

The EURASIA CENTER

Greece: Environmental Overview

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Path to EU Accession:

Greece won independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1829 and has been adding expanding as a nation territorial wise ever since. The nation endured a civil war and a military dictatorship to reach the democratic form of government it has now. It is now a part of the European Union in 1981 and adopted the Euro in 2001 as its form of currency. Greece in the 21st century faces a range of environmental issues that also exist in other Southern European countries. A Few of these are deforestation, acid rain, and waste management.

Demographics:

- Greece boasts a population of 10,706,209. The Greek government does not collect data on ethnicity but based on citizenship, 93% of the country is Greek.
- In terms of religion, the population is almost entirely Greek Orthodox (98%) with an extremely small group of Muslims (1.3%).
- Life expectancy at birth is 76.85 years for males and 82.06 for females. The population is on the decline with a population growth rate of 0.136%.
- The age composition of the population is as follows: 0-14 years: 14.3%, 15-64 years: 66.7%, and 65 years and over: 19%. 97% of the entire population of Greece is literate.¹



The Delphi ruins are not the only reminders of Greece' glory days in the first millennium BCE.

Picture Above: http://magicplanet.org/catalog/images/greece_delphi_01.jpg

¹ "Greece." 2007 CIA World Factbook

Education

- The major education debate in Greece is not the budget for the school system but whether private schools should remain banned (as it was in the Constitution in 1975). Greece also does not also recognize 3-year university degrees.
- The Greek education system has a little over 1.4 million people enrolled in their schools from the primary to post-secondary level. The government spends about 4.7 Billion Euros (or 2.7% of its GDP) on public education. Primary education is 6 years, and secondary education takes 6 years.²

Geography/Natural Resources:

- Greece is located on the bottom of the Balkan Peninsula in Southeastern Europe. The nations that surround it are Bulgaria (to its North), Macedonia (to its west), and Albania (also to its west). The bodies of water that surround the nation are the Mediterranean Sea to its south, Aegean Sea to its east and the Ionian Sea to the west.
- Greece maintains a total area of 309,050 square kilometers, making it slightly bigger than the American state of Arizona. Less than 1/3 of the total area is actual land (130,860 square kilometers).³
- Greece's natural resources do not have much of an economic value. The quality of lignite is low. The forests seem to have been greatly depleted. Yet, the bauxite and iron ore deposits are rich. Greek soil is mostly dry and rocky but there is rich soil in the valleys.⁴
- Greece has a natural gas reserve of about 35 billion cubic feet. From 2001-2004, the Greece's consumption of natural gas has jump significantly (25 billion cubic feet). The country now buys 2/3 of its natural gas imports from Russia and the rest from Algeria.⁵
- It was estimated in 2006 that Greece produced about 4.7 thousand barrels of oil per day. While they consumed an estimated 423.9 thousand barrels per day in 2005.



Greece's Acropolis stands still today as one of the greatest monuments in the world.

Picture Above: www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/europe/greece/images

² "Education in Greece" [Wikipedia](#).

³ "Geography of Greece" [Wikipedia](#).

⁴ "Greece" [MSN Encarta](#)

⁵ "Greece Region Energy Data, Statistics and Analysis." U.S. Department of Energy: Energy Information Administration
<<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Greece/NaturalGas.html>>

- It is estimated that in 2004, that 62% of all energy consumption was oil, followed by coal at 26%, natural gas at 7%, and hydroelectricity at 3%.⁶

Agriculture

- Agriculture employs 12% of the workforce, and accounts for 7% (about \$16 billion) of the Greek GDP.⁷
- Permanent crops compose 8.59% of the land, and arable land accounts for 20.45%, while there is 14,530 square km in irrigated land.⁸
- Key crops include: wheat, corn, barley, olives, wine, and tobacco.⁹
- In 2004, Georgia exported over 360 million dollars worth of cotton and 282 million dollars worth of tobacco leaves. Cheese is the most expensive import to Greece. Greeks bought a little over 336 million dollars worth of cheese. The rest of the top imports were pig meat, alcoholic beverages, beef, and cigarettes.¹⁰

Relevant Environmental Laws and Regulations:

Kyoto Protocol

- An international agreement in which adherents voluntarily sign up to limit their carbon emissions in an effort to reduce global warming. Additionally, nations can buy and sell emission credits in order to fulfill their pledge.

Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty

- The goal of this act is to provide comprehensive protection of the Antarctic environment and dependant/associated ecosystems. This applies to area covered by the Antarctic Treaty
- It was adopted in 1998, by 27 other countries including the US, UK, and Germany while 15 nations have yet to ratify it.¹¹

Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

- It was opened for signature in June of 1998 but it has yet to be put into force.
- The agreement tries to control and reduce emissions of organic pollutants, so their transboundary fluxes will be reduced. This has been enacted in order to save human health and the environment.

⁶ "Greece Region Energy Data, Statistics and Analysis." U.S. Department of Energy: Energy Information Administration <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Greece/Profile.html>>

⁷ "Agriculture in Greece" [Wikipedia](#).

⁸ "Greece." [2006 CIA World Factbook](#)

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ "Greece: Key Statistics of Food and Agriculture External Trade." [Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations](#) <<http://www.fao.org/es/ess/toptrade/trade.asp?country=84&year=2004>>

¹¹ "Environmental Agreements" <http://www.interopp.org/html/env_agreements.htm#e0035>

- Only two nations (Canada and Norway) have ratified it. Greece is among the 34 nations that have signed the act but has yet to ratify it.¹²

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat

- The objective of this act is to stop the loss of wetlands. It recognizes that problem the loss of wetlands will cause in the future. It also identifies the importance of the ecological functions that the wetlands provide, not only recreationally but economically, culturally, and scientifically.
- The act was opened for signature as of early 1971 and was put into force on December of 1975. 123 Nations so far have ratified this document including Greece.¹³



A Greek monastery sits between the Grand Meteora on one of Greece's many hills.

Picture Above: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Greece_meteora_monasteries.JPG

Current Funding Projects:

Integrated Ecosystem Management in Transboundary Prespa Park Region

- Member countries include Albania, Greece, Macedonia, and the Former Yugoslav Republic.
- The members seek find an integrated approach to ecosystem management that balances economic development with protecting and conserving the regions natural resources.¹⁴

Acknowledgements:

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Under the Supervision and Coordination of: Dr. Samuel Lee Hancock, CM, Executive Director***

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "Integrated Ecosystem Management in Transboundary Prespa Park Region." [International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network.](http://www.iwlearn.net/iw-projects/Fsp_112799469041/view?searchterm=None)