

Quality Study Annex 8 France case study

At a glance

- *Social service quality strongly affected by the economic crisis, however, the “eco-system” of social service organizations is recovering.*
- *The government establishes basic and rather technical quality requirements.*
- *No extra points in public procurement tenders for holding external accreditation.*
- *ISO seems to be the most popular accreditation system. However, both providers interviewed and academic literature, sustain that EQUASS might have potential in the country.*

Quality trends

Currently, the social services in Greece are regulated at the national and regional levels: while the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Health foresee the general strategic lines, the national, regional units (former – prefectures) are responsible for the national licenses and auditing. Since 2017, there is an official registry of the private non-profit agencies providing social care services. According to one provider interviewed, such a registry helps to control and distribute the funds. **However, besides registration and accreditation, there is no national quality assessment tool for social services and the interviewed provider and some authors consider it to be "a major problem"**

The personal social services in Greece did not develop based on rational planning and taking into account the complex needs of their potential users. Such development is related to the marginal role of social assistance within the Greek social security systemⁱⁱ. Thus, different social care related sectors such as long term care,ⁱⁱⁱ elderly care,^{iv} child care^v are often considered as inadequate, recognizing the importance of informal services, usually offered by the families themselves. **The economic crisis worsened the situation, limiting the support of the government available, and making the institutions that are purchasing services, more rigid about how they spend the public money.** As one interviewed provider told us, the economic crisis forced their organization to search financing sources other than the state: produce and sell crafts, contacting different foundations or writing projects. Thus, the quality requirements that they pay attention to are also related to the requirements of their (potential) donors.

In the last ten years, we barely managed to exist, and many organizations like our closed. We spent nearly half a year without paying salaries. We searched for other ways of financing <...> now governmental funding is less than 8% of our income.

As for the national authorities, there are specific standards that organizations have to fulfill to register as providers of services. However, the standards might be deemed as technical: the number and composition of staff, the target population, the safety of a building, etc. Auditors yearly check the compliance with these standards from the regional units. **Both providers interviewed claimed that current regulation of the social care system is not sufficient, and in general, the system has "a very poor impact."** One interviewed provider observed



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that their organization expects the public authorities to impose a quality system in order to be able to distinguish which service providers offer quality services.

Place of EQUASS in the overall system

While there is no obligation to have any external certificates, various organizations decide to have them, mostly due to the opinion of their potential private funders and clients. **All three organizations interviewed have an optional ISO certificate, which seems to be among the most popular in Greece.** The secondary literature, for example, Nicolaidis and Terpos^{vi} Also, indicate the Greek organizations are choosing the EFQM certificate. The organizations interviewed state that the quality is important for their work, especially bearing in mind the quality and personalization of services, and having clear indicators for their work.

One of the interviewees explained that their organization decided to obtain the ISO certification because of its recognition in Greece. Other organizations got certified in order to participate in the European-level projects, where the ISO was required. Out of three interviewed providers, one was certified by EQUASS, other two organizations had some knowledge about it. The EQUASS-certified organization sustained that its main advantage is its focus on the participation of service users (person-centered approach) and its focus on "using the results for improving services." **The EQUASS certified organization sustained that more organizations offering social and care services could benefit from the EQUASS certification.** Peculiarly, the representative of another organization, who had very little knowledge about such certification system, sustained that after reading more about it, they also were considering that it might be useful. Vassilios Dimitriadis, who with other authors studied the suitability of different quality systems for rehabilitation services^{vii} reached the same conclusions. However, the main problem for EQUASS or any external certifications to prosper in Greece seems to be their optional character and costs. ISO seems to have an advantage due to it being better known and more widespread.

ⁱ Dimitriadis, V. Kousoulis, A. Sgantzios, M. Hadjipoulou, A. Lionis, C. 2014 "Implementing a system to evaluate quality assurance in rehabilitation in Greece." *Disability and Health Journal.*, vol. 8, p. 42

ⁱⁱ Moukanou, Evgenia. 2009. Social Care Services for the Elderly in Greece: Shifting the Boundaries? Paper Submitted to the 4th Biennial Hellenic Observatory Ph.D. Symposium on "Contemporary Greece and Cyprus."

ⁱⁱⁱ Ziomas D., Konstantinidou D., Vezyrgianni K., Capella A. 2018. *ESPN Thematic Report on Challenges in long-term care.* European Commission

^{iv} Mokbanou. 2009.

^v The Manifold, Greece child protection services 'disjointed and inadequate', Al Jazeera <<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/greece-child-protection-services-disjointed-inadequate-181222093452266.html>>

^{vi} Nicolaidis, Y. Terpos, C., 2010. "The evolution of quality management in DOKPY, Magnesia – Greece: from basic quality initiatives to EFQM" *International Journal of Productivity and Quality Management.*

^{vii} Dimitriadis, V. Kousoulis, A. Sgantzios, M. Hadjipoulou, A. Lionis, C. 2013 "Quality assessment systems in rehabilitation services for people with a disability in Greece: A critical review," *Disability and Health Journal*, 157-175. And Dimitriadis, V. Kousoulis, A. Sgantzios, M. Hadjipoulou, A. Lionis, C. 2014 "Implementing a system to evaluate quality assurance in rehabilitation in Greece." *Disability and Health Journal.*, vol. 8, pp. 35-43.

