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Collaboration among the University of Macedonia and Equivalent
Institutions
of Neighboring Countries on Issues of Human Resource Management and
Total Quality Management of Small Businesses
Scientific Coordinator: Professor Demetrios Papadopoulos

Human Resource Management in Greece and Bulgaria

Elaborated by the University of Macedonia
And the Euroconsultants

Scientific Coordinators

- **George Tsiotras, Professor**
- **Stella Xirotiri – Koufidou, Professor**

Scientific Work Group

- **Demetrios Papadopoulos, Professor**
- **George Siomkos, Professor**
- **Konstantinos Velenzas, Professor**
- **Konstantinos Agorastos, Professor**

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN GREECE AND BULGARIA

SUMMARY

The present study refers to the main issues of human resource management in Greece and Bulgaria. The study deals with the issues of work flexibility, salaries, pension and social security, motivation, job analysis and job description, organizational structure, working schedule, and foreign employee acceptance.

Based on these secondary data, a survey was designed and conducted. The survey aimed at exploring the establishing trends in the development of personnel policies in Greece and Bulgaria. The research took the form of a Balkan comparative study of organizational policies and practices in Human Resources management across the two countries (Greece and Bulgaria). Human resource management in most European countries is strongly influenced by the national legal and institutional framework, even though organizations across Europe are faced with common economic and structural changes which appear to elicit similar responses in personnel management strategies. In order to obtain a detailed view of HR trends in Greek and Bulgarian companies, a six-month survey was carried out.

The research had a particular objective: to monitor the impact of the increased 'Europeanisation' of business on specific human resource management practices in these two countries. Of course, this Europeanisation is more plainly manifested in the EU countries and in the single European market, though it is not limited to those countries. It was of interest whether such Europeanisation would lead to a harmonization of personnel policies. Originally, the survey aimed to assess whether there were significant differences between HR trends in EU and non-EU member states. Given the recent application of many other countries to join the EU, and even before that, to align their legislation with the EU, this last point becomes more marginal.

The study ends with the main conclusions drawn by the findings of the conducted survey, which reveal that Greece seems to show a convergence with Bulgaria for most HR practices. A point that needs to be stressed, common in both countries, is that even though all firms realize the importance of the HR activities, not all firms respond favorably to the operation and involvement of the HR department or HR personnel in the formulation of the firm's strategy. HR management is still viewed as an operational tool that helps with the bureaucratic activities of the HR field and does not play the strategic role that it intends. The role of those involved in the HR departments is to help businesses accept the philosophy of the HRM, which is nothing more than the acknowledgement of the strategic importance of the human factor, evaluation of personnel needs and utilization of human skills.

Based on the findings of the survey, both countries (Greece and Bulgaria) follow the general trends of the rest of the EU countries, something that reinforces further collaboration and/or expansion of cooperation between the two countries. Nevertheless, there are differences, as mentioned above, that must be addressed and paid attention to for the successful meshing of the HR fields of Greek-Bulgarian firms.

A final conclusion of the study is that the HR field in Greece and Bulgaria is evolving at a stable pace and holds a responsible position towards the European and global challenges. It fully acknowledges the responsibilities that it bears and the importance in the formulation of a competitive advantage of firms as well as the economic and social prosperity of the labor force in these two countries.