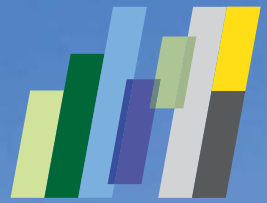


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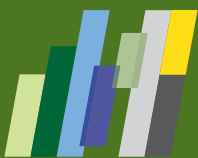


# Greece

HIGHLIGHTS

## 2020





## WHAT ARE EPRs?

OECD Environmental Performance Reviews (EPRs) provide evidence-based analysis and assessment of countries' progress towards their environmental policy objectives.

They promote peer learning, enhance government accountability and provide targeted recommendations to help countries improve their environmental performance. They are supported by a broad range of economic and environmental data. Each EPR cycle covers all OECD member countries and selected partner countries.

All reports, and more information, are available on the EPR website: <http://oe.cd/epr>.

## THE THIRD EPR OF GREECE

Greece is one of the founding members of the OECD. The previous *Environmental Performance Reviews* of Greece were published in 2000 and 2009. The report reviews Greece's environmental performance since 2009. The OECD is grateful to the examining countries: Israel and Portugal.

The EPR provides 49 recommendations, approved by the OECD Working Party on Environmental Performance (WPEP) on 26 February 2020. They aim to help Greece advance towards green growth and sustainable development; implement ambitious decarbonisation policies; strengthen environmental governance; and better mainstream biodiversity into agriculture, fisheries, transport and tourism. Particular emphasis is placed on climate change mitigation and adaptation and on biodiversity.

<http://oe.cd/epr>

*“As the COVID-19 emergency evolves, Greece should promote a resilient, green and inclusive economic recovery. It has opportunities to accelerate the low-carbon transition and scale up efforts to adapt to climate change impacts on water, agriculture and tourism.”*

**Rodolfo Lacy,**  
OECD Environment Director



The environmental performance review (EPR) was completed before the COVID-19 outbreak. It is projected that the pandemic and containment measures will reduce gross domestic product (GDP) by 8% in 2020 if there are no further virus outbreaks, with recovery of 4.5% forecast for 2021. The output and employment losses and budgetary costs from the crisis are expected to be less severe than those experienced over 2009-16, but the negative impact on tourism, investment and public finances is a setback to longer-term recovery.

The government has announced measures totalling EUR 11.4 billion (6.1% of 2019 GDP) to support household incomes and business liquidity in 2020. It is implementing a programme to help the tourism sector. With support from the new EU recovery fund, investment in low-carbon and environmental infrastructure would promote growth.

## GREECE 2019

### Population

11 million

### GDP/capita

(current purchasing power parity)  
USD 31 400  
(OECD average is 46 600)

### Total area

129 000 km<sup>2</sup>

### Population density

80 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>  
(OECD average is 36)

### Currency

Euro (EUR)  
In 2019 USD 1 = EUR 0.893

## Overview

After Greece underwent extensive reforms to cope with a deep recession, the economy started to recover in 2017. The country faces difficult challenges as the COVID-19 crisis hampers longer-term growth prospects (see box). Greece is one of Europe's most biodiverse countries and ranks among the ten most carbon-intensive OECD economies. As a Mediterranean country with thousands of islands, it is highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change. Progress towards sustainable development requires effective implementation of ambitious climate mitigation and adaptation policies, strengthening of environmental governance and enhanced coherence between environmental, energy, transport, agricultural and tourism policies.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- **Ambitious targets to phase out lignite and tap renewable energy potential**
- **Rich biodiversity providing ecosystem services and supporting the economy**
- **EU funding for low-carbon and environmental infrastructure**
- **The National Circular Economy Strategy and action plan to move up the waste hierarchy.**

## CHALLENGES

- **A fossil-fuel-based energy mix**
- **Prevalence of road transport and an old vehicle fleet**
- **Predominance of landfilling and room for improving waste infrastructure**
- **High freshwater abstraction levels, with scarcity issues expected to intensify.**

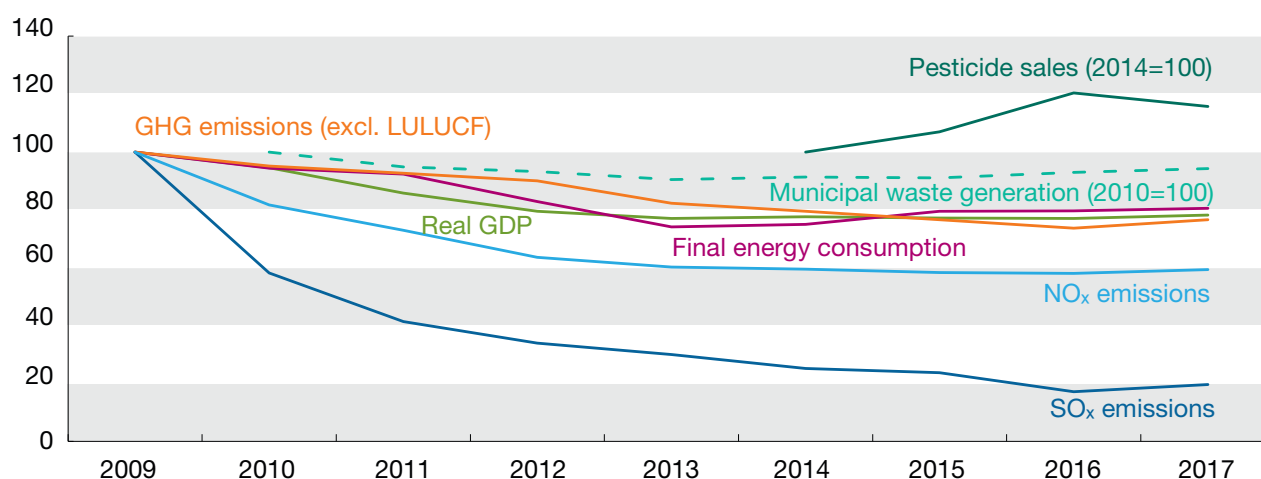


## Environmental performance | key trends

Between 2009 and 2017, major air pollutant emissions declined faster than GDP (Figure 1). Since 2013, however, energy consumption, municipal waste generation and pesticide use have grown more quickly than economic activity. Although the energy mix has shifted towards cleaner fuels, the economy strongly relies on fossil fuels. Greece faces challenges in waste and water management, and air pollution remains a serious concern. Efforts are also needed to address the environmental impact of agriculture.

Figure 1. Progress in decoupling

2009=100

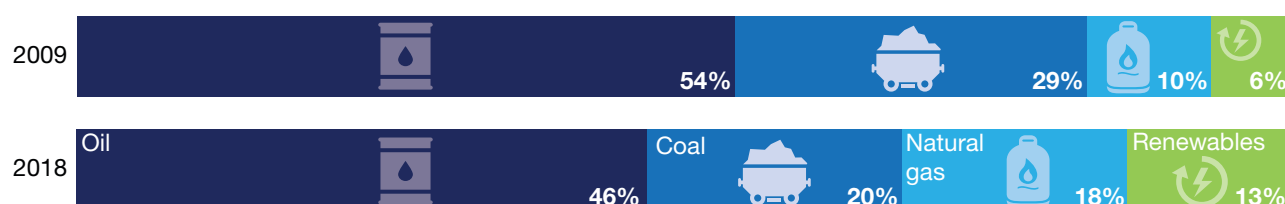


Source: Eionet (2019), NECD Inventory 2019; IEA (2019), IEA World Energy Statistics and Balances (database); OECD (2019), OECD Agriculture Statistics (database); OECD (2019), OECD Environment Statistics (database).

### ENERGY MIX AND AIR QUALITY

- Greece has made significant progress in deploying renewable energy sources (mainly wind and solar photovoltaics) (Figure 2). In 2018, renewables accounted for 13% of total primary energy supply and 31% of electricity generation, above the respective OECD averages of 10% and 26%. The country reached the target set by the EU Renewable Energy Directive for 2020. However, it remains highly reliant on oil and coal.
- Emissions and concentrations of major air pollutants have declined, largely because of reduced energy consumption, abatement measures and use of cleaner fuels. National projections put Greece on track to meet its 2020 and 2030 emission reduction commitments under the National Emission Ceilings Directive.
- Exceedances of EU air quality standards continue to be recorded in urban areas and have significant negative health effects. Greece has fallen behind in developing a national air pollution control programme.

Figure 2. Energy supply mix

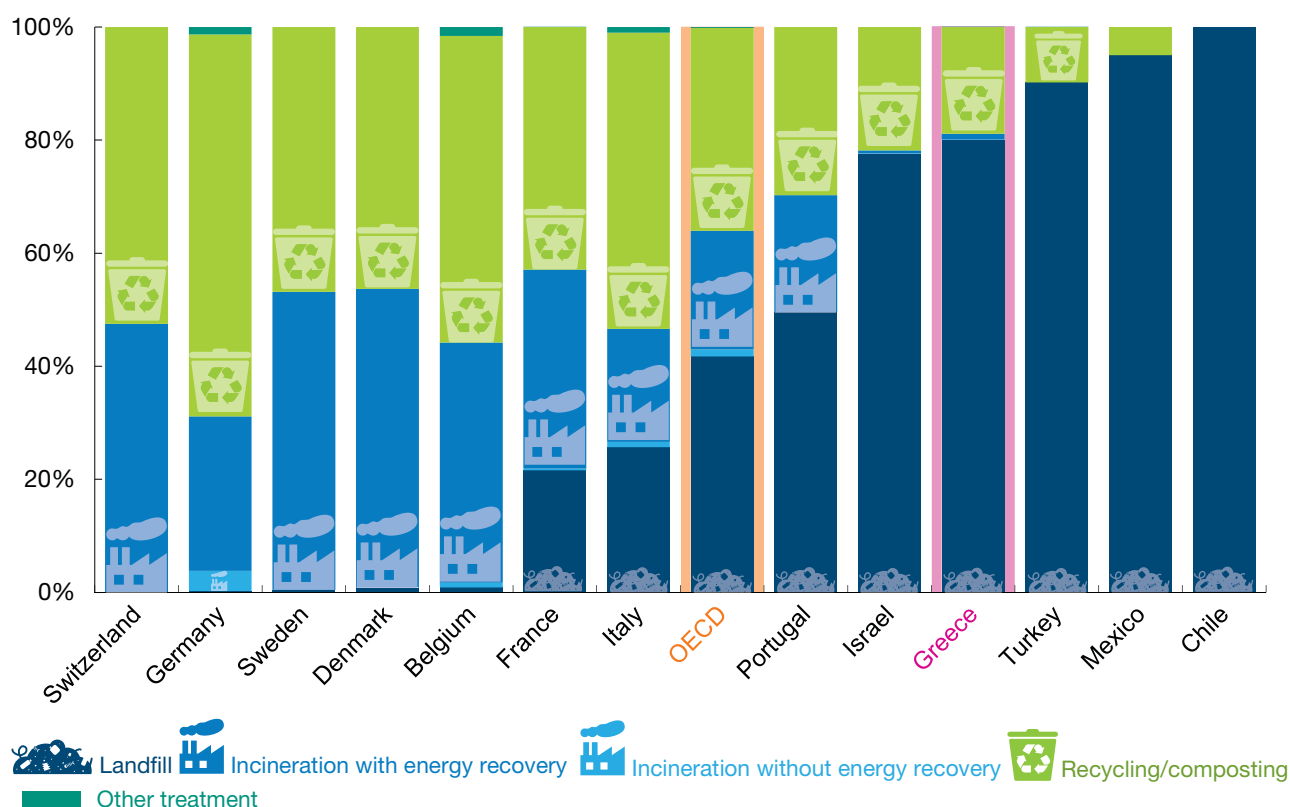


Source: IEA (2019), IEA World Energy Statistics and Balances (database).

## WASTE AND WATER MANAGEMENT

- Greece has adopted a National Circular Economy Strategy and aligned legislation with circular economy principles. Over the past decade, it has made strides in closing illegal landfills and expanding extended producer responsibility systems. A tax introduced in 2018 significantly reduced consumption of single-use plastic bags.
- However, 80% of municipal waste ends up in landfills (Figure 3) and Greece is unlikely to meet the 50% EU reuse and recycling target by 2020. As of mid-2018, more than 50 dump sites did not comply with EU requirements. Large gaps remain in hazardous waste management.
- Greece is generously endowed with freshwater resources, but scarcity issues are expected to intensify with climate change. Freshwater abstraction is high due to irrigation, which benefits from partial cost recovery and reduced electricity prices, and from leakage in the distribution system. Ensuring that prices cover supply costs and reflect scarcity, combined with effective agri-environmental measures, would support sustainable water management.
- A fair share of water bodies achieve good ecological and chemical status. People have access to high quality drinking water and most bathing waters are of excellent quality.
- Trends in water abstraction and quality should be better assessed to address pressures from diffuse pollution and irrigation. Agricultural use of fertilisers, pesticides and water has increased in recent years. Wastewater is not adequately treated in many agglomerations.

Figure 3. **Municipal waste by type of treatment, 2017**



Note: Data refer to household and similar waste collected by or for municipalities, originating mainly from households and small businesses. Includes bulky waste and separate collection.  
Source: OECD (2019), *OECD Environment Statistics* (database).

## Next steps | air quality, waste and water management

- Close and remediate the remaining illegal landfills. Build treatment facilities for hazardous waste.
- Adopt and implement the national air pollution control programme to protect human health.
- Reduce diffuse pollution and encourage water saving through agri-environmental measures.
- Improve urban wastewater treatment in line with the EU requirements.

# Environmental governance and management

**Environmental and spatial planning legislation has been streamlined to reduce the administrative burden on businesses. Increased government transparency has helped strengthen environmental democracy. However, ensuring compliance is a significant challenge.**

## INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- The decentralised governance system with strong regional and municipal autonomy requires clearer division of responsibilities and better vertical co-ordination.
- The 2010 environmental permitting law joined environmental impact assessment and permitting processes and completed cross media integration of environmental permits. Low-risk activities became subject to standard environmental obligations, in line with good international practice.
- Permits based on integrated pollution prevention and control have been introduced for activities with high environmental risk, and their conditions are based on best available techniques.
- Strategic environmental assessment of plans and programmes is regularly used. However, Greece ranks low among OECD countries on the quality of regulatory impact assessment of laws and regulations.
- The cadastre is scheduled to be completed in 2021, but gaps in local land-use planning are compensated through special planning regimes. Illegal construction remains a serious environmental concern.

## COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE

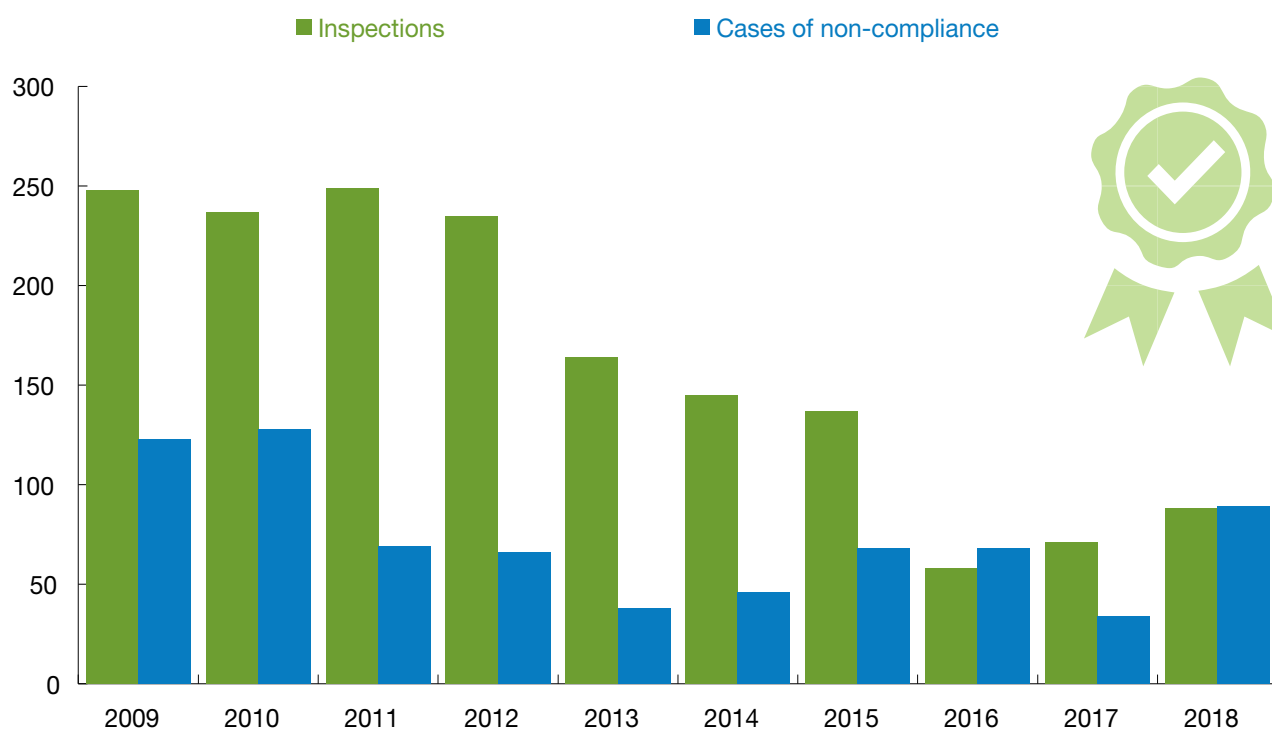
- High rates of non-compliance undermine environmental policy implementation.
- Staff cuts have led to decreased compliance monitoring at the national level despite high non-compliance (Figure 4).
- Inspections are reactive and rarely planned based on risk.
- Administrative fines are high, on average, but about a third remain unpaid.
- Compliance and green practices are increasingly promoted: the number of new ISO 140001 certifications increased from 455 in 2009 to 1 520 in 2017.
- The use of financial guarantees against environmental damage is mandatory for high-risk activities but in practice has so far been limited to hazardous waste management activities.

## ENVIRONMENTAL DEMOCRACY

- Accountability is enhanced by the office of the Greek Ombudsman, which is heavily involved in environment-related cases.
- Online platforms are increasingly used for public consultation and dissemination of environmental information but there is room for improving monitoring systems to assess key environmental trends.



Figure 4. **Number of inspections by the national environmental inspectorate and cases of non-compliance**



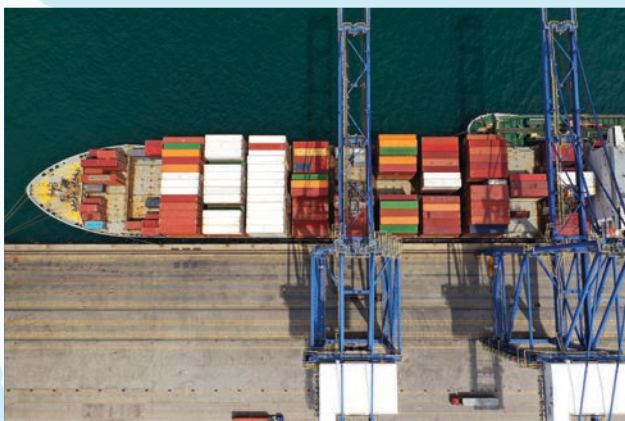
*Note:* Some non-compliance cases registered in a certain year may correspond to a prior year's inspection.  
*Source:* Country submission.

## Next steps | governance

- Enhance information exchange and co-ordination in compliance assurance between all levels of government.
- Improve local spatial planning and limit the use of special planning regimes for strategic investments.
- Increase the share of planned inspections based on risk assessment; strengthen the capacity of all environmental inspection authorities.
- Improve environmental monitoring and information.



## Case studies



### REDUCING AIR POLLUTION FROM SHIPS

Maritime shipping is a major contributor to air pollution in Europe, particularly in port cities. The main emission control measures include reduction of marine fuel sulphur content, combustion process optimisation, exhaust gas cleaning and catalytic reduction.

Connecting ships at berth to onshore power supply (cold ironing) can help reduce NO<sub>x</sub> and PM emissions. In 2018, the port of Killini was the first cold ironing pilot in the eastern Mediterranean. An EU-funded project called ELEMED (for ELectrification of the Eastern MEDiterranean) involves two ports in Greece (Killini and Piraeus). It paves the way for wider implementation in Greece and elsewhere in the region.



### TILOS IS ENERGY INDEPENDENT AND FOSSIL FUEL FREE

The island of Tilos is located in the southeastern Aegean Sea. Its 500 inhabitants used to be supplied with oil-based electricity via an undersea cable from Kos island.

The EU Horizon 2020 programme supported a pioneer hybrid system comprising an 800 kW wind turbine, a 160 kW photovoltaic park and an advanced battery storage system of 2.88 MWh/800 kW. With the use of smart metering and demand side management devices, installed in almost every residence on the island, local consumers on Tilos are actively involved in the operation of the smart microgrid, helping maximise exploitation of local renewables and avoidance of oil imports.

### IMPROVING ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

The Greek Ombudsman is an independent authority whose office is provided for in the Constitution. Its investigators work on cases of poor administrative practice at the national, regional and local levels, with a dedicated team on the environment and urban planning.

In recent years, the top four areas of citizen complaints have involved licensing and monitoring of construction works, use and maintenance of public spaces, protection of natural habitats, and waste management. About 85% of public complaints addressed to the office end up being resolved by the public administration.

The ombudsman's office publishes annual reports and special reports on key issues with recommendations to the government. It also draws on specific cases to submit written proposals to competent authorities on legislative or implementation measures.





### EFFECTIVELY MANAGING PROTECTED AREAS

Schinionas-Marathon National Park in Attica is one of the region's most important coastal ecosystems and an area of high ecological value. It comprises a reconstructed wetland, pine forest, spring, bay, hill and residential and tourist area. It is also home to the Olympic rowing centre, whose construction impact was offset by the establishment of an overflow basin that significantly improved the biodiversity of the wetland and the park.

Since 2018, the park's management authority has expanded its supervision to southeastern Attica by approximately doubling the areas under its responsibility. Resources, however, have not matched the expansion, which entails increased risk, especially related to fire management.



### SUPPORTING THE GREEN TRANSITION IN LIGNITE-DEPENDENT REGIONS

In 2018, Greece established a Fair Transition Fund to devote around EUR 20 million per year of the revenue from auctioning EU ETS allowances to diversify local economies and create new jobs in lignite-dependent regions. The fund is expected to finance low-carbon and low-environmental-footprint projects in the Florina and Kozani regional units and in the Megalopolis municipality. In addition, the Public Power Corporation has funded environment and development projects worth around EUR 130 million in these regions since 2014.

Western Macedonia, Greece's main lignite producer, was selected as a pilot region of the EU Coal Regions in Transition initiative. Greece expects to benefit from the EU Just Transition Mechanism, which aims to mobilise at least EUR 100 billion over 2021-27 (increased to EUR 150 billion in light of the COVID-19 crisis) to support the regions and sectors most affected by the transition towards the green economy.



### ATHENS LEADS ON CLIMATE ACTION

In 2017, Athens adopted a climate action plan for both mitigation and adaptation and developed the Resilience Strategy to become an open, green, proactive and vibrant city by 2030.

The city aims to reduce GHG emissions by 40% between 2014 and 2030 by improving energy performance of buildings and public lighting, installing renewables in public buildings and improving local transport services.

Intensity of heat waves has worsened. The climate action plan aims to enhance green infrastructure and the built environment and to protect public health and vulnerable groups. The city launched a smartphone app, in collaboration with the National Observatory of Athens, allowing citizens to assess their risk during heat waves and get information about nearby cool spots. The European Investment Bank is providing a EUR 55 million loan and technical assistance to support implementation of the resilience strategy.



# Towards green growth

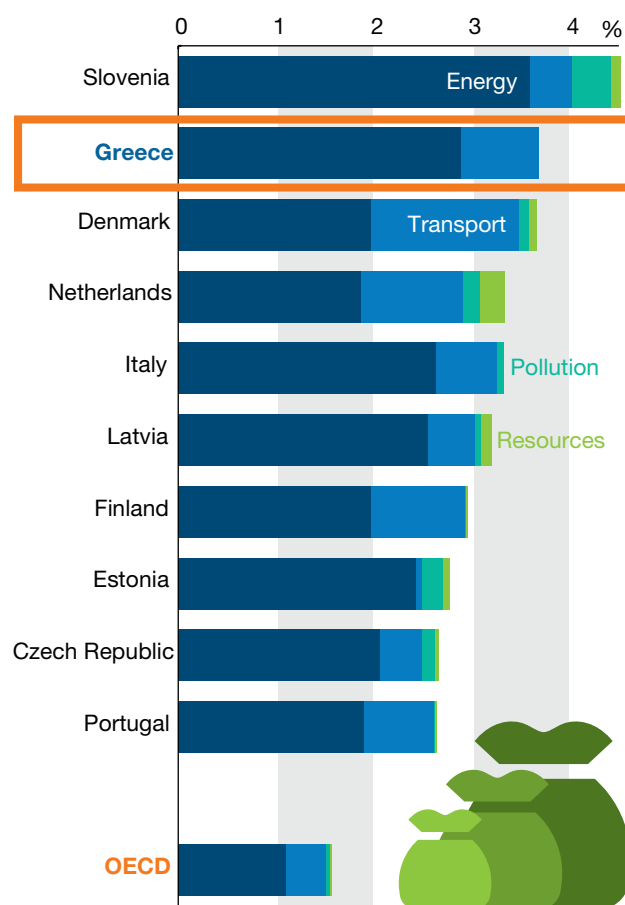
In 2018, Greece renewed its commitment to sustainable development in a voluntary national review on implementation of the 2030 Agenda. However, ensuring coherence between environmental and sector policies, including those on energy, transport, agriculture and tourism, is challenging. Greece has taken steps to accelerate the low-carbon transition. The European recovery fund offers an opportunity to leverage green investment. Greece has raised carbon prices but could better align fiscal incentives with environmental objectives while protecting those in need.

## GREENING PRICE SIGNALS

- Revenue from environmentally related taxes sharply increased to reach 3.7% of GDP in 2018, among the highest levels in the OECD (Figure 5). Despite increased energy taxation, tax variation across fuels and uses does not reflect climate damage of fuel use.
- High support to fossil fuels undermines the carbon price signal. Examples of such support are tax exemptions on specific industrial uses of coal, reduced rates on oil for heating and subsidies for fossil-fuel-based electricity producers.
- Diesel is taxed less than petrol even though it is more polluting. This, combined with an end to a ban on diesel cars in Athens and Thessaloniki and the introduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emission criteria in the circulation tax, has encouraged sales of diesel cars. Varying distance charges according to vehicle emissions on motorways, as planned, would help address air pollution.
- The vehicle fleet is among the oldest in Europe. The economic crisis and vehicle tax reductions for old vehicles have served as disincentives to its renewal.

On average,  
cars are  
**15 years**  
old and trucks are  
more than  
**20 years**  
old

Figure 5. **Share of green tax revenue in GDP**, top ten OECD countries, 2018

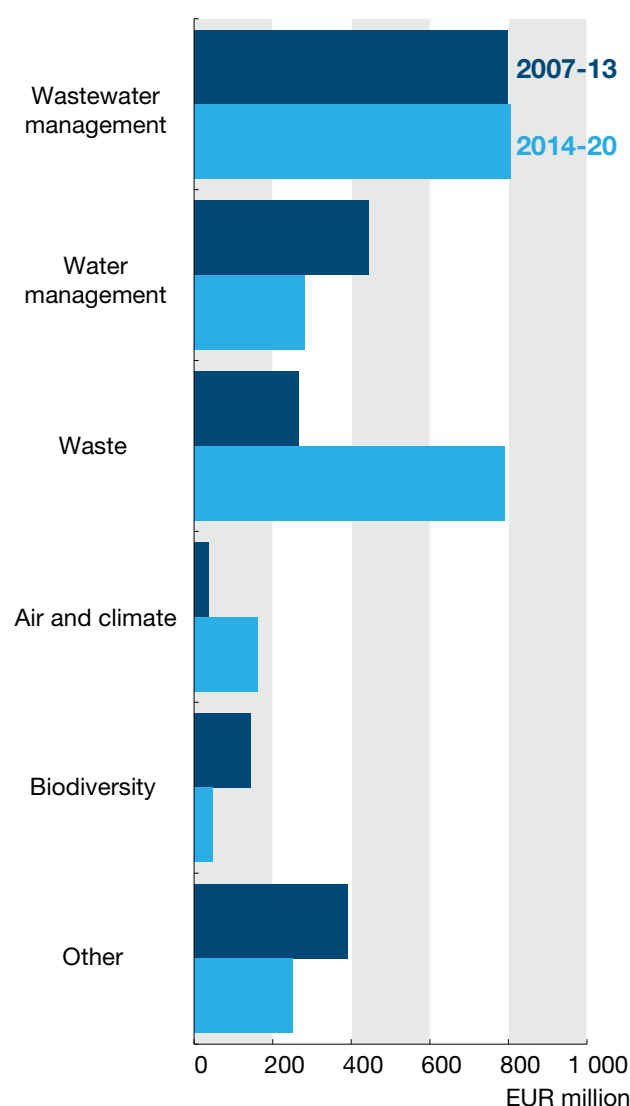


Source: OECD (2019), *OECD Environment Statistics* (database); OECD (2019), *OECD Tax Statistics* (database); EC (2019), Taxation and Customs Union website.



## GREEN INVESTMENT

- Public investment in environmental protection has decreased despite significant EU allocations (Figure 6). Over 2007-13, only 13% of Cohesion Policy funding was spent on the environment. Allocations were increased in the 2014-20 programme period, especially on waste, but projects have been delayed by poor planning and capacity limitations. Effective use of EU funds is key to catching up on environmental infrastructure.
- Tariffs for environmental services should ensure sustainable financing of service provision. Water charges do not fully reflect financial, environmental and resource costs. High public expenditure on waste management is not reflected in the outcomes. Recent laws provides for cost recovery in water services and performance-based waste pricing.
- Social tariffs aim at improving the affordability of electricity and water services. However, they have not been effective in targeting the poorest and they reduce investment capacity. Direct payments, not linked to energy or water use, could help address social concerns and promote more efficient resource use.
- The motorway network has doubled over the past decade. In 2017, investment in roads accounted for 2.3% of GDP, a higher share than in any other OECD country. A lack of sustainable urban mobility plans and poor development of soft transport modes have resulted in continued reliance on cars.
- Greece's eco-innovation performance is modest. Important demonstration projects have been achieved (see Tilos Island, p. 8). Environmental issues, energy and transport are priorities of the National Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation 2014-2020, which has been allocated EUR 1.1 billion in EU funding.

Figure 6. **Operational programmes on environment, 2007-13 and 2014-20**

Note: The chart compares actual spending of the OP Environment and Sustainable Development 2007-13 (EUR 2.1 billion) with allocations for the environmental component (EUR 2.3 billion) of the OP Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development 2014-20 (excluding national contribution).

Source: OECD (2019), *OECD Environment Statistics* (database); OECD (2019), *OECD Tax Statistics* (database); EC (2019), Taxation and Customs Union website.

## Next steps | green growth

- Review tax variation across fuels and uses to provide a consistent carbon price signal. Gradually close the gap between diesel and petrol taxes.
- Identify environmentally harmful subsidies and prioritise which to phase out.
- Harmonise taxation of new and old vehicles. Vary the circulation tax according to air emission standards in addition to CO<sub>2</sub> until road tolls are linked to vehicle emissions.
- Ensure effective use of EU funding for environment-related infrastructure.
- Assess utilities' performance in providing waste and water services to ensure cost recovery and promote efficient resource use.
- Rebalance investment from road to rail. Implement sustainable urban mobility plans and develop soft transport modes.

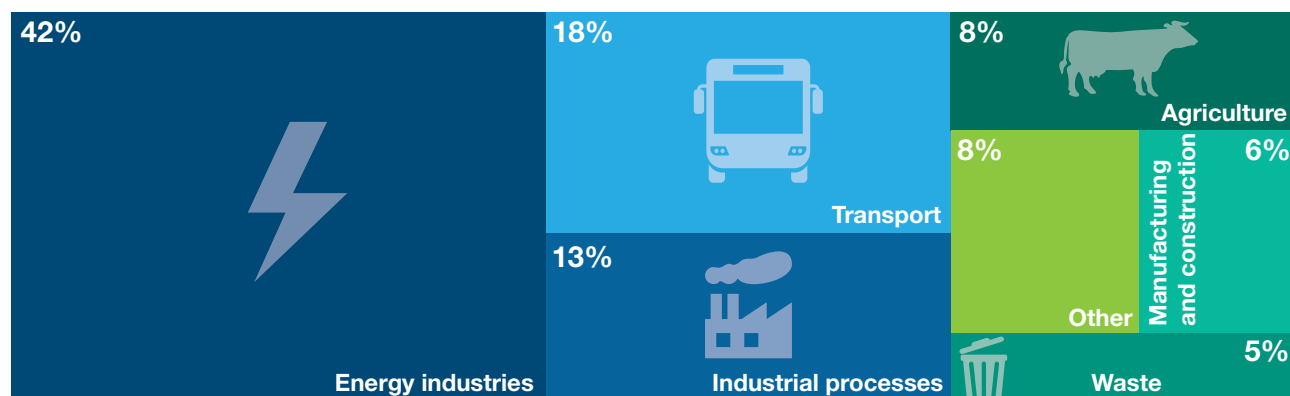
# Climate change mitigation and adaptation

**Greece is engaged in an ambitious energy transition. The government announced a lignite phase-out by 2028 and endorsed a National Energy and Climate Plan to 2030. However, achieving climate neutrality by 2050 is challenging. As a Mediterranean country with thousands of islands, Greece is highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change. It should pursue adaptation efforts, especially in water, agriculture and tourism.**

## GHG EMISSION TRENDS

- Most GHG emissions come from energy industry and transport (Figure 7). Greece ranks among the ten most carbon-intensive economies in the OECD owing to significant reliance on coal for power generation and on oil for transport, heating and power generation on many islands.
- GHG emissions have steeply declined (Figure 8). The economic crisis, which reduced energy demand, explains much of the decline, although the shift towards cleaner fuels has also played a role. Greece surpassed its target for the first Kyoto Protocol commitment period. It is on track to meet the 2020 and 2030 targets for GHG emissions not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System.

Figure 7. **Share of GHG emissions by source, 2017**



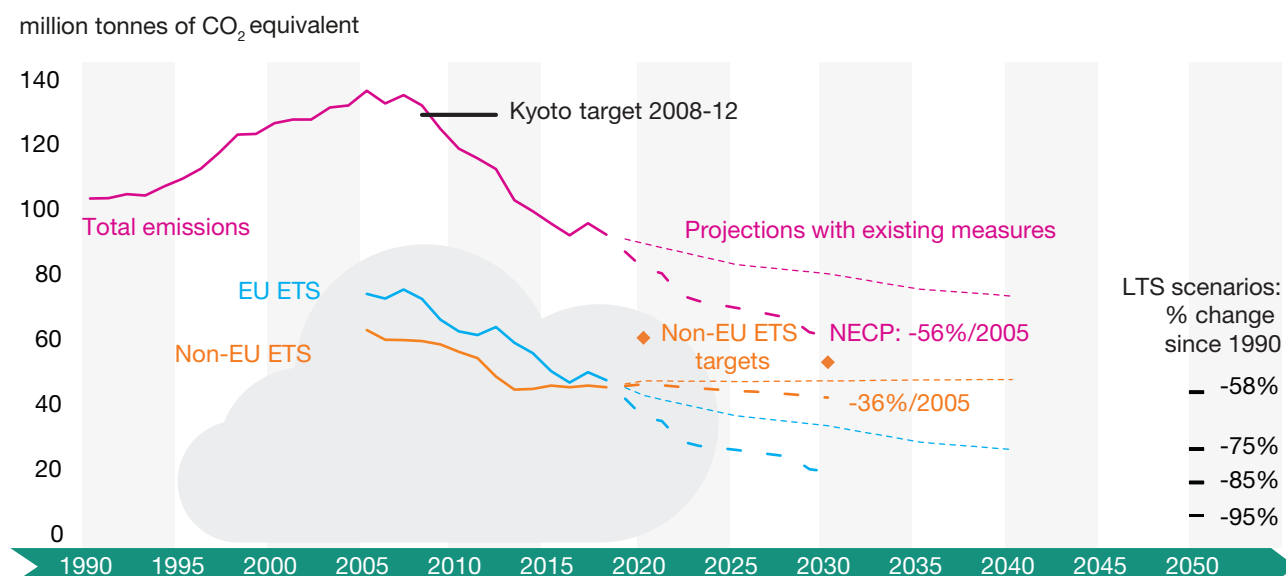
Note: GHG emissions excluding land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF).  
Source: OECD (2019), OECD Environment Statistics (database).

## MITIGATION

- The National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) envisages emissions declining primarily due to decreases from power generation, with emissions in non-energy sectors falling slightly. Promotion of natural gas and renewables, interconnection of islands with the mainland grid and decommissioning of lignite power units are the main measures. Mitigation policies in agriculture, LULUCF, transport, waste could be further detailed.
- Investment needs for renewables and energy efficiency are estimated at more than 2% of 2018 GDP annually. Greece replaced feed-in tariffs with a feed-in premium system with auctions that is more market-oriented and should reduce public support costs for renewables. Developing storage systems will help exploit small islands' renewables potential (see Tilos Island, p. 8). The NECP plans to renovate 60 000 buildings annually until 2030. Beyond effective use of EU funds, developing private funding through energy performance contracts can help overcome limits on access to bank loans.



Figure 8. **2030 targets are ambitious but achieving climate neutrality is a challenge**, GHG emissions, projections and targets



Note: GHG emissions excluding land use, land-use change and forestry. 2018: Preliminary data. 2050: emission reductions in the Long-term Strategy scenarios (LTS). From top to bottom: continuation of NECP measures after 2030; acceleration of NECP measures after 2030; with additional measures in a 2° scenario; with additional measures in a 1.5° scenario. Source: MoEE (2019), *Climate Change Emissions Inventory*; MoEE (2019), *National Energy and Climate Plan*; MoEE (2020), *Long-term Strategy to 2050*.

- Greece has developed a Long-term Strategy to 2050. Additional policies will be necessary, as continuation of NECP measures beyond 2030 will not be sufficient to reach climate neutrality by mid-century.

## ADAPTATION

- By the end of the century, the decrease in precipitation levels is estimated to range from 5% to 19% countrywide while air temperature is projected to increase by between 3.0°C and 4.5°C. Sea level rise and freshwater shortage are the priority associated risks. Without action, climate change may reduce GDP by up to 2% per year by 2050 and up to 6% by 2100. Agriculture is among the sectors expected to be hardest hit, but climate change impacts on tourism and coastal areas will particularly affect household income and the economy.
- The country has strengthened its policy framework for adaptation. However, implementation is a work in progress. As regions are responsible for developing action plans, capacity building and cross-government co-ordination are needed to align policies. Adaptation has been considered in some strategies but progress should be tracked in water, agriculture and tourism.

Extreme climate events like heat waves, droughts, floods and forest fires occur regularly. Greek forest fires in the summer of 2018 were among the deadliest worldwide. In total, 12 066 ha from 34 fires were mapped, of which 2 331 ha belonged to Natura 2000 sites. The Greek network was the sixth most affected in the EU in terms of area in 2018.

## Next steps | climate change

- Implement the NECP to put the economy on a long-term decarbonisation pathway. Phase out lignite on schedule by 2028, pursue island interconnection, invest in renewables and develop storage systems.
- Develop and implement a transition plan to support lignite-dependent areas.
- Strengthen efforts to decarbonise the transport sector and building stock.
- Ensure that adaptation considerations are integrated in water management, agriculture and tourism.

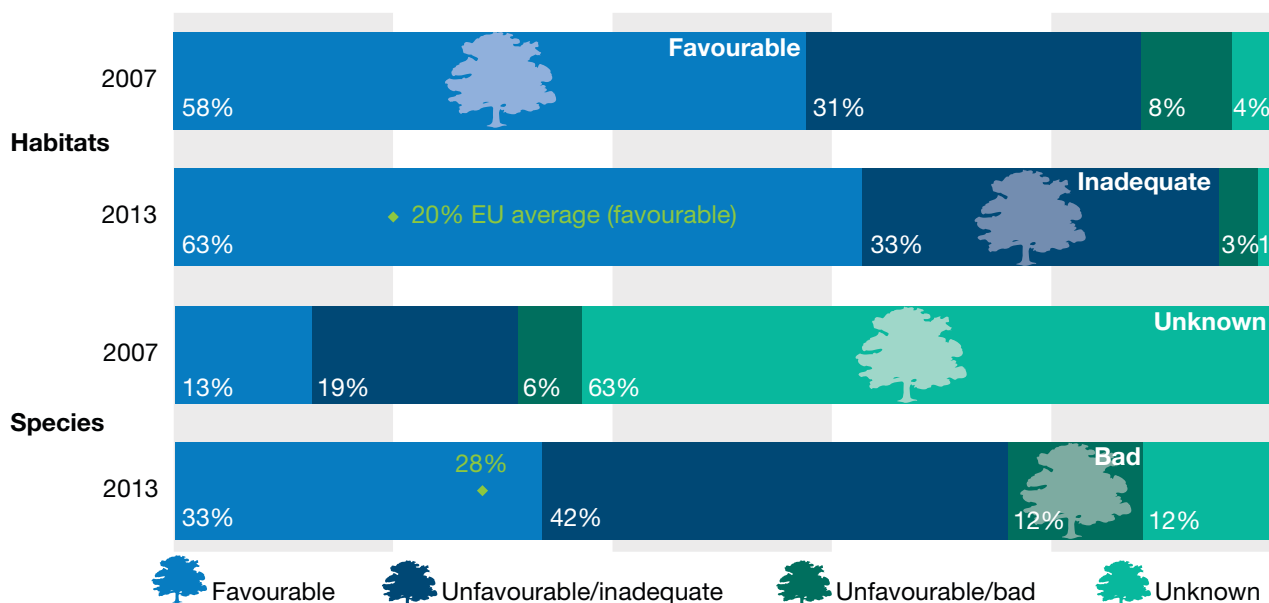
# Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use

Greece is one of the most biodiverse countries in Europe due to its high species diversity, extensive coverage of natural areas, lengthy coastline and thousands of islands, which create diverse landscapes with high aesthetic and cultural value. Habitat conservation status has improved but the status of more than half of species is unfavourable. The main causes of biodiversity loss are urbanisation, habitat fragmentation, pollution, invasive alien species, climate change and fires. Key pressures come from agriculture, fisheries, transport and tourism (especially coastal). Greece has yet to establish a comprehensive national biodiversity monitoring system and improve integration of biodiversity concerns into economic sectors.

## MONITORING BIODIVERSITY STATUS AND TRENDS

- The conservation status of habitats has improved in recent years and is generally positive. The latest report under the Habitats Directive says a majority (63%) have favourable status, one-third (33%) unfavourable/inadequate and only a small fraction (3%) unfavourable/bad. Compared to EU averages, Greece scored significantly better on all indicators (Figure 9).
- More than half of species (55%) have unfavourable status. Root causes include landscape modification, habitat fragmentation, illegal hunting practices and use of poisonous bait.
- Birds are less threatened than other taxa and initiatives to protect selected species, like the Dalmatian pelican, have been undertaken. Still, common birds declined by almost 20% over 2007-16, a similar trend to that in the rest of Europe.
- Greece has not yet established a national comprehensive monitoring system for biodiversity. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) includes targets for monitoring and evaluating its implementation, which should facilitate access to scientific knowledge regarding Greek flora and fauna and fill data gaps.

Figure 9. **Conservation status of habitats and species**



Source: EEA (2019), Habitats of European Interest (database); Eionet (2019), Reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive.



## MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY ACROSS SECTORS

- Greece needs to better mainstream biodiversity into other economic sectors by making explicit links between ecosystem services, biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use in key policy areas.
- Tourism's largest impact is in coastal areas due to infrastructure development, including roads leading to tourist destinations, and overcrowding on beaches. Tourism in these areas puts pressure on the environment during the peak summer season, including excessive water consumption during dry periods. Overpumping can also cause irreversible salinisation of aquifers. Tourists produce large quantities of solid waste, which is difficult for local authorities to manage.
- Biodiversity mainstreaming into agriculture is mostly done through the Rural Development Programme. However, the programme's net effects on biodiversity via agri environmental measures would require a more detailed assessment.
- There are no quantitative national targets on organic farming. Organic farming increased from 7% of agricultural area in 2005 to 9% in 2018. Despite significant EU support, the share has progressed less rapidly than in most countries.
- Greece controls fishing methods with bans on drift nets and pelagic trawling, both of which severely affect protected aquatic fauna (e.g. through bycatch of sea mammals and water birds). Fishing is restricted in certain periods (e.g. during spawning season) to conserve habitats and protect endangered aquatic organisms. More stringent restrictions are applied in protected areas and priority habitats, such as Posidonia oceanica meadows, which are Natura 2000 sites.

Protected areas cover an extensive share of the terrestrial area (**32%**), while marine protected areas account for a smaller share (**around 20%**) of territorial seas.

## INSTRUMENTS FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE

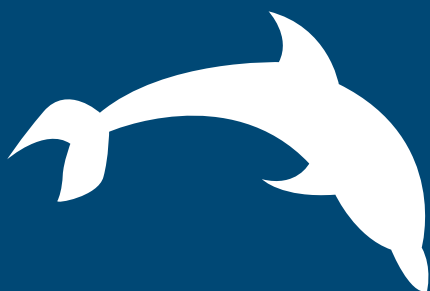
- Aside from charges for groundwater extraction, limited fees for access to national parks and fees for hunting and fishing licences, economic instruments remain underused. Farmers benefit from an electricity tax exemption. Diesel used for domestic shipping, including fishing and tourist boats, is untaxed.
- Only six management plans have been adopted, covering 2% of the Natura 2000 network's area.
- The complex architecture of spatial planning and special regimes for certain investment projects can cause environmental degradation. Illegal construction, particularly on coasts and in forests, remains a major environmental concern.
- Greece lacks an overarching framework for green infrastructure, which is a target of the NBSAP and the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy.



A notable example of threatened species is the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) in the Mediterranean. It nests in Kyparissia Bay in the Western Peloponnese, an area threatened by unregulated infrastructure development.

## Next steps | biodiversity

- Complete the mapping and assessment of ecosystem services in line with international commitments. Update the red list of threatened species.
- Complete management plans for all protected areas with legal force and sufficient resources for implementation.
- Support municipalities in effectively implementing local spatial plans that integrate biodiversity considerations. Develop a strategic policy framework for green infrastructure.
- Support sustainable tourism initiatives and promote thematic forms of tourism in line with protection and conservation of resources.
- Assist farmers in adopting biodiversity-friendly practices and develop organic farming areas.
- Improve the sustainability of fisheries. Revise the regulatory framework for fisheries based on conservation needs.
- Upgrade the national forestry accounts.



# OECD Environmental Performance Reviews Greece 2020

## MORE INFORMATION

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### **OECD Environmental Performance Reviews: Greece 2020**

The report and all data are available on

<http://oe.cd/epr-greece>

**Environmental Performance Review programme**

<http://oe.cd/epr>

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