

Greece

Recent policy developments

- There have been increasing decentralisation efforts in recent years. The regions have acquired more powers, starting with the 1997 Kapodistrias reform of local and regional government, transforming into fully separate entities under the 2010 Kallikratis plan (Law 3852/2010; effective from 1 January 2011). Thirteen regional governors and councils are now popularly elected (for a five-year term). Their mandate is to plan and implement policies at a regional level, according to the principles of sustainable development and social cohesion, taking into account national and European policies. Still, many responsibilities remain within the central government's secretariats and the regions rely on transfers for funding. Some metropolitan functions have been allocated to Attica and Thessaloniki (Central Macedonia) within their corresponding regions. The Kallikratis reform reduced the number of municipalities from 1 033 to 325.
- The Kallikratis reform set up seven decentralised administrations that maintain functions that the state decided to retain under its jurisdiction rather than to devolve to the regions. They are governed by a general secretary, who is appointed by the Ministry of Interior, and are mainly responsible for implementing and monitoring central government legislation at the local level in areas like immigration, public property, environment and spatial planning. As the intermediary between the central government and the municipalities, they have a supervisory and monitoring role for the municipalities.
- Currently, the relevant ministries conduct the national regional plan and the regional operational programmes, in the framework of Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020. The emphasis is on boosting competitiveness and entrepreneurship and implementing specific sectoral policies to assist the economic recovery.

Government structure	Municipal-level governments	Intermediate-level governments	Regional or state-level governments
Unitary	325	7 decentralised administrations, appointed by the Ministry of Interior	13

Regional development policy

Lead ministry(ies) or committees	Ministry for Development and Competitiveness
Regional development framework	National Strategic Reference Framework; regional operational programmes (in correspondence with the 13 Hellenic regions). Regional development measures have been strongly aligned with EU Cohesion Policy and are codified under different development laws.

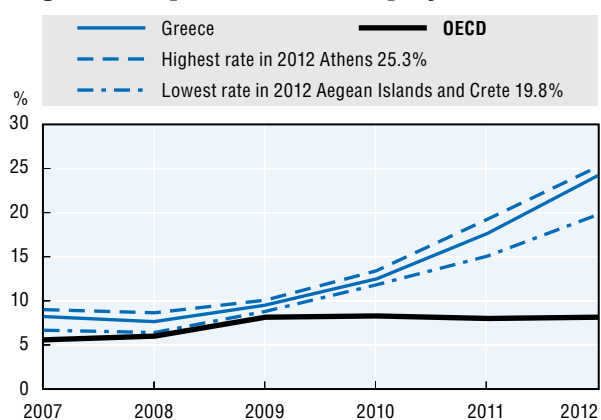
Urban development policy

Lead ministry(ies) or committees	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change
Urban policy framework or strategy	National Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Framework; regional frameworks for spatial planning and sustainable development; Master Plan of Region of Athens/Attica; Master Plan of Thessaloniki

Rural development policy

Lead ministry(ies) or committees	Ministry of Rural Development and Food
Rural policy framework or strategy	The Rural Development Law (2005) sets the framework, and the National Strategy Plan (NSP) for Rural Development provides policy guidance.

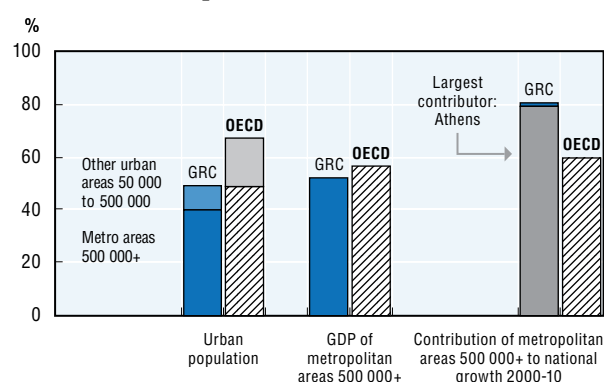
Regional disparities in unemployment trends



In recent years, the unemployment rate has soared in Greek regions such as Athens (25%), and the youth unemployment rate reached 58% in Northern Greece in 2012.

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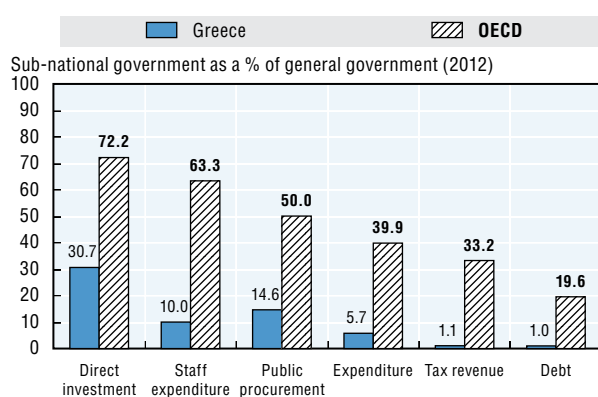
The importance of urban areas



In Greece, 49% of the population lives in cities of different sizes. The share of population in metropolitan areas (urban areas with more than 500 000 inhabitants) is 40%, compared to 49% in the OECD area.

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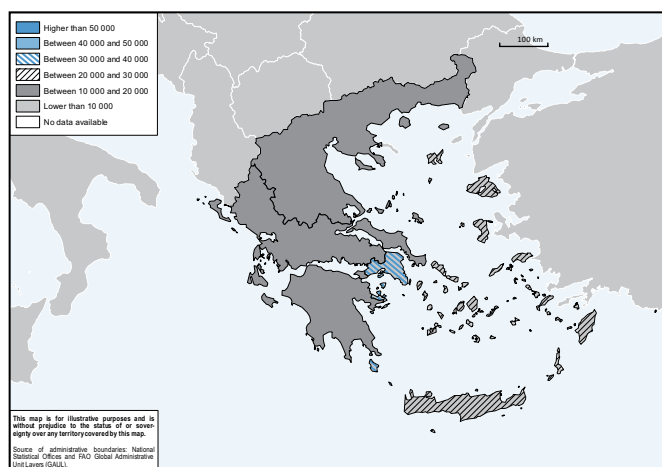
The role of sub-national governments in public finance



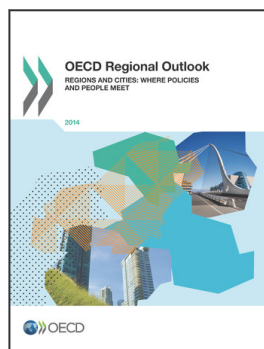
General public services and social protection are two of the largest spending items for SNGs in Greece: they represent 50% of sub-national expenditure, compared to 26% in the OECD area.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933107902>

Regional differences in GDP per capita levels



Greece had the 6th lowest regional disparities in GDP per capita in OECD countries in 2010. In the previous decade, regional growth varied from +3.7% annually in Athens to no growth (0%) in Central Greece.



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