

Islamic Religious Education and Religious Education in Greece

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RE in Greek Schools

- Religious Education is provided by the state with the general aim being determined by the free “cultivation” of religious conscience.
- 2 Faculties with 4 Schools of Theology (2 in Kapodistrian University of Athens and 2 in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) are subsidized by the state and not by the Church
- RE- a compulsory subject- is taught of a period of ten years for one or two hours weekly
 - New Curricula implemented in 2017-2019-with an open religious approach and teaching about other religions from the age of 8
 - Intermediate curricula 2019-2022-teaching about other religions from the age of 16
 - New Confessional curricula waiting to appear September 2022-

- Law 4301/2014 offers the possibility of the recognition of several religious communities in Greece as religious legal person
- Muslims are recognize already by the Treaty of Lausanne since 1923 as “Muslim minority” with special rights:
 - Shari’a-Hanafi School (religious matters, family and inheritance)
 - Minority education (bilingual education) based especially on the art. 40%41

Types of Schools for Muslim Students in Western Thrace

- Minority Schools
- Madrassas-Religious Schools
- Public Schools

All the above are schools for the indigenous Muslims of Western Thrace, the so-called “old” Islam

For the New Migrants and Refugees there is no particular legal status regarding RE

Types of Schools

- State-Public Schools _ around 4633 primary Schools and 2680 secondary schools
- Faith based Schools _very few and including the 2 Madrassas of Western Thrace +
- Private Schools (from 5000 to 15000 euros per year)- around 320 for primary education and 100 for secondary education
- 2 Jews Private Schools
- Institute of Educational Policy (IEP)_ Ministry of Education

IRE or IRI

- Based on the constitution the state provides RE for all Students and IRE or IRI for Muslims pupils of Western Thrace

RE for all pupils _ 2017-2019

| PRIMARY EDUCATION 6-12 | SECONDARY EDUCATION (13-15) | SECONDARY EDUCATION (16-18) |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Symbols of Islam• Friday in Islam• Prayers and the Mosque• The Virgin Mary in the Qur'an• Rites of Passage• The Qur'an• Excerpts from Islam• Law• Fasting in Islam• Islam in our country | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representation of God in Islam• Jesus in the Qur'an and the Islamic tradition• The stranger in Islam• Religions and the problem of evil | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expressions of religious experience, community, and individualism in Islam• The essence of the sacred in the everyday life of the faithful• The role of the Muslim religious authorities• Political power and the stance of Islam• The dialogue of churches with Islam• Islam and bioethics• Life and death• Forgiveness• The acceptance of "otherness" in Islamic traditions• Work and deeds of man• Justice• Happiness |

RE for all pupils _ 2017-2019

- With the adoption of the latest RE curricula (2017), there was strong belief among many theologians and citizens that RE could work for all students, without exception, as a bridge builder and not as a divisive factor within the school.
- At the same time, families or religious institutions can offer catechistic instruction for their religious traditions.

Schools in Western Thrace

| Minority Schools _2020 | Madrassas | Kur'an Kursu |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| 6500 pupil 123 minority schools | 250 2 madrassas | Non formal education In many places |

IRE/IRE Curricula, Textbooks, Teacher Training

- Each educational structure has its own IRE/IRI curriculum, its own timetable for the teaching of IRE/IRI, and its own educators. IRE/IRI in these different school types can be broadly understood as Islamic religious instruction (IRI), aiming at socialisation in one's own tradition and rooted in the historical tradition of teaching Islam to Muslims.

IRE in minority schools

- The teaching of IRE/IRI in Turkish is compulsory;
- It is a two-hour subject in the second year of primary school and a three-hour subject for the remaining four years of primary school.
- The name of the course is Religion, or more specifically *Din Kültürü ve ahlak bilgisi* (Religious Culture and Knowledge of Ethics). Until 1982 it was mainly called *Din Derleri* (Religious Lessons).
- The IRE/IRI curricula for minority schools are procured in Turkey. In general, they follow the Turkish RE/RI curriculum, but with a reduced amount of teaching material. For this reason, many educators deem these curricula as inadequate, and many times they are not followed to the letter.

IRI in madrassas

- The two madrasas, one in Komotini (Hayriyye Medresesi), and one in the city of Xanthi (Şahin Medresesi), have a different status compared to IRE/IRI in minority schools and in state schools
- (Law 2621/1998, Art. 4, and Ministerial Decree Γ2/5560 of 25-11-1999). The school subjects and curricula in madrasas are the same as those in state schools, supplemented by additional IRI courses such as Interpretation of the Qur'an, Tafsir, Arabic and Turkish Language, Islamic History, Sira, Fiqh, and Aqida.

Additional IRE courses in madrasas

| Additional Religious Lessons | EPATH / SPECIAL PEDAGOGIC ACADEMY |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Fiqh (methodology) Qur'an Arabic Turkish Islamic History Sira Tafsir Hadith (methodology) Imamatu (Imam's duties) | New Curricula ? |

Islamic Religious Education and State Schools

- Introduced since 2013 in State/Public Schools
- The first time a second subject on religion, as an elective course, had been introduced into the state schools in Greece and the first time students in state schools were separated according to their religions.
- IRE/IRI was chosen by the majority of the students and thus is considered a success.
- IRE/IRI teachers were chosen by a special committee made up of both the heads of the Muftiate and other Muslims, and they were appointed both as IRE/IRI teachers and as imams in the mosques (around 64 in 2013–2014, around 85 in 2019–2020 and 92 this year 2022-2021).
- However, even though the state pays their wages and pensions, there are not enough IRE/IRI teachers for all the state schools in Thrace, which are attended by a significant number of Muslim students. There is also a lack of textbooks, and teachers therefore develop their own teaching material. The previously mentioned call for a committee of experts to work on a new IRE/IRI curriculum and on a Teachers' Guide for Madrasas could also be used in state schools.

Training for State Schools Islamic Studies in Tertiary Education

- 2014 a 40 hours training
- 2014-2015 a 460 hours training
- Since 2016 a postgraduate program in Islamic Studies is offered at the School of Theology _ Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

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