

## **The Greek Certification Practice for Private Security Personnel**

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In 2012, Greece developed a PLA/RPL certification process for professionals who work as private security personnel, but are not holders of a recognized qualification. Its implementation over the past four years supports the connection across education, training and certification with the actual needs of the labor market.

The certification falls under the jurisdiction of the Hellenic Republic Ministry of Interior and is overseen by the Hellenic Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs in cooperation with the Center for Security Studies (KEMEA). The National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) is the authority body for awarding the certification. The certification examinations are administered at the national level and conducted throughout the year.

### **Certification Grants a Recognized Qualification**

The year 2012 marked the introduction of new legislation in Greece (i.e., DECISION 20007/Official Government Gazette B 2899/29 October 2012), which determines, for the first time in the country, the precondition of the Certificate of Competence as one of the required documents for issuing a license for practicing the profession of private security personnel. In simple terms, any professional who works or has worked in the past as private security personnel and needs to renew his or her working license (valid for five years), or needs to replace an expired license, is required to be certified and possess the Certificate of Competence granted by EOPPEP upon successful participation in the national certification examinations for the private security personnel specialty.

To this date, more than 30,000 people have been certified to work as private security personnel. Participation in the certification process is steadily growing, highlighting a current demand in the labor market.

### **The Certification Process**

The Certification process is based on legislated criteria, standards and procedures published in the Official Government Gazette and announced on the official websites of both EOPPEP and KEMEA to ensure transparency, open access and wide publicity. Additionally, the process ensures quality, objectivity and equal access opportunities while promoting lifelong learning for adult citizens. The certification process entails national examinations, and for every examination period, a Central Examination Board (CEB) is established. The CEB is responsible for the efficient organization and execution of the national examinations (including candidate eligibility process and criteria, exam dates, exam centers throughout the country, exam questions and exam proctors) (Hellenic Parliament, 2013).

A citizen may have access to the certification examination, either directly through professional experience criteria, or through training coupled with job practice and in line with standards prescribed in the legislative

framework. EOPPEP has developed the “Training Regulation” that includes:

- a) The job profile for the specialty “Private Security Personnel,” which has been developed in collaboration with the social partners, accredited by EOPPEP via a legislated procedure and published on the website of both EOPPEP and KEMEA.
- b) The task analysis, which involves the description of both general and technical professional knowledge, skills and competencies.
- c) The theoretical and practical parts of the examination (procedures, content, duration, requirements).
- d) The pool of questions for the theoretical part of the certification examination (EOPPEP, 2012).

The training required for eligibility in the certification examination involves successful completion of a program of 105 hours including training in a training center licensed by EOPPEP, in combination with job practice (Hellenic Parliament, 2012).

## **Certification Criteria, Standards and Procedures**

### **Eligibility criteria**

Access to the national certification examination is gained via either professional experience or training received, combined with job practice in the profession. Eligibility is extended to: a) professionals who do not possess a recognized qualification and have worked as private security personnel, are either self-employed or are employees of private security services companies; or b) holders of a training certificate for private security personnel who have successfully completed the training program (as described earlier). Each candidate provides: a) a proof of identity (a copy of ID or passport); b) a proof of employment or a training certificate for private security personnel; c) an examination fee (currently 150 Euros for the whole process) (KEMEA, 2017).

### **The examination process**

Candidates are assessed both in theory and practice. The theoretical part of the exam assesses whether the candidate has the required knowledge and skills for carrying out the work of private security personnel. This portion of the examination has a duration of two and a half hours. The exam questions are electronically drawn from a pool of 300 questions included in the training regulation for the private security personnel specialty. Questions of general knowledge count for 30 percent of the total grade, while 70 percent is allocated to questions of a technical nature. All questions must be answered and are graded by degree of difficulty. Additionally, for the practical part of the exam, each candidate is examined orally before a board of three examiners in a group of three fellow candidates. The time allocated per candidate is 20 minutes. Successful examinees are those who pass the practical part of the exam (no grade is given) and receive a minimum grade of 10 out of 20 in the theoretical part.

Successful candidates are awarded the Certificate of Competence by EOPPEP through a standardized procedure.<sup>1</sup> This certificate is equivalent by law to the Vocational Training Certificate level 1 (no longer awarded). This legislated equivalence is significant for security professionals as they obtain a recognized qualification equivalent to a Vocational Training Institute (IEK) certificate, which is an initial vocational training qualification at level 3 of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework<sup>2</sup> and referenced to level 3 in the European Qualifications Framework<sup>3</sup> (EOPPEP, 2017).

The implementation of this certification process has so far proven to be a successful joint venture on multiple levels. On the one hand, the collaboration between public authorities involved sharing a common goal and vision, and the adoption of an optimal assessment practice in view of ensuring validity, transparency, equal treatment and open access to the certification process, has been notable. On the other, the fruitful

cooperation between the public and private sector (private training centers) exercises a positive impact on upgrading qualifications of the labor force and promotes employment opportunities. Finally, the engagement of the social partners in the development of the job profile on which the training regulation is based, indicates social acceptance and labor market consensus.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> All relevant information, legislative framework, criteria, standards, assessment, procedures and exam results are made public on the respective websites of EOPPEP ([www.eoppep.gr](http://www.eoppep.gr)) and KEMEA ([www.kemea.gr](http://www.kemea.gr)).
- <sup>2</sup> To learn more about the Hellenic Qualifications Framework, visit <http://www.eoppep.gr/index.php/en/qualifications-certification-en>.
- <sup>3</sup> More information about the European Qualifications Framework can be found at [https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-egf/files/leaflet\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-egf/files/leaflet_en.pdf).

## References

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