



regional observatory
for social inclusion
region of crete



NEWSLETTER

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Issue 10



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Social Fund (ESF+) and national resources.

OBSERVING SOCIAL INCLUSION IN CRETE

The **Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete** monitors, analyzes and highlights social developments on the island, with the aim of formulating policies that strengthen cohesion and justice.

Read about its latest news, actions and initiatives.



1. What are the living conditions in Crete?

For the first time in Greece, thanks to the cooperation of the Crete Region (**Regional Observatory of Social Inclusion**) with **ELSTAT** (EU-SILC), data on living conditions are recorded not only at the Regional level, but also per Regional Unit!

These data are reflected in the new research entitled **"Household Income and Living Conditions in Crete: Mapping the Current Situation – Deprivation and Social Protection"** which was carried out in collaboration with the **University of Crete - Laboratory of Social Analysis & Applied Social Research (EKAEKE)** of the Sociology Department.

The research at a glance...

The Region of Crete:

- It shows **long-term population growth**.
- It remains one of the **least "aged" regions** of the country.
- Its economy is transforming into a **service economy** (tourism, trade) with a decrease in employment in the primary sector.
- It shows **high self-employment** and small businesses (<10 employees).
- It presents **limited highly skilled positions** and almost stagnant productivity.

It has the lowest rate of (income) poverty in the country **11,1%**



However, many households in Crete still struggle to meet basic welfare needs with their disposable incomes, as material and social deprivation remain high, reaching **24.2% — almost double the EU-27 average.**

CANNOT participate regularly in recreational activities **22,0%**

CANNOT go on vacation **53,0%**

CANNOT replace furniture **48,0%**

HAVING DIFFICULTY paying bills **43,0%**

CANNOT cover an emergency expense (repair, health) **41,0%**

WHAT IS OBSERVED AT THE LEVEL OF REGIONAL UNITS

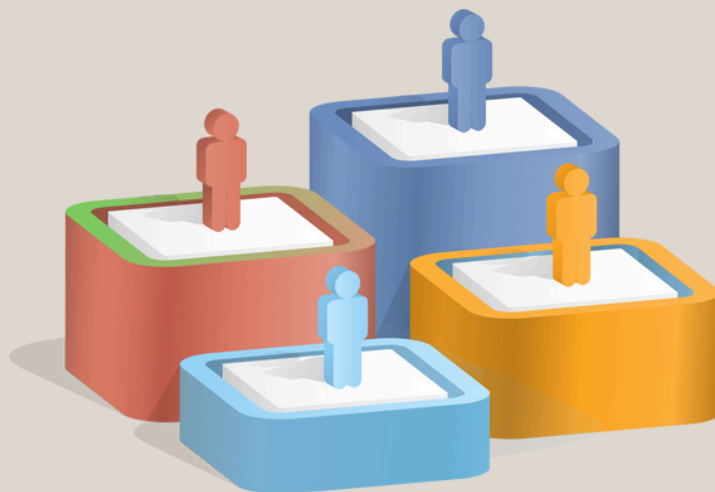
RETHYMNO: 30% **CANNOT** spend a small amount on personal needs each week.

HERAKLION: 15% **CANNOT** maintain adequate heating.

LASITHI: 25% **CANNOT** participate in recreational activities.

CHANIA: 11% **CANNOT** cover the costs of one meeting with friends/relatives per month.

Chania has the lowest poverty rate (8.2%), while Rethymno has the highest rate (12.4%).



Within the social protection system, pensions play the main role in containing poverty, **while social transfers (welfare and unemployment benefits) do not make a significant contribution to poverty reduction**, as is the case in other European countries.

Which population groups are most affected by poverty in Crete?

- Single-person households
- Single-parent households with mother as parent
- Women
- Ages 65+ (mainly women)
- Four-person households
- 2 & 3-person households
- Poor working & retired people
- Not economically active
- Low-educated people



CONCLUSIONS

Financial support through social protection benefits **is not sufficient on its own**. What is needed is the development of **comprehensive, quality and free public services**, which reach the neighborhoods and homes of households in poverty or deprivation. Through these services, support acquires an **indirect income character**, covering basic needs such as housing, health, education, etc.

In this way, the financial burden on households is reduced, a decent standard of living is ensured and the population is empowered to gain autonomy and become independent from the constant need for assistance.

See more about
the research [HERE!](#)

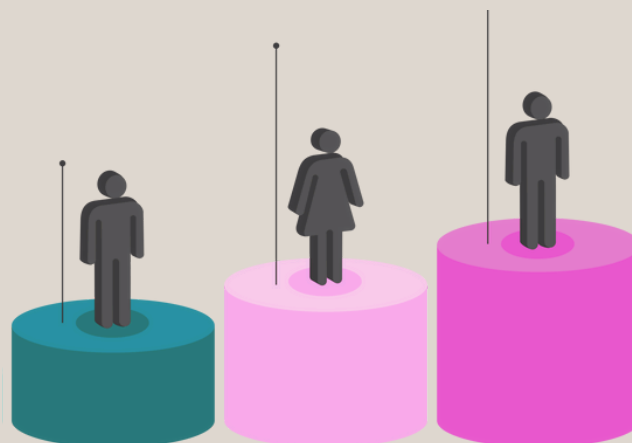
2. What is the evolution of unemployment and long-term unemployment in the Crete Region?

The Observatory conducted another survey entitled **"Report on Unemployment and Long-Term Unemployment by Regional Unit and Municipality in the Region of Crete 2021-2024"**.

Using data from the **Public Employment Service** (DYPA), for the years **2021-2024**, the study highlighted the seasonal fluctuations in short-term unemployment as well as the structural characteristics of long-term unemployment in the Crete Region.

CONCLUSIONS

The spatial dimension of unemployment determines the viability of local communities, requiring targeted policies for new jobs and preventing rural abandonment.



Unemployment in Crete:

strongly seasonal due to tourism, but with a stable core of long-term unemployment.

Unemployment characteristics...

- **Short-term unemployment:** peaks in January, but decreases by 65% in the May–August period, due to tourism.
- **Long-term unemployment:** reflects structural difficulties in the labor market in the Region.
- **Tourist municipalities:** strong seasonal fluctuations in employment.
- **Urban centers:** concentration of the core of long-term unemployment.
- **Rural municipalities:** persistence of unemployment due to shrinking primary sector and reduced employment opportunities.

See more about the research [**HERE!**](#)

3. Civil Society in the Mapping of Services and Social Policy Bodies in the Region of Crete!

New Section in Mapping: Civil Society

The Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Region of Crete has enriched the Mapping of Social Policy Services and Institutions in the Region of Crete, adding a new, particularly important section: **Civil Society**.

This new section aims to provide the public with more complete information about the bodies, associations and organizations of Civil Society that are active in Crete, by Municipality and Regional Unit.

All Bodies on One Platform!



By integrating Civil Society, the Observatory confirms its commitment to a comprehensive and updated mapping of social policy services and bodies, creating a dynamic tool that strengthens social cohesion and supports local communities in Crete.



The renewed platform brings together Associations and Organizations of Crete in a single information point, providing:

- **Search and filtering capabilities**, for easy finding organizations by geographic region or thematic category.
- **Strengthening the connection between institutions** and citizens, promoting cooperation and knowledge exchange.
- **A powerful tool for social cohesion.**

Discover Civil Society organizations **HERE!**



4. The Regional Observatory for Social Inclusion of the Crete Region participated in the 3rd Interactive Workshop of the GRANDIS project!

The **Interactive Workshop** of the European project **GRANDIS - Green, Digital, Female-driven SMEs** (Interreg Europe), was organized by the Region of Crete on **Thursday, September 25, 2025**, at the Bizrupt multi-purpose venue, in Heraklion, Crete.



Goal: to collectively formulate practical solutions to strengthen female entrepreneurship in Crete, focusing on the challenges but also on the opportunities associated with the green and digital transition.

Women entrepreneurs and professionals from all over Crete, with the support of Regional executives, worked in groups, examining business and proposing applicable practices that were presented to Regional representatives and experts.

The GRANDIS project continues with new workshops, strengthening the participation of women in entrepreneurship!

5. MAGMA Programme: an inspiring good practice!



The **MAGMA (Job Guarantee Program)** pilot program in Marienthal, Austria, shows the way to address long-term unemployment by offering a **job guarantee to the long-term unemployed through a holistic approach!**

Objective: to address long-term unemployment not simply with benefits, but with the substantive integration of beneficiaries into the labor market, enhancing their financial security, social participation and sense of purpose.

How is it applied:

- ◆ **Preparatory support:** personalized counseling, support from psychologists and social workers to address personal obstacles.
- ◆ **Finding work:** in positions that meet the beneficiaries skills and the community needs. Participants had also the opportunity to create new jobs for the benefit of the community.

The program at a glance...

It was implemented by the **Austrian Public Employment Service** in collaboration with the Institute for New Economic Thinking at the University of Oxford

It provided a **guaranteed job** with decent pay.

Beneficiaries were city residents who had been unemployed for **more than 12 months** or were at risk of becoming so (9–12 months).

The pay was at least the **minimum collective wage**, with flexible hours and type of employment (full or part-time).

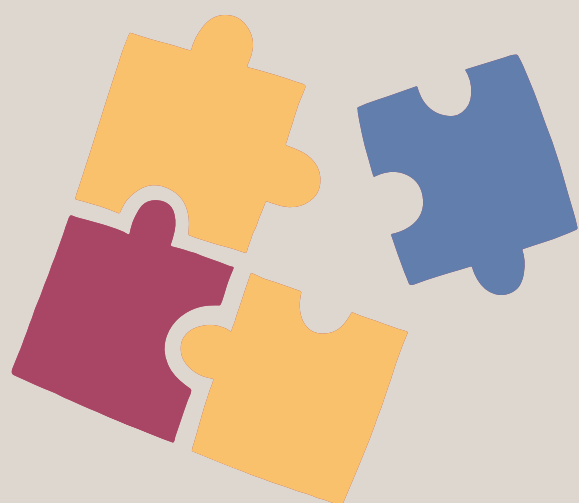
Employers **received support** for job creation, and the state covered the costs where the market could not.

What were the main results of the program?

The cost amounted to 29,841 euros per participant per year, similar to the cost of unemployment benefits, but with additional social and economic benefits.

- Positive impacts on the **economic and social well-being** of participants.
- Significant **reduction in long-term unemployment**, without a negative impact on the employment of the remaining residents.
- **Increase in disposable income**, enhance social recognition and integration and improve the psychological balance of participants.
- The prospect of participating in the program had a **positive psychological and social impact** on those on the waiting list.

The program was voluntary, with no loss of unemployment benefits for those who did not participate!



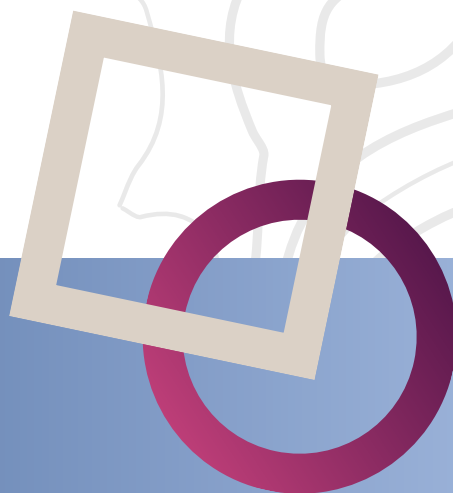
See more about the good practice **[HERE!](#)**

IT IS WORTH NOTING

- In 2025, the Austrian government announced a commitment of €50 million to expand the program.
- The pilot program attracted international attention (EU, OECD, UN, etc.).
- Based on its success, the European Commission allocated €23 million from the Social Fund+ (ESF+) for new pilot job guarantee programs across Europe.



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COMMUNICATION

Averof 1, 71201 Heraklion

t: +30 2813 412 442, -443

e: socialobservatory@crete.gov.gr

w: socialobservatory.crete.gov.gr

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ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ
REGION OF CRETE