

GREEK Language & Immigration Policies

Short Outline



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GREECE

[National situation in short]

Situation for immigration in Greece concerning learning of language

What	How	Who
<p>In order to acquire the Greek citizenship and to be granted the status of long term resident, Third Country Nationals TCNs need to prove the knowledge of Greek language</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 cases</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 30px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>In the first case (acquisition of citizenship), the adequate knowledge of the Greek language, history and culture can be certified following an interview of the interested party by the authorities.</p> <p>In the second case (acquisition of the status of long term resident) TCNs must, first of all, meet two criteria: <i>they must be over 16 years of age and they must legally reside in the country.</i></p>	<p>If these criteria are met, they have to demonstrate a minimum working proficiency of the Greek language by passing the Level Two (A2) exams. Examinations are held twice a year</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Before taking the exams, candidates need to attend courses of at least 150 hours on “Greek language” and 25 hours on “Greek history and culture”. The courses are also provided twice a year (in February and in October).</p>	<p>The Institute for Continuing Adult Education of the General Secretariat for Life Long Learning is responsible for the organization of the courses, while the exams are carried out by the Secretariat General for Life Learning /Centre for the Greek Language.</p> <p>Both authorities are supervised by the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs.</p>
	<p>In order to be eligible for the free Greek lessons provided by IDEKE, EU citizens only need to show their passport.</p> <p>Non-EU citizens will need a letter from their employer confirming that they have work in Greece as well as a valid residence permit</p>	<p>The <u>Institute of Lifelong Learning for Adults</u> (<i>Institouto Diarkous Ekpaideusis Enilikon / IDEKE</i>) offers free Greek language lessons for immigrants in 49 different prefectures across Greece</p>

<p>B. Greek language learning programs for unemployed immigrants – repatriated – refugees and unemployed from social vulnerable groups for whom the inadequate knowledge of the Greek language inhibits their social inclusion</p>	<p>After the successful completion of a language course, immigrants could apply for a traineeship, other lifelong learning opportunities, or for assistance in finding employment or setting up a business.</p>	<p>The training course lasts 300 hours in accredited vocational training centers and aims at improving the linguistic and social skills of the participants. An important asset of the programme is the attainment of certification (2nd level) provided by the Center for the Greek Language of the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs. Courses by: Certified centres of vocational training [CVET]</p>
<p>Under article 8 of the new presidential decree and article 8 of the EU directive, EU citizens who wish to stay for more than three months are required to apply for a registration certificate (<i>veveosi eggrafis</i>) at their local aliens bureau. The registration certificate does not have to be renewed. To register, EU citizens are required to submit the following documents: a valid identity card or passport.</p>		

Legal legislation in Greece

- **L.3284/2004:** Foreigners can obtain Greek citizenship provided they are at least 18 years old and have resided in Greece for at least 7 years.
- **L.3838/2010** includes the automatic acquisition of the Greek citizenship by birth for third generation immigrants and the right for second generation immigrants to acquire the citizenship either by birth, provided their parents are legal permanent residents in the country for at least five consecutive years, or after having attended and successfully completed at least six classes of a Greek school in Greece
- **As for the legal status** of documented immigrants living in Greece, most permits are of 1-2 years duration and are awarded for dependent employment (around 70%).
- **The Law 3536/2007** establishes a “National Committee for the Integration of Migrants” within the Ministry of Interior, Decentralization and e-Governance: that is an intergovernmental administrative instrument composed by representatives from different levels of central, regional and local government, as well as social partners and civil society representatives. This Committee is, among others, in charge for the comprehensive Action Plan ‘ESTIA’ for the social integration of the foreign population, legally established in the country. It is a “set of actions” with a “holistic approach” of the Greek policy towards the urgent need to safeguard social coherence, provide better access to services for migrants and increase their involvement in all aspects of social, public and private life, leading to their empowerment in order to be able to achieve “feasible and independent participation regardless of any state intervention”.
- **At present**, the current immigrant policy is under review, in view of (a) stabilizing the permanent resident status of documented migrants by reducing the risk of losing this status, (b) facilitating their transition to long-term regimes of increased rights and (c)

enabling their full participation in the economic and social life, especially with regard to second generation immigrants.

- **To this end, law 3838/2010** on “Current provisions for Greek citizenship and the political participation of foreign-born Greeks and of legally residing immigrants” has been recently introduced . Longterm residents and 10-year permit holders can now vote locally. They can stand for some positions (excluding mayor or vice-mayor) once they have sufficient Greek knowledge for their tasks. Voting rights are presented as the most effective form of active integration, fighting social exclusion and promoting local governance. Local integration councils aim to record and investigate problems faced by permanently residing migrants and strengthen social cohesion. However, the 5 to 11 members may or may not be immigrants, but just municipal councillors

Immigration legislation concerning Greek Language knowledge

The third-country nationals, to obtain the **Certificate of Attainment in the Greek Language - Level A2-**, awarded by the G.S.L.L.L, which is a prerequisite for **obtaining the status of long-term residence in Greece** , according to the Greek Legislation for the Certification System should attend Greek classes .

The training program is divided into two levels: **A1** and **A2**, lasting 125 and 175 hours respectively.

More specifically:

A1 level:

→ **Introductory courses in Greek language, history and culture and the lifestyle of the Greek society.** Students acquire the language skills and practical social skills, in order to better meet the communication situations of everyday life and become acquainted with the social environment, history and culture of the country.

A2 level:

→ Greek language lessons, elements of Greek history and Greek culture. At this level there are two **(2) modules**: Greek Language Courses, lasting 150 hours, and elements of Greek history and Greek culture, lasting 25 hours.

→ **I At all levels of learning and if there is successful completion of a level, the trainee is granted a Certificate of Lifelong Education.**

→ **I The courses are free of in obtaining the Certificate of Attainment Level A2 in particular.**

In addition, each trainee is expected to receive educational and auxiliary material - printed and electronic - to enhance trainees' skills and abilities.

→ **I Each class of learning consists of 15 to 20 trainees. Each trainee is required to attend systematically the training program in which he/she has been enrolled. The limit of absences is set at 20% of total hours.** (*Educational Material of the Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 2010*).

Funding of Greek classes

→ **Language courses financed through different EU funds have proved valuable in strengthening the effectiveness of the integration policy**

→ The cost of the exams procedure is covered by the state budget, while the Certificate of Greek language, history and culture knowledge is being granted to the participants who have succeeded in their exams.

After succeeding in the exams, immigrants can subsequently apply for the long term residence status.

→In case they fail, they can re-participate in the following exams, without any restriction.
Only for the first time, candidates do not have to pay any fee for their participation.

→In the framework of the Operational Programme on ‘**Employment and vocational training**’ 2002- 2006, the implementation of the **Greek language learning programs in certified centers of vocational training for unemployed immigrants – repatriated – refugees and unemployed from social vulnerable groups for whom the inadequate knowledge of the Greek language inhibits their social inclusion”**

→**Currently, the programme is being implemented under the Operational Programme “Human Resource Development 2007-2013”**

→ **Volunteering actions by NGOs [Non-profit programmes |**

- The [Hellenic Federation of Voluntary Non-Governmental Organizations](#) manages different non-profit groups in Greece including groups that aim to teach Greek language and culture to immigrants in order to improve their social integration into Greek society. Visit their website for more information.
- **Some church groups and schools also offer free language lessons to immigrants.** These initiatives are supported by the municipality of the area of the church. For information on which churches and schools offer free language courses visit the Citizens Service Center in your area.
- **The Hellenic American Union**—a non-profit educational institute—offers Greek lessons in their Center for Applied Linguistic and Language Studies. Besides the six levels of Greek taught from beginner to advanced, there are selections of courses offered depending on the needs of the student. For example, a course is taught on oral skills as well as a preparatory course for taking the governmental exam.

Countries of origin of migrants [source: EMILIE Project, Final Report, 10 November 2009]

In 2008, the immigrant population of Greece numbered about 1.3 million, or 12% of the total population of 11 million. More specifically there are

- 700,000 legal migrants in 2008 (of whom 40,000 hold a long term residence permit).
- 190,000 co-ethnic migrants from Albania with special identity cards, who have been encouraged to naturalise since 2006.
- 150,000 co-ethnic returnees from the former Soviet Union who have received citizenship.
- an estimated 280,000 irregular migrants (in 2008).

Main immigrant nationalities include **Albanians** (about 60% of the total immigrant population), **Romanians and Bulgarians** (currently EU citizens), **Georgians, Ukrainians, Russians**, and to a lesser extent **Asian immigrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh mainly**. Asian children are hardly present in Greek schools as Asian immigrants come to Greece mostly on their own, leaving their families behind.

There are about 100,000 practising Muslim immigrants in this population. A large part of Albanians residing in Greece are nominally Muslims but generally do not practice religion.

Annex 1 :

Greek language learning : Options

<http://www.takingupresidence.com/greece/language/learning-the-language-where-to-start.5.html>

There are a number of options to learn Greek and these are available to suit all needs.

State-run programmes | **The Institute of Lifelong Learning for Adults** (*Institouto Diarkous Ekpaideusis Enilikon / IDEKE*) offers free Greek language lessons for immigrants in 49 different prefectures across Greece. The yearly enrolment is 3,000 students and waiting lists are common. Courses are split into four levels: Alpha, Beta and Gamma level are 100 hours each, and the Delta level is 125 hours. There is an additional 25 hours of Greek culture and history lessons. At the end of each course, the immigrant is issued a certificate upon successful completion of the written and oral exam. In order to apply for a permanent long-term resident permit, you will need to take and pass this test. The test is administered at no charge every February and October by the Government.

In order to be eligible for the free Greek lessons provided by IDEKE, EU citizens only need to show their passport. Non-EU citizens will need a letter from their employer confirming that they have work in Greece as well as a valid residence permit.

For immigrants who do not want or need to apply for a long-term residency permit, there are some other options available. New initiatives are always launched in different municipalities across Greece. For example, in 2008 **the Municipality of Athens** launched a programme for mothers of immigrant children enrolled in day care to learn Greek.

The University of Athens also offers Greek lessons to immigrants. There is demand for these courses as they are the best value for the money. Courses for immigrants start at €492; costs depend on your nationality and include 15 hours of instruction a week. You can choose from three different courses; all year, a five month course and a summer course. For more information, visit the website of the **University of Athens Faculty of Philosophy Language Center**.

Non-profit programmes | The **Hellenic Federation of Voluntary Non-Governmental Organizations** manages different non-profit groups in Greece including groups that aim to teach Greek language and culture to immigrants in order to improve their social integration into Greek society. Visit their website for more information.

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Private lessons/Private language schools | Immigrants can also choose to learn Greek privately. Private language centers can be found across Greece and this market is highly competitive. They offer short, intensive courses as well as longer courses that follow the governments Alpha, Beta, Gama, Delta syllabus. Private language centres can be expensive. Expect to pay an average of €740 for 60 hours worth of lessons. Another option is to have private individual lessons at home. These are much more expensive, around €40-50 an hour. Teachers can usually be found in the classified sections of major newspapers or through word of mouth.