling to increase and promote their Work-Life Balance:

<https://www.greatplacetowork.gr/arthra/15-tropoi-gia-tin-epiteyxi-enos-exairetikoy-ergasiakoy-perivallontos-yperoches-praktikes-apo-ellinikes-epicheiriseis/>

