Success story

The “Swimming school programme” for 8–9-year old pupils was launched as a pilot project in Athens in 2015 and was then extended throughout Greece, involving 2800 groups of over 44 000 pupils and 260 teachers of physical education nationally in 2018. The programme emphasizes physical activity and teamwork through swimming. Pupils also learn about basic safety and hygiene and develop individual and social competence. Each trimester consists of 12 mandatory swimming lessons. The Programme is part of each school’s physical education course.
MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE

National recommendations on physical activity for health

TARGET GROUPS INCLUDED

- Children (<5 years)
- Children and adolescents (5–17 years)
- Adults (18–64 years)
- Older adults (> 65 years)
- Frail and very elderly adults (> 85 years)
- Pregnant women
- Breastfeeding women
- People with disabilities
- People with chronic diseases

Level of physical activity

ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS

- Children 4–12 years: Overall 59%, Boys 62%, Girls 56%
- Adolescents 13 years: Overall 14%, Boys 18%, Girls 8%
- Adolescents 15 years: Overall 11%, Boys 15%, Girls 7%
- Adults and older adults 18–64 years: Overall 20%

Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

SECTORS WITH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

Physical activity levels among adolescents were assessed through the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study 2013–2014. The physical activity levels of adults were assessed in a national survey in 2014, which will be repeated every 5 years. Children’s physical activity levels were assessed in a survey that was part of the National Action for Children’s Health programme.
The aim of the “Sports for all” programme in Greece is to provide opportunities for the entire population to be physically active. It includes programmes for people with disabilities, preschoolers, children and older adults and also in mental health facilities, prisons and as part of drug rehabilitation. The programme is funded by the General Secretariat of Sports and is being implemented nationwide.

Sports-for-all programmes are delivered to older adults as an opportunity to exercise and are conducted in cooperation with municipalities, foundations and sports clubs. Two sport events have also been held: the “World senior games” for people aged ≥ 50 years in 2017 and the “4XF for silver safety” in 2016.

The aim of the “Different people – common needs: refugees moving towards a physically active life” programme is to support refugees in being physically active. The programme was established in 2016, is coordinated by the Directorate of Physical Education and is funded by the European Union. It provides two 3-h sessions of physical activity per week for people aged 15–30 years living in refugee camps in Athens.
Physical activity promotion in the health sector

Physical activity for health is taught as an independent module in the curriculum of physical education teachers in both primary and secondary schools. In addition, physical activity theory and best practice are taught as part of other modules of instruction and coaching in various sports, including football, basketball, track and field games and volleyball.

Physical activity in schools

Total hours of physical education per week in PRIMARY SCHOOLS: 3 All mandatory

Total hours of physical education per week in SECONDARY SCHOOLS: 2 All mandatory

Promotion of physical activity in the workplace

Active travel to and from the workplace: X

Physical activity at the workplace: X

National awareness-raising campaign on physical activity

MEDIA USED IN NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

Television: ✓
Radio: ✓
Newspapers: ✓
Social media: ✓
Public events: ✓
Public figures: ✓
Other: ✓

A “National school day” was implemented for the first time in 2014 and is repeated on the first Monday of October every year in all schools in Greece, involving all teachers and pupils. About 850 000 students in 7000 schools take part in organized sports events inside and outside the school area. The event takes a long-term, holistic approach to promoting health and quality of life, with the broad goal of achieving public health and economic benefits for the country.