

Recovery and Resilience Plan – Cyprus

What about career counselling and
Guidance?

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Policy axis 3 “Strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of the economy”

3.3. “Business support for competitiveness”

- Boosting of investment and entrepreneurial activity
- Job creation and acceleration of economic activity,
- Development of business activity based on knowledge, technological upgrading, digitalization and innovation
- Competitiveness of all enterprises in the country.
- A main challenge: lack of access to funding, which would allow both the establishment of new businesses and the expansion of existing units by making new investments.

Therefore, this component aims at supporting businesses and by supporting businesses it aims to create more jobs.

Undoubtedly, creation of more jobs is essential but is not panacea. It has to be accompanied by effective career counseling services to facilitate the career design of people.

In this component no such provision is made.

Policy axis 5 “labour market, social protection, education and human capital”

5.1. “Educational system modernization, upskilling and retraining”

- modernisation of the curricula of both primary and secondary education
- digitalisation of education
- establishment of a new system for teacher and school evaluation
- addressing of skills mismatch between education and the labour market
- extension of free compulsory preschool education. .

- Although the component focuses on providing students with the necessary skills and competences to be effective in the modern labour market “in line with current and future labour market needs and in relation to the green and digital transitions”, there is **no reference in career counselling and guidance.**
- What about the training of career counselors to address the needs of the students and of an ever-changing labour-market?

Reforms:

- Reform 1: Addressing skills mismatch between education and labour market (Secondary and Higher Education)
- Reform 2: A new teacher and school evaluation system
- Reform 3: Extension of free compulsory pre-primary education from the age of four
- Reform 4: Digital transformation of school units with the aim of enhancing digital skills and skills related to STEM education
- Reform 5: e-skills Action Plan - Implementation of specific actions

Investments:

- Investment 1: Construction of Two Model Technical Schools
- Investment 2: Skilling, Reskilling and Upskilling

Flagship initiatives: Modernise, Reskill and Upskill

Total estimated budget to be funded through the RRP: €94 mln

- major challenge: vocational education and training (VET)
- participation in upper secondary VET remains low.
- Employability among young graduates of certain sectors (STEM) remain scarce while demand is high. Cyprus enjoys one of the highest percentages of Tertiary Education Graduates.
- Need to enhance the attractiveness of STEM subjects from an early age.
- The plan recognizes the necessity for “Cross-sectoral cooperation and high-quality student guidance”. However **no other mention of career counseling and guidance is made.**

Career counseling should be in the heart of addressing these issues, but it seems to be considered as just a peripheral service.

- The plan makes no reference for promoting high quality career counselors training programs or promoting the implementation of research-based interventions.

- The Department of Higher Education (DHE) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MOECSY) aims to implement a research program entitled “Graduate Tracking of Cyprus Higher Education”, that will collect valid and reliable national data regarding graduates’ pathways after leaving Higher Education (HE) and training and the skills acquired in HE and are used in the work setting.
- This information will provide the evidence base to policy makers, higher education institutions, researchers and employers in order to make informed decisions that will ultimately contribute to increasing the responsiveness of Cyprus’s education and training system to labour market needs with benefits for the individuals but also for the economy as a whole.
- However, even in this study, career guidance and counseling is rather absent.

All discrepancies between education and the labour market are considered to be rooted in skills mismatch and not in lack of career guidance that leads to skill mismatch.

- “The Strategy will be translated into an action plan with a well-rounded series of actions and activities that together will form the backbone of reforms to the education system and the labour market in the coming years. It could include actions such as:
- i. Enhancement of the Career Counselling and Educational Services (CCES) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth (MOECSY)
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- The enhancement of career counseling and educational services is no further explained. No mention on the new models or the necessity for training of the career counselors.

Policy axis 5 “labour market, social protection, education and human capital”,

5.2. “labour market, social protection , social welfare and inclusion”

- Operational performance of Public Employment Service (PES) will be improved in order to provide better service to the unemployed and to employers.
- The Government will also provide incentives for employment of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs), enhance outreach activities for NEETs and facilitate the integration of young registered unemployed in the labour market by **promoting their coaching and career guidance** through effective co-operation with academic institutions and training centres.

- Investment 1: Improving the Effectiveness of the Department of Labour and Public Employment Services and reinforcing support for young people
- Objectives:
 - To improve the **operational performance** of the Public Employment Service (PES).
 - To support young persons Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) who are not registered with the PES for their integration in the labour market by promoting outreach activities.
 - To facilitate the integration of young registered unemployed in the labour market by promoting their coaching and career guidance through effective co-operations with academic institutions and training centres.

- There is no provision for high quality training of career counsellors in contemporary career theories and models that address the current needs and the volatile labour market.

Focus on socially vulnerable groups

- There is no focus on labour market integration for socially vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, only on social policies.
- No reference for career counseling and guidance for people with disabilities.
- How do we expect to achieve social inclusion without effective career counseling that leads to work integration?

- Career counseling can and should play a major role in facilitating work reintegration of marginalized groups and enhancing opportunities for decent work.
- The national plans should foster a much more systematic articulation between career counseling policies and labor market and social protection policies.

Thank you for your
attention!