

Working & Living in Greece



-FIND JOB-



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01 Introduction



● General Information

Greece or **Hellas** (in Greek Ελλάδα=/ελλα'δα/), officially known as the **Hellenic Republic** is a country located in Southern Europe and lies at the juncture of three continents: Europe, Western Asia, and Africa. It shares land borders with Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey. The Aegean Sea lies to the East of the mainland, the Ionian Sea to the West and the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea to the South. Since 1981, Greece is a longstanding member of the European Union and, since 2002, of the Eurozone. It is also a founding member of the United Nations as well as a member of a multitude of other international organizations including the Council of Europe, NATO, OECD, OSCE and the WTO.

www.visitgreece.gr, www.mfa.gr

Quick Facts

Official name	Hellenic Republic
Form of government	Parliamentary Republic
Head of state	President: Aikaterini Sakellaropoulou
Head of government	Prime Minister: Kyriakos Mitsotakis
Capital	Athens (pop.: 3,089,698 incl. Piraeus)
Other great cities	Thessaloniki (pop.: 788,952) Patra (pop.: 168,034) Larissa (pop.: 144,651) Heraklion (pop.: 140,730)
Official language	Greek
Monetary unit	Euro (€)
Population	10,816,286 (2011 Official Census)
Total area (sq km / mi)	131,957 / 50,949
GDP per capita (in Euros €)	18.150 (2019)

● Language

Greek is an independent branch of the Indo-European family of languages. Native to the southern Balkans, western Asia Minor, Greece, and the Aegean Islands, it has the longest documented history compared to any Indo-European language, spanning 34 centuries of written records. Its writing system has been the Greek alphabet, which has a lot of differences with the commonly used Latin alphabet. In its modern form, it is the official language of Greece and Cyprus and one of the 23 official languages of the European Union. The language is spoken by almost 17 million people today in Greece, Cyprus, and diaspora communities in numerous parts of the world.

Fluency in Greek is an essential skill when one is in search of a job in Greece. Few exceptions to that general rule exist, mainly in certain jobs in the tourism sector. In sectors of a broader and multicultural context, a good knowledge of English is also essential.

Information about learning Greek and obtaining a certificate of attainment can be found at the online portal of the Greek Language Center: www.greek-language.gr.

● Currency

Greece belongs to the Eurozone (also known as the Euro-area) and its currency is the Euro (in Greek, Ευρώ=/evro'/). The Eurozone consists of those European Union countries which have adopted the Euro as their currency. It currently has 19 member states. For more information about the Euro currency or the Eurozone please visit www.ecb.europa.eu, www.eurozone.europa.eu, www.bankofgreece.gr

● Human Rights, Equality and Non-discrimination

Since ancient times, Greece has always been a meeting point for different civilizations as it was strategically placed in an intersection between East and West, easily accessible by land or sea. Due to this fact, Greece was among the first nations where respect of diversity has become a core ethical value. Until today, equality and non-discrimination remain deeply rooted in the Greek people's hearts as innate principles. Moreover, the protection of human rights has also been a lasting priority for Greeks, and that is currently reflected in the Greek Constitution and in a number of national and international legal documents already ratified by the Greek Parliament (e.g. European Convention of Human Rights-ECHR).

Other fundamental rights such as the rights to life, liberty, honour and the freedom of religion are also effectively safeguarded for all persons irrespective of nationality, race or language and of religious or political beliefs. Lastly, the right to vote is bestowed upon all Greek citizens, over 18 years old, who are eligible to vote.

Greece finally fully abides by the European Commission's Directives regarding the implementation of the principles of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation.

● Rule of Law

Once in Greece you will be subjected to the Laws of Greece. In the event of any legal problems one should contact the Embassy of the country of origin or one of the General Consulates in Greece.

02

Why work in Greece



● Greece towards a new development era

As Greece emerges from the economic crisis, the country is appealing as an investment location because it offers business people a wide variety of investment opportunities that take advantage of the country's strategic geographic location and unique competitive advantages. Greece is a natural gateway to more than 140 million consumers in Southeast Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, a region with a GDP of almost 1 trillion Euro. As the hub of diverse emerging markets, Greece provides access to populations with a strong demand for consumer goods, infrastructure modernization, technology and innovation networks, energy, tourism development, and light manufacturing.

At the same time, Greek companies and banks have a strong foothold in the markets of neighbouring states. Investors are discovering that Greece has a combination of characteristics that are unequalled in Europe. Greece is a leading global tourism destination, an emerging regional energy hub, and possesses highly educated and multilingual human capital.

Greece still remains the 18th larger economy in the European Union. It is also considered to be one of the world's top touristic destinations (21 million guests in 2019) and an emerging regional energy centre.

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/GRC>
www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org

● Economy projections and promising sectors

COVID-19 has undoubtedly severely impacted Greece's economy. The Greek state and the citizens have dealt extremely effectively the crisis outbreak, so the negative impact has been severely moderated.

According to the latest estimates, the full economic effect of the containment measures is expected to have materialised in the second quarter 2020 with a strong decline in domestic demand and exports. As social distancing measures are gradually relaxed, economic activity is expected to start recovering, leading to a partial recovery of domestic demand. Real GDP is expected to decline by 9% in 2020 and to increase by 6% in 2021. The recovery of exports depends heavily on the outlook in Greece's main trading partners. In particular, tourism and transport are expected to be hit hard by the crisis. The concentration of tourism in the summer months makes Greece particularly vulnerable to travel restrictions and COVID-19 induced changes in travel behaviour. www.ec.europa.eu/finance

The most dynamic sectors are tourism, shipping and logistics, information and communication technologies, food and agriculture, global business services and energy. Primary and secondary sector enterprises able to draw upon innovative solutions may well be the next candidates for leaving this slump. www.investingreece.gov.gr

● Land and Climate

Greece is the ideal destination that can combine business and pleasure. It is known worldwide for its unmatched natural beauty, mild climate conditions and landscape diversity that make it perfect not just for vacation but also for business activities or employment.

Eighty percent of the land consists of mountains and hills, making the country one of the most mountainous in Europe. Furthermore, it has the longest coastline in the Mediterranean Basin, which is at the same time one of the world's longest, featuring more than 2,000 islands, of which about 170 are inhabited.

According to the Köppen-Geiger classification, the Greek climate is classified as Csa Climate, which refers to a warm temperate Mediterranean climate with dry, warm summers and moderate, wet winters with the warmest month above 22°C.

● History and Culture

Greece is undoubtedly the cradle of western culture, modern democracies, the judicial system, legal equality, systematic thought and sciences, literary forms and classical art. With more than 5,000 years of cultural riches, from the Paleolithic era to contemporary life, it is considered a world-class archaeological and historical wonderland. Moreover, educational excursions, theatrical productions, festivals, pilgrimages, visits to archaeological sites, monuments and museums, excursions to study the natural environment, folk art and culture are just a few of the many things that Greece has to offer. www.yppo.gr, www.culture.gov.gr, www.gnto.gov.gr

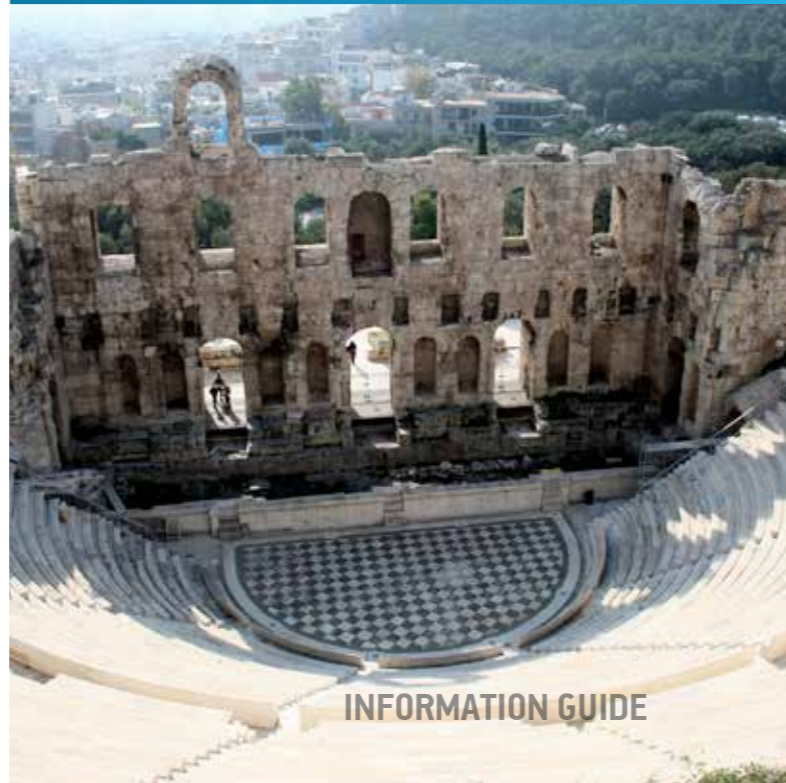
Greece's rich and tumultuous past has greatly influenced its contemporary lifestyle. The Greek perspective on the world, music, food, customs and traditions, even the way

Greeks do business are all part of a specific and genuine cultural idiom. Greeks as a whole are extremely proud of their history, their cultural heritage and their contribution to science, literature, art, philosophy and politics.

www.visitgreece.gr, www.livingingreece.gr

● Philoxenia

Tracking down its roots to ancient Greece, as a profound principle of godly origin (Xenios Zeus or Xenia Athena), *philoxenia* may be generally translated as "hospitality", although this translation does not adequately describe what it means. It literally means "love of strangers" and is considered to be generosity of spirit, a joyful kind of the-best-of-what's-mine-is-yours attitude in which Greeks take great pride as a defining attribute. This is actually the Greek universal contribution to trust and acceptance as well as to respect of diversity.



INFORMATION GUIDE

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Working in Greece



INFORMATION GUIDE

● Finding and Applying for a Job

There is a network of public and private Employment Services where unemployed people could search systematically for a job.

OAED (Manpower Employment Organization) local offices (one-stop shops) manage the national registry of unemployed and provide counselling, mentoring or other employment services (www.oaed.gr).

On the other hand, private employment agencies certified by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs may provide similar quality services.

EURES is the formal European network of public employment services through which job mobility is encouraged: ec.europa.eu/eures.

Surfing on the internet or searching through classified ads are also popular ways to find a job in Greece. Both OAED and private employment agencies maintain internet portals/job engines for informing and assisting jobseekers. Through them the unemployed can upload their CV in a registry which only employers have access to. The EURES portal is currently the most sophisticated job engine of its kind.

Different CV formats are used by each employment agency. The most common ones are the CV generated by the OAED portal (www.oaed.gr) and the Europass format (www.europa.eu/europass/en).

● Labour Market

In February 2020 (pre-COVID-19), the unemployment stood at 15,9%. In July 2020 (in COVID-19), it rose at 17,3%. The highest rate of unemployment is observed among young people aged 15-24 (32.7%). The rate for the long-term unemployed has fallen at 12.2% in 2019. These are the highest unemployment rates throughout the European Union. More than half of the unemployed live in the great metropolitan centers of Athens and Thessaloniki and are mostly workers in the services sector.

More than 80% of the enterprises in Greece are small in terms of annual turnover (up to €150,000). The predominance of small and very small enterprises is also manifested in the average amount of employment provided per enterprise. More than 85% of enterprises have no more than five employees. For more statistics please visit www.elstat.gr, www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat/, www.oaed.gr, www.oecd.org

● Demand and Supply

According to the national data about vacancies, the highest demand for labour concerns office and accounting employees. Following that, there is a strong demand for call center operators, door to door salesmen and medical imaging/therapeutic equipment technicians.

On the other hand, there is a strong supply for builders and construction technicians, unskilled workers, office workers, domestic cleaners, teachers and artists.

For more information please visit: ec.europa.eu/eures.

● Employment Contracts & Collective Bargaining

The most common type of employment contracts in Greece is still the full-time contract with an indefinite duration. Other flexible employment contracts such as temporary employment, part-time work or job rotation have recently expanded particularly in the seasonal (tourism-based) employment in touristic areas.

Previous labour market reforms which led to the deregulation of certain of its aspects have started shifting the trend towards more flexible employment contracts.

On the other hand, the overhauling of the National General Collective Agreement has ultimately resulted in decentralizing collective bargaining from the national and sectoral level to enterprise level and furthermore to individual level.

For labour market surveys see: www.eiead.gr, www.inegsee.gr.

● Protection against Dismissal

The employment relationship can be terminated by both parties. In case of dismissal after one year or longer, the employer is obliged to pay a compensation amount, which depends on the length of employment and on whether there has been a written forewarning of employment termination. Pregnant women and workers on normal leave are also protected. Moreover, there is a limitation of redundancies in companies employing more than 19 workers. For more information please visit www.upakp.gr.

● Self-Employment

All entrepreneurs must commence their businesses by registering to the competent tax authority. Specific professional qualifications (degree, license to practice etc.) or other requirements (building or space) might be necessary for exercising some professions. Those interested may seek relevant information at the public employment service (www.oaed.gr), where counseling programs over entrepreneurship are constantly offered, or at www.startupgreece.gov.gr.

● Working Licenses

In Greece, there are some regulated professions such as doctors, lawyers, nurses, guides, electricians, hairdressers etc. which need special licensing. Working licenses may be issued by competent bodies such as Ministries, Regions, Scientific Associations and relevant Chambers, depending on the specific profession. European citizens may have access to such professions for which they had already been licensed in their own country with few exceptions where such provisions exist.

The Greek Authorities are carrying out a project relating to the liberalization of professions, by reducing regulations and restrictions, for some key sectors of the economy, the outcomes of which are yet to be delivered. More information can be found at the internet sites of the competent Ministries and the relevant Chambers, and at www.eu-go.gr.

● Traineeships

Periods of traineeships can be stipulated in ad hoc regulations whereas specific ALMPs are implemented such as: Training Vouchers, Work experience programme for new labour market entrants aged 16-24 and Subsidy Programme for Private Enterprises to Employ TEI and ASPETE (former SELETE) Students.

All of these above schemes are managed either by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs either by the National PES (OAED).

Traineeship Programmes are also available each year for workers in the tourism & catering sector under a scheme supervised by the Ministry of Finance.

● Wages/Salaries

Workers' wages and salaries cannot be less than the legal minimum wage rates and salaries for employees and daily paid workers. Additional remuneration is offered for under-aged offsprings and seniority. The minimum monthly gross salary for the unskilled and unmarried employee is €650,00 while the minimum daily wage for the unskilled and unmarried worker is €29,04. The net salary results from deducting the social insurance contribution rate (15,5%) from the gross salary. www.gsee.gr

● Working Hours

The work week in Greece is estimated at 40 hours in total (max 10 hours per day), although some employees may work a further five hours per week if so required. These five additional hours are paid at a 20% rate higher than the employee's regular wage and are not regarded as overtime. If the employee works for more than 45 hours, he or she must be paid 40% above their regular rate. Employees can only work for up to 120 hours of overtime annually at this rate and any additional hours must be paid at 80% of the employee's regular wage.

Employees are also permitted to work for two additional hours per day when necessary and two hours less per day when possible as a counterbalance. The employee may instead, choose to take the time off in a block as a day off.

Employees are entitled to a minimum of 12 hours of rest time per 24-hour period and are also entitled to a minimum rest period of 24 hours per work week. Those with a work day of more than six hours are entitled to a minimum 15-minute break per shift, during which time they can leave their work station.



● Annual Leave & Public Holidays

Greek law stipulates a (minimum) annual holiday entitlement of 24 working days for employees who work a six-day week and 20 working days for employees who work a five-day week, once they have completed the basic "waiting" time (qualifying period of employment-12 months). This basic entitlement increases by one day for each additional year of employment, up to a maximum of 26 working days for those on a six-day week and 22 working days for those on a five-day week. Only working days are included in the calculation; public holidays and customary feast days do not count as part of the holiday entitlement. There are 5 public holidays in Greece for private sector employees. In the case of part-time work, the holiday entitlement is calculated differently: after the completion of twelve months' employment, employees are entitled to one twelfth of the holiday for each month of employment (a month of employment consists of 25 working days). Employers cannot ask their employees to accept compensation instead of taking their leave unless the employee has been made redundant or resigned.

● Social Insurance

It is mandatory that every citizen who derives income from employment or self-employment in Greece will be insured by the Social Security system. The issuing of AMKA (Social Security Number) is a necessary precondition in order to do so. It can be issued by the Citizens' Service Centres (KEP-www.kep.gov.gr). Supplementary insurance is also provided for those who wish so.

The social security system is mainly funded by employees' and employers' contributions. Regarding the private sector employees, the contributions are paid by the employees and the employers. Regarding the self-employed and the liberal professions, the contributions

are paid by themselves. Some insurance funds receive additional state funding and social contributions.

Healthcare cover is also ensured with a higher percentage levy for the employer and a lower one for the insured. Contribution rates depend on the social security agency and the profession of the insured. www.efka.gov.gr/el.gr

● Health and Safety at Work

In the field of occupational safety and health, a key priority is to improve working conditions through technical and organizational measures at all levels (national, local, sectoral and company).

The state promotes health and safety at work, complying with all relevant Directives deriving from the European Commission, by designing specific policy measures and creating all appropriate structures and processes for this task. The primary responsibility for these matters rests with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs through its specialized inspection services. www.elinyae.gr.

● Arbitration

The Labour Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is the supervisory body of the state with the task to monitor and implement labour regulations. In case of dispute and in order to avoid further judicial procedures, the Labour Inspectorate acts as an arbitrator between the employer and the employee. www.sepenet.gr

● Taxation

Income gained in Greece from employment or pension is subjected to tax. The issuing of Taxpayer Identification Number (AFM) from the competent tax offices is a necessary precondition so all tax obligations can be fulfilled.

Tax brackets are calculated on taxable income, as follows:

- 9% for incomes up to €12,000,
- 22% for incomes from €12,001 up to €20,000,
- 28% for incomes from €20,001 up to €30,000,
- 36% for incomes from €30,001 up to €40,000 and
- 41% for more than €40,000,

Tax reduction is granted if the taxpayer submits goods receipts or performs e-transactions amounting to 10% of his or her income.

A named "social solidarity contribution" tax ranging from 2,2% up to 10% is imposed on all incomes above €12,000.

Taxpayers who do not have their tax residence in Greece are also entitled to tax relief unless they retain their tax residence in another member state of the European Union or the European Economic Area and a) at least 90 % of their income is obtained in Greece, b) demonstrate that their taxable income is so low that they could benefit from the tax reduction under the tax laws of the state of residence.

Entrepreneurs and self-employed persons are subjected to a business tax ranging from €400 up to €1,000 while they may also deduct business expenses and insurance contributions.

For farmers, special provisions are applied.

Physical or mental disablement, alimony because of divorce and donations over 100 Euros in total can also reduce tax.

www.gsis.gr

● Accommodation

Rental rates in Greece depend on various estate and environment features like weather conditions, view, parking positions, storages, terraces, elevators, heating, solar heaters, sun awnings etc.

Other features like the building age, the surrounding area, the floor, the distance to mass transport stations as well as the general condition of the building also play a very important role. It is worth noting that, over the past 2 years, rent prices in Greece have risen by 5-10%.

According to statistics, rent rates across the country per square meter range:

In Attica: from €6 in Eastern suburbs to just over €10 in Southern suburbs. In the city center, the cost is about €7.

In Thessaloniki: from €5 in the surrounding metropolitan area to €7.5 in the city center.

In provincial cities: from €3 to €4.5 on average with the lowest rates observed in Lamia at €2 and the highest in Kalamata at €7.

Prices do not include water supply, drainage, heating, electricity, gas or other utility costs. Most often the owner asks the tenant for a rent deposit in advance.

● Cost of Living

The cost of living has increased in recent years but Greece still remains relatively cheaper than other North-European countries (for more information please see Overall Consumer Price Index, www.elstat.gr). Some indicative product prices are the following (July 2020):

- Bottle of water (1.5 lt) €0.75
- Cigarettes €4.00
- Milk (1 lt) €1.20
- Bottle of Domestic Beer (0.5 lt) €1.35
- Oranges (1kg) €1,10
- Eggs (12) €3
- Public transport ticket €1.20 (Athens), €0.90 (Thessaloniki)
- Monthly transport ticket €27 (Athens), €30 (Thessaloniki)
- Gasoline (1 lt) €1.40

● Leisure Time

In Greece, one can discover many ways to make the best of his spare time. Shop opening hours are from 8:30 to 15:00 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays while on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays the shops open even in the afternoon from 17:00 to 20:30. In touristic areas shops remain open throughout the day. Apart from shopping in traditional markets and supermarkets, one can enjoy outdoor lunch at a traditional restaurant (tavern) or drink a coffee by the beautiful sea.

Water Activities: Almost every Greek beach is diving-friendly. Excellent beaches for this purpose is the Monastery in Paros, Paleokastritsa in Corfu and practically everywhere in Kastelorizo. Diving Schools can be found in Corfu, Evia, Leros, Santorini, Milos, Paros, Rhodes and Glyfada (near Athens). www.diving-greece.net, www.extremesportsgreece.com

Windsurfing and water skiing instructors can be found on almost every beach. Rental rates for equipment range from 15 to 25 Euros. www.windsurfing.gr

Climbing: Greece is a mountainous country and therefore ideal for mountain and rock climbing. Local alpine clubs can be found in many cities where information on their activities is available. www.oreibasias.gr

Cycling: Cycling has become a very popular sport in recent years, and this probably has to do with the fact that Greece has over 4,000 km of coastal roads. It is possible to rent bicycles daily but nonetheless many prefer the bicycle as the primary means of transportation. Bicycle transport is free on trains and ferries. Many travel agencies specialize in biking tours. www.bicyclegreece.com

Ski: Greece is one of the most cost-efficient destinations for skiing in Europe. There are 16 ski resorts in the country. The most famous is the ski center of Parnassos, 195 km northwest of Athens, and the ski center of Vermio, 110 km west of Thessaloniki. The ski season lasts from January to April. www.snowreport.gr

Other popular activities may include yachting, free-falling, excursions, museum and monastery visits etc.



● National Health System (NHS)

The Greek National Health System (NHS) has been established since 1983. It aims at providing all necessary medical and nursing services for people residing in Greece. Its main pillars are the Regional Health Network (TOMY – local healthcare units for prevention, cure and rehabilitation) and hospitals (General, University and Regional hospitals – secondary and tertiary healthcare units for in-hospital treatment). www.moh.gov.gr

The National Centre for Emergency Care (EKAB) is the emergency unit that provides immediate in situ treatment and assistance as well as transfer services to the nearest health structure. (Emergency tel.: 166) www.ekab.gr

● Social Welfare

A really broad and decentralized network of certified public-private social welfare agencies and NGOs comprises the National Social Care System. This is a national registry of organizations which offer services aiming at taking proactive actions and identifying problems of socioeconomic exclusion as well as treating physical, mental disease or disability. These programs are directed towards specific target groups: a) family, children and youth, b) the elderly, c) disabled persons and d) vulnerable persons and persons in emergency situations. A typical example is the "Help at Home" program which is directed towards senior citizens as well as individuals with mobility difficulties and other disabilities, who cannot look after themselves fully. The program provides counselling and psychological support, nursing care, family assistance and companionship.

Social Security Institutions grant a number of allowances to their insured such as family and maternity allowances as well as allowances for disabled persons and persons in need (OAED, EFKA). www.oad.gr, www.efka.gov.gr

● Family

Traditionally, in Greece, it has been the grandparents that take care of young children. However, the culture is now changing due to modernisation of the nursery school system as well as changing living patterns. For young parents who can afford it, babysitters can also be found via personal recommendation or in classified advertisements.

Pre-school, in general is not compulsory. Children from two-and-a-half years of age can be enrolled in either public or private crèches, nursery classes as well as kindergartens. Child and Infant Care Stations, Infant and Nursery Schools, Centres for Integrated Care and Children's Creativity are all parallel social structures designed to ease young parents in terms of childcare.

Schooling is compulsory from the age of four. Children who have reached the age of three years and six months on 1 October must enrol in a structure for the upcoming year. Public schooling (including books) is free of charge.

Other activities such as studying foreign languages, acquiring knowledge on information technologies, sports enrolling, dancing, painting or art crafting are supported by a broad network of centralized, decentralized and local public entities as well as private ones, which can creatively occupy children until their late teenage years.



● Unemployment Benefit

If employment is covered by unemployment contributions, the insured person may be entitled to unemployment benefit. The application must be submitted in person, within 60 days from the expiry of fixed term employment or the termination of the employment agreement by the employer. For more information about the prerequisites for the benefit please visit www.oad.gr.

EU/EEA citizens and citizens of Switzerland coming to Greece in search for a job may transfer the benefit they receive in their country of origin for a period of 3 up to 6 months.

● Driving

EU citizens, can drive in Greece if they hold the European Driving License. Under EU Directive 80/1263/ ECC, the holder of a driving license of a European Union country can replace the driving license of the country of origin with a valid driving license of the new country of residence without any further requirements. Information can be found at www.yme.gr/odigos-politi/adeies-odigon

For non-EU citizens, Greek law requires the possession of an official International Driving Permit to show along with one's own driving license. Information about acquiring this kind of document can be found at any competent body for transport issues in the country of origin.

In Greece driving is on the right and overtaking is on the left. The country's road network is in very good condition. Seat belts are compulsory. Children under 12 years are not allowed to sit in the front seat. It is also mandatory to have a first aid kit, a fire extinguisher and a warning triangle.

● Transportation

In Greece there are 15 international airports and 25 national ones, the most important of which are:

- Eleftherios Venizelos, Athens International Airport (www.aia.gr)
- Macedonia, Thessaloniki International Airport (www.thessalonikiairport.com),
- Nikos Kazantzakis, Heraklion International Airport (www.heraklion-airport.com).

The others are mainly located in the islands.

The most common means of transportation in the country is the bus. Transportation among different cities is achieved by the intercity buses or else known as KTEL www.ktelbus.gr.

Islands are connected to the mainland through an extensive network of vessels (www.hcg.gr). Routes may experience delays due to bad weather. During the summer months, almost every remote island is connected by regular ferry, but in winter the routes are reduced significantly.

The trains belong to the Hellenic Railways Organization (www.ose.gr). The railway network is limited and has two main lines. The one connecting Alexandroupoli-Thessaloniki-Athens and via connection up to Kalampaka and Volos. The other one is connecting the main cities of the Peloponnese.



● Gastronomy

Greek gastronomy has a recorded history of around 4,000 years, with special characteristics based on pure and unique quality goods produced on Greek land. In fact, it was Archestratos who wrote the first cookbook in history (330 B.C.).

In contrast to what many people believe about Greek cuisine, one may discover that "moussaka", "souvlaki" and "choriatiki" (Greek salad) are not the only worthwhile Greek dishes. Greek cuisine consists of a large variety of dishes that can fully satisfy the gastronomic quests of both vegetarians and meat lovers.

Greek cuisine has four secrets: good-quality and fresh ingredients, correct use of flavourings (herbs) and spices, the famous Greek olive oil and simplicity.

The most popular spirits are ouzo, tsipouro, local wines and beer. Coffee plays an important role in the daily life of the Greeks. The traditional Greek coffee is served in a small cup and is prepared by baking fine powder roasted coffee beans, in a coffee pot. www.visitgreece.gr/en/gastronomy, www.kerasma.gr



Educational System

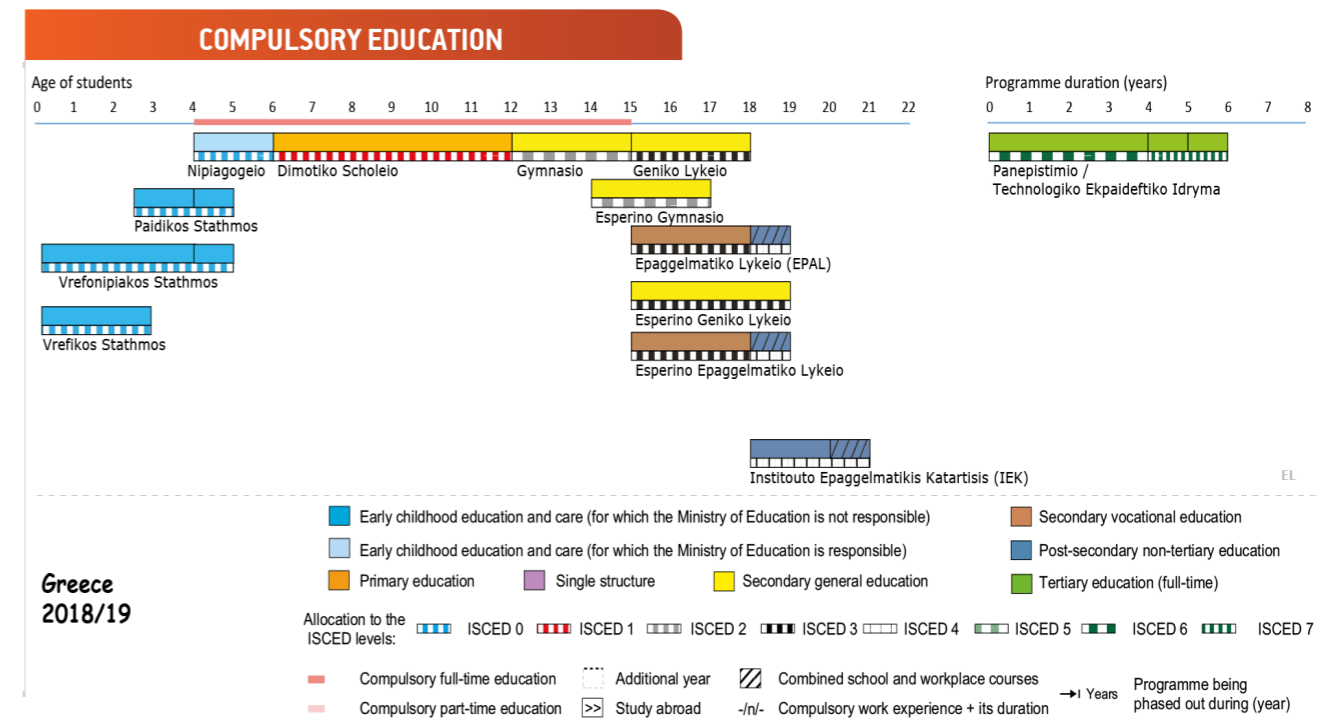


● Formal Education

Although education in Greece is compulsory for all children aged 4-15 years old, their school life can start from the age of 2.5 years. Apart from this pre-school education (crèches, nursery schools and kindergarten – NQF 0), the Greek education system consists of three successive levels: primary (semi or full-day elementary schools – NQF 1), secondary, which is divided into two sub-levels: compulsory Lower Secondary Education (junior high schools – NQF 2) and post-compulsory Upper Secondary Education (general or vocational high schools – NQF 4), tertiary (universities, higher technological and higher non-university education – NQF 5-8).

In parallel with ordinary primary and secondary level education schools there are also schools for special groups of students, namely, intercultural schools for aliens and expatriates, schools for pupils from the Greek-Muslim population of Thrace and independent special schools for disabled children. In the upper level of secondary education there are also pilot-experimental schools (in co-operation with universities), music schools, ecclesiastical schools and sport-oriented sections. There are also second-chance schools for adults who have not completed the nine-year compulsory education.

www.minedu.gov.gr,



● Non-formal Education

Non-formal education is the education provided outside the context of the formal education system and can lead to an official certification. Its main service providers are:

- Schools of Vocational Training (SEK – NQF 3) which provide initial training to graduates of compulsory formal education,
- Institutes of Vocational Training (IEK – NQF 5), which provide initial training to graduates of formal non-compulsory secondary education,
- Centers for Lifelong Learning (non classified), which provide ongoing training, general adult education, guidance and lifelong counseling and
- Colleges, which provide non-formal post-secondary education and training (classification only after certification – NQF 5).

The vocational training programs are short-term and the required number of hours of attendance depends on the subject, the content of the curriculum and the group of people to whom the program is addressed. Many of the programs include theoretical training and apprenticeships in firms; the trainees are usually subsidized for the duration of the program. www.oaed.gr

● Instruction Language

The official language of instruction is Greek. However, specialized courses are being offered at undergraduate or postgraduate level in a foreign language. At the same time, the knowledge of one or more foreign languages is a prerequisite for the admission and attendance of postgraduate programs.

● The National Qualifications Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) is a tool for the classification of qualifications in terms of knowledge, skills and competences that are acquired by people on completion of a learning process. It comprises 8 levels of classification. Both formal and non-formal education structures which are equally provided by public or private sector agencies in Greece can be classified according the NQF. The NQF is also compatible with the European Quality Framework (EQF). Further information about the NQF, the EQF or the educational system in general can be found at www.eoppep.gr, ec.europa.eu/eqf, www.minedu.gov.gr,

● Certification of Qualifications

EOPPEP develops and implements the National Accreditation and Certification System for non-formal education, including initial and continuing vocational training and adult education, and provides scientific support, vocational guidance and counseling services in Greece. www.eoppep.gr

DOATAP (Hellenic NARIC) is the competent body for the recognition of university or technological degrees that are awarded by foreign Higher Education Institutions. The Hellenic NARIC is also responsible for providing information about educational systems and accreditation of institutions in Greece and abroad. www.doatap.gr

More recently, the Council for the Recognition of Professional Qualifications (SAEP) has been designated as the body responsible for the recognition of professional skills. Foreign college and other professional degrees may also be recognized by SAEP.

● Financial Aid for foreign students

The State Scholarships Foundation (IKY) grants scholarships for postgraduate or postdoctoral studies in Greece to all foreigners. Moreover, THYESPA is an IKY program on Modern Greek Language and Culture that is provided freely and involves the parallel learning of the Greek language, provided that there is already a basic knowledge of Greek. There are also scholarships for Greek summer courses at the Universities of Athens and Thessaloniki under the IASON program. Further information about scholarships can be found at www.iky.gr.

Private institution initiatives may also offer scholarships for undergraduate or graduate studies.

● Mobility

Education mobility is encouraged by two distinct European Commission initiatives. On the one hand, **Ploteus** is the European network that aims to help students, job seekers, workers, parents, guidance counselors and teachers to find out information about studying in Europe.

On the other hand, the primary objective of **Erasmus+** is to disseminate information about learning opportunities abroad for individuals and fund mobility projects.

Further information about these programs can be found at ec.europa.eu/ploteus, www.iky.gr/en/erasmus-pluseng and ec.europa.eu/programs/erasmus-plus/.



Emergency Telephone Numbers

International Telephone Code: +30

European Emergency Number (Police/Medical/Fire): 112

Police-Immediate Response: 100

EKAB Ambulance Service: 166

Fire Brigade: 199

Police Call Center: 1033

Marine Police Immediate Intervention: 108

Counterterrorism Agency: 1014

Forest Agency: 191

E.L.P.A (Road Assistance): 10400

Emergencies Hospitals, Pharmacies: 14944

Poisoning Center: 210 7793777

Tourist Police: 171

Time 14844

Weather bulletin 14944

Remember

Before you arrive

- Translate any certificates/diplomas regarding studies or work experience (ask for the U1 document from the Public Employment Service of your country to prove your work experience).
- Transfer the unemployment benefit using the U2 document.
- Get a European Health Insurance Card: ec.europa.eu/social.
- Check the cost of living and transportation of the city where you are going to live.
- Settle taxation matters.

Once you have arrived

- Visit police station after 3 months to get a European Citizen's Card. www.ypes.gr
- If you are working you have to ask for a Social Security Number. www.amka.gr
- You must also issue a Tax Identification Number. www.gsis.gr

Other Useful sites

- EURES – European Employment Services www.eures.europa.eu
- Your Europe – Useful Information and checklists www.ec.europa.eu/yourEurope
- Solvit – Solving problems on the EU/EEA market www.ec.europa.eu/solvit OAED
- – The Greek Public Employment Service www.oaed.gr
- EFKA – the Greek Social Insurance Organization in Greece www.efka.gov.gr
- Official tourism web site www.visitgreece.gr
- Practical guide about living in Greece www.livingingreece.gr





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