

# ETUDES HELLENIQUES

# HELLENIC STUDIES

**L' éducation en Grèce et  
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Education in Greece and  
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# School Evaluation and Assessment of Teachers in Greek Primary and Secondary Education<sup>1</sup>

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## RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article on examine les efforts successifs qui ont eu lieu en Grèce depuis la chute de la dictature (1974) jusqu' à maintenant (2011) visant à établir un système d'évaluation de l'école et des enseignants du primaire et du secondaire. L'ensemble de ces efforts a conduit à l'échec pour diverses raisons, la principale étant la forte réaction des enseignants contre les propositions officielles. Le manque d'évaluation, créé par cet échec, a des répercussions défavorables sur le fonctionnement du système éducatif grec, ainsi que sur son efficacité. Les inconvénients les plus graves sont mentionnés dans l'article. On a encore essayé de trouver les motifs majeurs des réactions des enseignants envers leur évaluation et d'expliquer l'échec des divers gouvernements dans la mise en œuvre d'un système d'évaluation des établissements scolaires et du personnel enseignant. On soutient le point de vue que les raisons qui ont provoqué ce résultat sont multiples. Elles se réfèrent à l'expérience négative provenant de l'autoritarisme des anciens inspecteurs, des conflits idéologiques et politiques autour de l'évaluation, de sa conception erronée, du manque de stabilité et de continuation dans la politique éducative grecque et du caractère fragmentaire des efforts entrepris. On formule, enfin, quelques propositions sommaires pour résoudre les problèmes examinés.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to briefly describe the successive efforts made in Greece from the fall of the dictatorship (1974) until now (2011), in order to establish a system of school evaluation and teachers' assessment in primary and secondary education. All the above efforts led to failure for different reasons, the most important of which was the strong reaction of the teachers against the official propositions. The absence of evaluation for a long period has had a negative impact on Greek Education and some of these aspects are mentioned in the article. An additional goal of this paper is to explain teachers' reactions and the failure of the Greek Government to administer a system for

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evaluating both teachers and the way schools function. The authors claim that the above situation is the result of many factors including the bad experience regarding the role of inspectors, the ideological and political conflict on the subject of evaluation, its misconception, the unstable and discontinuous educational policy in Greece and the fragmentary character of the evaluation reform projects. Finally, the authors make some suggestions in order to overcome the above problems.

## **Introduction**

This paper refers to the issue of evaluating greek schools of primary and secondary education and emphasizes the assessment of in-service teachers. The first part of this paper presents the historical background of the evaluation practice in greek schools over the last decades (after 1974 until now), examining the various attempts made for the establishment of an evaluation system in schools. The second part analyzes the negative impact of the absence of evaluation in the greek educational system for a long period of time. The third part attempts to identify the reasons according to which these efforts ended up in failure. Finally, the last part discusses some measures which could be taken in order to change the existing situation.

### ***1.1. School Evaluation and Teachers' Assessment until the end of the 1970s. The Authoritative Role of Inspectors***

Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the assessment of the way greek schools operated had been assigned to inspectors. The first inspectors were appointed in 1889 and were charged with administrative, supervisory and guiding authorities. Though many inspectors worked hard for the benefit of education, their role was mainly administrative, while their advisory activities were limited. They wrote reports for every teacher including commentaries related to his/her scientific, didactic and pedagogical qualities and often referring to personality characteristics. The evaluation criteria used by inspectors often contained political and ideological elements and were sometimes connected to the private life of teachers. They were cases of arbitrary and authoritative behaviour, a fact that often brought dissatisfaction and complaints in the educational community (Andreou & Papakonstantinou, 1994, Athanasiou, 1990, 1999, 2000, Kassotakis, 2001).<sup>2</sup>

Generally speaking, we could say that, in the past, the system of inspectors failed to ensure a valid and objective school evaluation and teachers' assessment and also help the development of the educational system. The evaluation

imposed was negatively criticized by many educators and some researchers in Greece, because it mostly operated as a mechanism of state control and discipline than as a way of contributing to the improvement of the quality of education and the professional development of teachers.

By the end of the 1970s, the reaction against inspectors increased. This explains the impelling demands on the part of teachers' federations to abolish the inspectors' institution and change the educational system radically. The movement was strengthened after the overthrow of dictatorship (1974) and was considered as a part of general democratization of the greek state.

However, the educational reform of 1976-77 didn't bring the expected renewal in the evaluation system (Bouzakis, 1995). The Act 309/76 and the presidential decree 295/77, despite their progressive elements for the greek reality, kept almost the same framework for supervising education and assessing teachers. The first educational congress of the National Federation of Secondary School Teachers (OLME), which took place in 1981, supported the following view regarding the inspectors: "*an authoritative system needs an inspector, while a decentralized, democratic system needs a scientist, a pedagogue, a psychologist, a guide*" (OLME, 1982). Similar points of view were also expressed by the National Federation of Primary School Teachers (DOE).

### ***1.2. Changes in the 1980s. School advisors replace inspectors***

The abolition of the inspector's institution was adopted by the Panhellenic Socialist Party (PASOK), as shown in the announcement of its policy in 1981: "*The institution of inspectors is abolished and replaced by the institution of school advisors, who cooperate with the teachers' association and participate in the evaluation process of regional councils.*" (PASOK, 1981. p. 55). It was implemented when the aforementioned party came into power (autumn 1981). Via a circular of 5-2-1982, the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (MNERA)<sup>3</sup> limited the inspectors' duties in writing reports only. The Act 1304/82 which followed abolished this institution and the educational responsibilities of inspectors fell into two new categories of educational cadre: a) the directors of regional administration (heads of division and heads of offices)<sup>4</sup> and b) the school advisors (*sxolikai symvouloi*), whose principal mission was pedagogical supervision, application of didactic instructions and organization of seminars for the in-service teachers' training.

However, evaluation continued to be vague, even in the programme of the socialist government, according to which school advisors could participate in the assessment process undertaken by the regional councils. It is useful to state that

the secondary school teachers' federation was initially positive for the participation of school advisors in the evaluation process. Later, based on the argument of incompatibility between pedagogical guidance and assessment undertaken by the same persons, as well as a number of other objections, the Union was against evaluation. According to Doukas (1997), former President of Secondary Schools Teachers Union, this change reveals the contradiction in the federation's views, which had a major negative effect on applying evaluation for the upcoming years.

The presidential decree provided by law 1304/82 was not enhanced, although it could form a basis for defining the evaluation of teachers. One of its drafts, which was prepared by K. Harris (1995), was accepted by the Minister of Education Ap. Kaklamanis and it was presented in a seminar realized in January 1984. This decree suggested that each school should keep a special book of cooperation between teachers and school advisors and a book of reports. These reports would evaluate in-service efficiency for teachers aiming at tenure, salary promotion and professional development. Two kinds of evaluation reports were suggested: the short ones which were the responsibility of the headteacher and the analytical ones which were the responsibility of a committee composed of two school advisors and the director of the educational office the school belonged.

However, this plan failed due to the reaction of teachers towards every kind of evaluation. The proposal for a new presidential decree was repeated later without result, despite the fact that there had been cooperation with primary school teachers' union since 1982 (Doukas, 1997).

The prolonged weakness of the government to provide the necessary legislation formed the conditions which resulted in stabilizing the absence of evaluation. This situation favored negative attitudes towards teachers' assessment expressed not only by teachers' unions but also by some scholars (Mavrogiorgos, 1985, 1993) and other people. At about 1984, the view about the incompatibility of the role of school advisor as a guide and evaluator became more significant. It was demanded that school advisors should not participate in the councils for selecting head teachers. In the second scientific congress of OLME (1985), it was also suggested that school advisors would not participate in teachers' assessment. At that period of time, a distinction had started between the term "school evaluation" <sup>5</sup> and "individual evaluation of teachers" against which the most important objections were expressed.

The disagreement between the government and the teachers' representatives on one side and the will of the Ministry of Education not to be in conflict with the corps of the teaching staff, on the other side, were reflected in the Law 1566/1985.

This outstanding act on the structure and operation of primary and secondary education depicted the efforts of updating and democratizing education (Kassotakis & Lambraki-Paganou, 1994). However, specific regulations about schools' evaluation and teachers' assessment in particular, were absent. Law 1566 suggested that school advisors would participate in the evaluation of teachers. Details of this participation would be made precise by a future presidential decree<sup>6</sup>. It was also suggested that the Pedagogical Institute should submit to the Minister of Education a report of evaluating the results of educational procedures, so that relative needs and deficiencies would be faced. This attempt of national evaluation of educational performance would be based on the evaluation reports of school advisors. Unfortunately, this process didn't have the importance it should. Essential evaluation of education by school advisors was not possible, because the prerequisites for educational assessment were inadequate. School advisors were not accepted by teachers to enter their classroom and observe their way of teaching.

In short, while Act 1566/85 brought innovation to many educational subjects on the matter of evaluation this was not the case. Teachers and schools were not evaluated. On the contrary, professional development continued to be based on the criterion of seniority.

The effort of legislative regulations on evaluation was repeated in 1986 with the preparation of a new presidential decree, which mainly brought back previous arrangements of former plans. It was proposed that teachers would be assessed according to the following criteria: scientific knowledge, teaching ability, participation in the organization of school life, diligence, cooperation with agencies. This suggestion was rejected again and was also the reason for giving a more important political dimension on the subject of evaluation. In addition, evaluation of schools and teachers was gradually connected to other educational factors, such as financing, teachers' salaries, quality of school programmes, initial education and further education of the teaching staff etc. The whole situation was exploited politically by the parties of opposition and made things worse.

Teachers did not directly refuse evaluation but they disagreed with the details concerning the procedure of assessment proposed by different governments (criteria of evaluation, evaluators, use of results etc.) and expressed their doubts about the objectivity of the evaluative judgments. They also maintained the same attitude for a long period of time and confronted, in a similar way, evaluation measures proposed later. They usually found the proposals of the state anachronistic, old-fashioned, outdated, arbitrary and unable to contribute to their professional development and the improvement of the quality of education.

They even faced contemptuously political and educational authorities while promising to establish an evaluation system different from that of the past.

During the year 1988 the MNERA decided to make up two committees composed of university teachers, school advisors and other educators aiming at the preparation of presidential decrees related to the application of Law 1566/85, including the one concerning schools and teachers' evaluation. It was expected that prominent scientists would contribute to overcoming the conflict between teachers and state and resolve the political contradictions on such a crucial educational matter such as evaluation. In October of 1988, a plan of presidential decree included the following issues: a) the process of planning educational evaluation (article 1), b) the role of school advisors and the responsibilities of teachers (article 2), c) the evaluation of education at the school unit level (article 3), d) the evaluation of teachers' contribution to the educational process, taking into consideration the participation of teachers in further training (articles 4 and 5), e) the process of evaluating the efficiency of the teaching staff (articles 6, 7, 8, 9), f) the designers of the above plan tried to combine the content of previous similar suggestions with the views of teacher organizations on educational evaluation.

The role of school advisors was emphasized in the proposed plan of presidential decree, a fact which was criticized negatively. It was claimed that evaluation would limit the main responsibility of a school advisor, which was guidance. This argument was used to reinforce the teachers' view against the participation of school advisors in assessment processes. Although the effort of introducing a positive pedagogical climate was generally recognized, the plan of the 1988 committee was finally rejected again.

The educational problems of the period did not favor the consensus between the MNERA and the federations of teachers. The subject of evaluation remained a cause of great conflict between state authorities and teachers' representatives. As a result, by the end of the 1980s, no solution was given to the matter.

### ***1.3. Efforts for Establishing School Evaluation and Teachers' Assessment During the 1990s***

Political elections of 8/4/90 brought New Democracy in the government. The pre-election programme of this political party suggested that teachers would be evaluated by the regional in-service educational council based on objective, measurable criteria. The report of the school principal, would have included in a documented way "*the ability a teacher could respond to his duties*" which would be also assessed. Teachers' evaluation would be used mainly for their professional development and promotion (N.D. 1989, pp. 19-20).

The next period of New Democracy government was characterized by educational troubles due to the presidential decrees on the subject of organizing secondary schools and more specifically students' evaluation. As a result these decrees were withdrawn and a change of leadership in the MNERA followed. Minister G. Souflias announced the beginning of a national dialogue on education, which would include the subject of teacher evaluation. However, due to the prevailing negative climate, a significant part of teachers did not participate in the dialogue.

The MNERA set up a plan of a presidential decree on the evaluation of educational processes in primary and secondary education, which despite its title, was focused on teacher evaluation. The plan suggested the necessity of drawing up assessment reports for the following categories of educators: teachers, school headteachers and directors. In addition, evaluation criteria were determined. Although this plan was also rejected by the federation of teachers, it led to issuing a presidential decree (presidential decree 320/92). The emphasis on individual teacher evaluation by headteachers and school advisors was maintained.

The effort of the Minister G. Souflias was one of the few attempts to legislate teachers' evaluation in Greece, after 1974. However, the panhellenic socialist government (PASOK) which came into power from the elections of October 1993 suspended its application and finally in 1994 the decree was withdrawn.

In 1994, a committee was established by the Minister of Education the task of which was to submit proposals on student evaluation and evaluation of schools (D1/1666/1-3-94 ministerial decision). Two reports were made by this committee: one on the subject of updating students' evaluation, the second one on school evaluation and teachers' assessment. The presidential decrees 409/94 and 8/95 concerning evaluation of primary education and high schools were based on the first report. It was also proposed that in some cases<sup>7</sup> the Pedagogical Institute and the MNERA would have the potential to apply examinations on the basis of specific criteria. Individual performances of students at school would not be mentioned in the final results. The purpose of this measure was to collect data for the monitoring and evaluation of education, expressed by students' performance, as well as measures for its improvement. This effort was not realized, although the decrees included some innovations such as descriptive evaluation of students and synthetic-creative tasks (*synthetikes dimiourgikes ergasies*). Teachers reacted, the Pedagogical Institute changed its leadership in 1995, while the regulations remained inactive. The committee also submitted proposals on the role and purpose of evaluating educational performance as a whole, in order to improve its quality. Since the general climate did not help<sup>8</sup>, this proposal also failed.



It is worth mentioning here that in the middle of the 90s' the greek government asked the OECD experts to evaluate the educational system of Greece and propose changes in education based on the results of their investigation. The evaluation study was completed in April 1996 and the report of evaluators was submitted to the government (OECD, 1997). Many proposals for changes concerning the whole educational system were included in this report some of which met the reactions of different progressive political parties and scholars. This attempt which would be considered as an effort for a global evaluation of the greek educational system did not continue in the coming years. Most of the proposed changes were not implemented, the real influence, therefore, exerted by this evaluation act was not very important.

A new proposal of the Pedagogical Institute appeared in 1996 which concerned a set of suggestions aiming to put into shape an assessment system of educational performance. International experience on assessment as well as the situation in Greece were taken into consideration. It was supposed that evaluation would play an important role to cope with problems in Greek Education. However, this proposal did not have any impact upon the educational reality of Greece.

Another attempt which took place on a pilot basis by the Pedagogical Institute (Department of evaluation) in the period 1997-1999 had as an objective "*The Internal Assessment and Planning of the Educational Performance*". The first results of the programme intended to contribute to the establishment of a form of internal evaluation in primary and secondary schools (M.N.E.R.A./P.I., 1999). A prominent element was the definition of quality indicators of educational performance. Though the school evaluation being proposed was not in contrast with the views of the educational organizations, there was no agreement. On the contrary, there were criticisms against this proposal.

A significant effort of applying educational evaluation took place in the context of the reform of 1997-98, under the ministry of G. Arsenis. In 1997, a booklet entitled "*Education 2000. For an Open Horizon Education*" (MNERA, 1997) summarized a set of measures, intending to bring about changes in the educational system as a whole. One of those measures dealt with the issue of evaluating teachers and educational performance. The text of the booklet was sent to all parties, however the response was negative because it included some educational changes which brought out strong reactions.<sup>9</sup> In August of 1997, Law 2525 was voted. According to article 8, evaluation is viewed as a process of assessing the quality of education and the degree to which its aims are realized. This is carried out by headteachers, school advisors and a permanent body of evaluators (*soma monimon axiologiton*). The same law provided for the

establishment of 400 posts of permanent evaluators and determined their qualities and responsibilities. The establishment of this body of evaluators was the point which created the most important reactions. The members of this body would have the right to interfere in case teachers protested against the judgment of their initial evaluators, assess school units and control the application of the evaluation system in general.

The setting up of this body of permanent evaluators, which was considered as an innovative measure by the state authorities, was also attacked by teachers' federations. The presidential decree 140/98 followed, while through a ministerial decision (D2/1938/26-2-98) the details of evaluating teachers and educational performance as a whole were defined. Teacher disagreements and arguments, even among members of the government, led this reform to failure once again. The change of leadership in the MNERA, in 2000, put an end to that specific effort.

Despite the fact that in the 1990s different parties which were in the government agreed on the perception that "*there should be improvement of educational performance and meritocracy on education*", the period ended without giving solution to the problem of schools' evaluation and teachers' assessment in Greece.

#### ***1.4. School evaluation and teachers' assessment in the first decade of our century***

At the beginning of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the policy of the MNERA was to calm things down by changing the regulations of evaluation introduced into greek education by the G. Arsenis reform and in particular those concerning the body of permanent evaluators. On the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2002, the greek parliament voted the Law 2986/2002, in which regulations of Law 2525/97 concerning the evaluation of teachers were abolished. According to the new law this task would be realized by headteachers and school advisors, while a personal report of self-assessment would also be included<sup>10</sup>. The assessment of schools and teachers was assigned to two agencies of the MNERA: a) the Education Research Centre and b) the Pedagogical Institute.

The Education Research Centre's responsibility was the development and application of quality indicators and criteria for a dynamic quantitative evaluation. This would be realized by putting down facts and figures (apotyposi) of the educational situation, as well as the control of reliability of the system by monitoring educational performance at all levels. The Education Research Centre had to collect and work out a report suggested by the Regional Centers of Support and Educational Planning, a report of internal evaluation of school

units and then submit to the MNERA a proposal on evaluating educational performance.

In the Pedagogical Institute 70 new posts of experts in education were established to help with the work of assessment.

Taking advantage of new technologies, cooperation between these two agencies was anticipated. The ultimate goal was the improvement of the quality of educational performance (MNERA/P.I., 2008). However, the law was static, with the exception of a research programme of the Education Research Centre, in which data were collected concerning facts and figures of the educational situation (C.E.R., 2005).<sup>11</sup> Consequently, strong reactions were brought up by teachers, a fact which justifies that the application of the law has been delayed till today. After the elections of 2004, the attempts of educational evaluation were focused on tertiary education and the attention on the relative issues concerning primary and secondary education was diminished.

The Government which came into power in the Fall of 2009 has inserted in the context of its educational policy the creation of the so-called “*New School*”, in which school evaluation takes the form of voluntary self-evaluation. According to the governmental announcements, such a process constitutes the first stage for implementing evaluation of greek schools (Law 3848/2010). This specific initiative attempts to make use of the materials which had been produced earlier in the context of various programmes sponsored by EPEAEK I & II, such as: a) the programme “*Internal Evaluation and Planning of School Education*” (Pedagogical Institute 1997-1999), b) “*Guide for the Evaluation and Planning of School Education*” (Pedagogical Institute 1997-1999) and c) the development and “prototypization” of indices and criteria for the mapping of the educational system.

At the level of implementation, efforts were made to take advantage of new structures (e-survey, e-school, mapping of the educational system, data provided in the context of lifelong learning, administrative reform and digital convergence of the Ministry of Education), so that elements of special interest, such as digital platforms or educational materials related to teacher training, could be used.

The self-assessment programme is planned to have a duration of two years (2010-2012) and is expected to be carried out on a pilot basis in 600 school units of primary and secondary schools. School advisors throughout Greece and more than 7.000 teachers have been taking part in this project, which aims at providing educational material on evaluation. The educational outcomes of the survey will be used by an Observatory, which is supposed to offer scientific support for teachers and new methodological practices in the school units of the country.

According to our experience most teachers' attitudes concerning evaluation have changed during the last years. The hostility against any kind of schools' evaluation and teachers' assessment which characterizes the educational situation in Greece during the post-dictatorship period started to be diminishing. So, future appears to be more promising in this field than in the past. The pressure exerted by the European reality and the international tendencies concerning the enhancement of the quality of education as well as the consciousness of negative impact that the absence of evaluation has in greek education will probably lead to a solution. We hope that this "adventure of evaluation", called by one of us *«peripetia axiologisis»* (Kassotakis, 2001) will take an end.

## **2. Negative Consequences of Non-Systematic Efforts on Evaluation**

There are not many empirical studies concerning the consequences of the absence of evaluation of teachers and school units. Consequently, the existing data do not lead us to certain conclusions. However, the dominant opinion expressed by a lot of articles and comments in the newspapers and adopted by many educators is that the lack of assessment is the principal cause of the malfunction of the educational system. In addition, it is the main reason of ineffective coordination and the most important cause of the continuous downgrading of educational quality.

According to a study made by Charakopoulos (1998), 60,6% of secondary education teachers are not satisfied with the quality of work done at schools. Among them, many consider that the main reasons of their dissatisfaction has its origin in the absence of evaluating school units and teachers themselves. A study of the Pedagogical Institute reveals that more than 60% of greek teachers believe that evaluation is necessary for upgrading the quality of education; only 57% of the teachers participating in the study were satisfied with the curriculum content and 45% with the objectives pursued by greek schools (M.N.E.R.A./P.I. 2008, p. 115). The low quality of greek education is reflected in the low performance of greek students in international research evaluating their knowledge and skills (for example PISA results, OECD 2001, 2004, 2006, 2010). The consequences of this low quality of greek education are reflected in many research projects which aimed to investigate the existing problems and the needs in our schools or to evaluate the satisfaction of teachers, pupils and parents with the offered education (Verdis, 2002, Maratou-Alimpranti et al. 2006, MNRA/P.I. 2008, Kassotakis, 2009). The low performance of greek education is attributed to a number of reasons among which the lack of evaluation is included.

According to an Inter-departmental Committee of the Pedagogical Institute (2009) the absence of evaluation in greek education<sup>12</sup> has had a negative impact on: a) monitoring the changes taking place at the european and international level b) the convergence of educational policies in the E.U. countries, c) the allocation of educational expenditure, d) the attempt for restricting educational bureaucracy, e) the reinforcement of the educational autonomy at different levels, f) the assessment of needs concerning in-service teachers' training, g) the increase of the inequalities among schools' units, h) the selection of educational leaders and i) the creation of a suitable educational atmosphere (MNERA/P.I, 2009).

There is also a point of view in which lack of evaluation for many years “*has formed a culture of resistance within the system, against any change, while it exerts negative influence upon any type of dialogue on specific issues*” (Salteris, 2006, p. 4).

It is a fact that, not evaluating teachers does not favor their professional development (Kosmidou-Hardy, 2005), since they are not encouraged to be improved and cope with their weaknesses. On the other hand, teachers who try to apply innovations at school or try to go beyond daily routine are discouraged, because none rewards their efforts and initiatives. Thus, they lose enthusiasm, creative motivation and are gradually adapted to indifference and inactiveness.

Some assert that teachers don't need to be evaluated by their superiors, since they are continually exposed to the eyes of their students and judged by them. We don't agree with this point of view. We think that total absence of every kind of control can lead to anarchy.

Additionally, the absence of teachers' systematic assessment favors the phenomenon of political “clientelism” from which Greece has suffered for a very long period. The lack of evaluation allowed the selection of educational cadre (school principals, educational counselors, heads of the departments of education) to be based on political criteria and seniority, rather than on the real competences of the candidates, in several cases.

### **3. The main reasons for the failure of applying school evaluation and teachers' assessment in Greece**

With respect to the above, it is obvious that no essential kind of evaluation of school education and teachers has been applied in our country for about thirty years, despite the undesirable impact that it has had on the quality of education. There are some exceptions concerning the selection of heads of education,<sup>13</sup> who represent a very small minority in the educational body, while the majority of teachers and schools remain without evaluation.

Trying to analyze the difficulties in applying educational evaluation during the period after the fall of dictatorship until now we wonder: What are the deeper reasons for this situation in Greece? How could the failure of successive attempts in applying an evaluation system be explained, considering the fact that these efforts were made by different governments at different periods of time? How can we justify the reactions of teachers on evaluation matters for a very long period?

We support the point of view that this situation is due to many factors, among which some are related to inadequacies and historical particularities of Greek Education, some others have a political or ideological dimension, the most important of which are presented below.

### ***3.1. The Role of Educational Policy and Ideology***

Educational policy in Greece was characterized by inconsistency and discontinuity which is due not only to frequent change of persons in high administrative posts (for example, in the MNERA, in the Pedagogical Institute, in the National Center for Educational Research etc.), but also to the inexistence of consensus regarding crucial subjects such as educational evaluation. It happens very often that one minister abolishes what has been decided by his predecessor. Several times the ministers try to implement their own educational policy, which is not linked with the one followed by the previous ministers. Some examples of that discontinuity could be found in the field of implementation of educational evaluation in Greece. Such a policy does not contribute to the establishment of a permanent system of evaluation. Additionally, it encourages reactions against it, because the opponents know that the next minister will change his predecessor's decisions if pressed by them.

Sometimes, this lack of consensus characterizes not only governments belonging to different political parties but also governments belonging to the same political party. This becomes more complex if we take into account the ideological dimension of the subject of evaluation. Over the last decades, educational evaluation was a politically and ideologically charged subject (Katsikas & Kavadias, 1999). Its support was identified with conservatism. Its doubt or resistance to application meant progressive ideology, despite the fact that it led to the "flattening of everything" and downgrading of education. Since every attempt against evaluation was identified with progress, it had been a hard task to support dynamically its necessity after the political changeover in 1974.

The ideological conflict on the evaluation was also carried inside the teachers' unions in which the political parties have their affiliates, adopting and supporting the ideas expressed by the corresponding party. Sometimes the controversy is

transferred to the committees set up in order to formulate proposals or to give solution to the existing problems. Usually, teachers' unions are represented in these committees.

The national dialogues which took place on the subject were led to failure, because of the above contradictions and lack of a sincere climate for genuine exchanges of opinions, which could result in social consensus.

### ***3.2. The Negative Influence of the Past***

As already mentioned, the extreme authority and authoritative behaviour of inspectors had caused objections and complaints among teachers. The experience of inspectors and the fear of repetition of the same authoritative models led to teachers' reaction, even against school advisors. There were cases in which teachers didn't accept school advisors in their classroom, which is a necessary condition for the monitoring of teaching and the improvement of the professional work of educators. Consequently, evaluation was not promoted<sup>14</sup>. The identification of assessment with administrative control generalized a fear to every kind of evaluation, which resulted in refusing even friendly forms of evaluation, such as self-assessment or internal evaluation of schools.

### ***3.3. The "Misconception" of Evaluation***

The reaction against evaluation was also favored by the ignorance of a great part of teachers and politicians about the modern theoretical and practical approaches of it. Till recently evaluation was not met as a self-existent subject of knowledge in the university curricula or in further training of teachers. So, for a long period future teachers were not systematically taught subjects concerning educational evaluation and acquired only some fragmentary elements on the matter of assessing students. As a result, the majority of the teaching staff identify evaluation with state administrative control followed by negative consequences and not as a means for the improvement of education and professional development. This conception of evaluation is linked with the fear of the personal consequences of a non satisfactory evaluation and as it is plausible it led to the refusal of any form of appraisal (Kassotakis, 2004a, 2004b).

Some recent changes made in the curricula of teachers' initial and in service training in the recent years, including the introduction of courses focused on evaluation, were not capable of changing radically the deep-rooted misconception of what the meaning of evaluation is.

### ***3.4. Educational Centralization and the “Top Down” of the Efforts to Implement Evaluation***

The educational system of Greece is undoubtedly characterized by centralization. Significant educational decisions are taken centrally and are applied in a similar and invariable way, a feature which is reflected in all efforts to introduce changes in the educational system. One of them is evaluation. All attempts to legalize evaluation have come from the central political authority, while there are few initiatives taken by teachers themselves. The educators have a limited pedagogical teaching autonomy and are bound to adapt their teaching to the evaluation criteria proposed by the state and the instructions of the MNERA. Unfortunately, the greek educational system has not been designed to give opportunities of feedback and make use of elements coming from action.

The drawback of this situation is that centralization limits the potentiality of planning evaluation processes at a school unit level. When schools just perform the orders of central administration, they meet difficulties in planning their work, taking initiatives and assigning creative tasks (Kassotakis, 1992).

Since the conditions of work and factors which determine the running of greek schools are not the same in all regions, and the performance of teachers differs, the process of evaluation should be adapted to the particularities of each region or school. It is obvious, one cannot apply everywhere the same criteria for the evaluation of schools and teachers' efficiency. However, reality is opposed to the need of this differentiation, since the educational system is characterized by centralization and uniformity.

This homogeneity of evaluation method and criteria reinforces the resistance of the teaching personnel against the state propositions. It also generates reservations related to the comparison of schools, which have dissimilarities.

### ***3.5. The Absence of Global Educational Evaluation***

Over the last years, there are few scientific efforts for evaluating some aspects of the educational system as well as a number of individual studies referring to the appraisal of partial factors such as curricula, teaching materials, training of teachers, educational policy, main agencies and services of the Ministry of Education, financing education, infrastructures etc. The lack of the so-called “spherical view” of evaluation in education legitimized the refusal of teachers to be assessed, since other parameters of the educational process remain out of evaluation.



### ***3.6. Inadequacies of initial education and further education***

Before being evaluated, teachers should have received appropriate initial and further education in order to obtain scientific knowledge, as well as pedagogical abilities for teaching and learning. Generally speaking, the greek system of initial education of teachers has not helped educators to achieve these goals. On the contrary, teacher education is traditionally characterized by a theoretical orientation of studies. Methodological weaknesses of the system prepare individuals mainly for a career in the public sector. Evidence from related studies has shown that teachers - of secondary education, in particular - are generally considered inefficient and incompetent concerning pedagogic knowledge and teaching skills (Kassotakis, 2005). In a way, reaction to evaluation can be justified. How are teachers asked to be evaluated on the basis of qualities that the educational system itself doesn't encourage them to acquire?

Undoubtedly, there is a need for an effective system of lifelong training for teachers which will help them cover their deficiencies and weaknesses, revealed by evaluation.

## **4. Closing Remarks**

Considering the fact that for about thirty years no systematic process of assessment has been applied in our country and in order to change the existing situation, we are convinced that there is a great need to establish a contemporary, pedagogical, up-to-date, system of evaluation. This view seems to be recently shared by many representatives of political parties, specialized educators and most teachers.

The demand to raise quality is evident. International competition as well as current technological development call for new changes and interventions. Evaluation nowadays can be defined more as an approach of self-regulation and quality upgrading of the educational system, than as a controlling process which serves administrative and bureaucratic aims. Some innovative measures to be taken are the following:

There is a need to ensure a consensus between political parties in a general framework of principles concerning evaluation, aiming to establish a steady educational policy.

Decentralization of the system would help the implementation of assessment according to regional conditions.

Training on evaluation should be promoted. There should be an effort to

inform all interested parties about the meaning, the aims, the forms and the functions of evaluation. The effort should be supported by the state, educational agencies and scientific organizations as well. The subject of “evaluation” should be introduced in the curricula of initial training for teachers. Evaluation should also be a part of further education programmes and seminars organized by the Pedagogical Institute, school advisors and the Universities as well. All educators have to be trained, in order to become aware that evaluation is a supportive process for teachers and not a mechanism of administrative control.

Criteria of evaluation should be established in cooperation with teachers’ unions. Elaborate methods of evaluating, such as “grids” of self-assessment or diagnostic tests, could be added. Moreover, supporting material (questionnaires of self-assessment, forms of professional self-analysis etc.) has to be produced in order to help teachers in their daily didactic duties.

Priority should be given to the self-assessment of teachers so that the dynamics of evaluation rises – beginning from bottom up – and a culture on evaluation develops in the educational community. At the same time a self-analyzing operation of schools (internal evaluation) could create mechanisms, which would contribute to the improvement of education and professional development of teachers.

Application of evaluation in our country should start by “friendly forms” of evaluation, such as self-assessment and voluntary peer evaluation. Thus, there will be a gradual familiarization with the relative processes, while reservations and negative attitudes will be decreased<sup>15</sup>.

The role of the teachers’ association should be reinforced towards taking initiatives for the evaluation of school units, while headteachers and school advisors can have a coordinating or further educational role at the beginning.

Additionally, a unified coordinating agency of educational assessment and educational research could be established. A spherical view should include all contributors of evaluation without limiting the process to students and teachers.

To sum up, there is a great need for a global evaluation of educational performance, which will lead to a radical change of the content and function of greek schools in the future. Evaluation has to be seen as a challenge for improvement and progress.

## NOTES

1. This paper is based upon a previous study by M. Kassotakis, which is under publication in greek in a volume dedicated to Professor J. Pyrgiotakis. Its adaptation in English and its updating with new data were made by D. Papagueli-Vouliouri.
2. This phenomenon was realized since the beginning of the inspectors' institution (Lefas, 1942).
3. After the elections of 2009, the MNERA was called "*Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs*".
4. For example, some of their administrative responsibilities were: coordinating the operation of schools, caring for school buildings and school equipment.
5. We use the term "school evaluation" in greek instead of "evaluation of educational task" (*axiologisi ekpedeftikou ergou*).
6. Concerning the selection of educational heads, it was suggested to draw up evaluative lists of candidates, on the basis of their scientific and educational knowledge: in-service experience, knowledge of educational matters, ability of undertaking administrative tasks, social offer, studies, writing, personality (article 2, paragraph 2). However, except from the submission of a curriculum vitae, a specific process of evaluating these elements was not defined.
7. Examinations would be applied for research reasons, evaluating the effectiveness of school performance at national or regional level.
8. Teachers of that period were against the application of descriptive assessment and synthetic-creative tasks.
9. One of them was the abolishment of the waiting list for the appointment of teachers (epetirida), which was previously kept by the MNERA on a yearly basis, according to priority order of the date of submission of candidacy applications.
10. Individual evaluation of teachers concerned the following categories (in order of priority): a) newly appointed teachers who were not permanent b) those who wished to be assessed, who were usually those who wanted to be promoted, by getting a post of a head of education.
11. After the elections of 2004, the attempts of educational evaluation were focused on tertiary education. ESPA 2007-2013 has included Higher Education in a separate action.
12. Inter-departmental Committee of the Pedagogical Institute, 2009. ([www.pi-schools.gr/paideia-dialogos/prot\\_axiologisis.pdf](http://www.pi-schools.gr/paideia-dialogos/prot_axiologisis.pdf)).
13. See the Law 3467/2006, concerning the selection of heads in primary and secondary education.
14. The fact that advisors were not allowed to enter the classroom led to the decreasing of their status and prestige.
15. For most Greek teachers evaluation is an unknown experience.

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