

## Greek Islands

### Overview:

The Greek islands include close to 6,000 islands and islets (only 227 of which are inhabited) lying in the Aegean, the Ionian, the Mediterranean, and the Sea of Crete. They are sub-jurisdictions of the Hellenic Republic.

### Territory:

The Greek islands, comprising 20% of Greece, are divided up geographically and administratively. Geographically there are seven groups of islands: the seven main Ionian Islands; six along Greece's western coast in the Ionian Sea, and Kythira off the southern coast in the Mediterranean; the six main Saronic Islands off the south-eastern coast of mainland Greece; Crete; the fifty-six Cyclades, twenty-four of which are the main Cyclades, located southeast of the Peloponnese and directly north of Crete; the Dodecanese, including fourteen inhabited and eighteen uninhabited islands just east of the Cyclades; the five Eastern and two Northern Aegean Islands (which are sometimes separated geographically but often represented as one group); and the four Sporades off the eastern coast of the Greek mainland. Administratively Greece is divided into 13 administrative regions known as peripheries and these are further divided into 51 prefectures, which are in turn divided into 147 provinces, composed of 900 municipalities (which contain communities). Crete, the Ionian Islands (minus Kythira); the North Aegean (Chios, Lesbos and Samos); and the South Aegean (including the Cyclades and Dodecanese) form four of the thirteen peripheries of Greece. The Saronic Islands plus one Ionian Island, Kythira, are part of the mainland periphery of Attica. The two northern Aegean Islands are part of the periphery of East Macedonia and Thrace, but one is a part of the prefecture of Evros and the other a part of the prefecture of Kavala. Three of the four Sporades are part of the prefecture of Magnesia, which is a periphery of Thessaly; the fourth and southern most of the Sporades is administratively part of the prefecture of Euboea which is within the periphery of Central Greece.

### Location:

The Aegean, Ionian, Mediterranean and Sea of Crete.

### Latitude and Longitude:

39 00 N, 22 00 E

### Time Zone:

GMT +2

### Total Land Area:

26160

### EEZ:

200

### Climate:

The climate in the Aegean is temperate with hot summers (cooler in the north), and mild winters. Most of the rainfall comes between December and January. Average temperatures are around 15 degrees c in the winter and 30 in the summer. The southern islands get warmer sooner and stay warmer longer, and the northern islands get more of the strong winds from continental Europe. The Ionian Islands receive the highest rainfall in all of Greece, receiving an average of 240mm of rain in the month of December. Despite the rainfall, temperatures are similar to the rest of the Greek islands.

### Natural Resources:

Natural gas, petroleum, sunlight (potential solar energy).

### ECONOMY:

<b>Total GDP:</b>
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<b>Per Capita GDP:</b>
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<b>% of GDP per Sector:</b>		
<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Tertiary</b>

<b>% of Population Employed by Sector</b>		
<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Tertiary</b>

### External Aid/Remittances:

A Regional Development Fund was established at the regional level in order to bring development into line with the rest of Europe. The fund is monitored by the Ministry of the Interior, and Public Administration and Decentralisation. The funds come from the Public Investment Plan and public agencies as well as from the European Union and international organizations. The funds are used to assist regional, prefectural and local development plans. More specifically, they are used to support regional technical studies and surveys, and to implement projects aimed at achieving a more effective management of resource use and tax and fee collection. The funds are also used to improve fiscal administration, to enable the regions to participate in EU programmes. Researching loans from different funding agencies to be used in the execution of public works projects is another area under the responsibility of the Regional Development Fund.

### Growth:

The economies of the Greek islands are growing, but they are also becoming more and more specialised in the service sector, and less diversified, increasing their dependence upon external support and decreasing the amount of people employed in areas that retain a certain level of self-sufficiency and connection to the land and sea (farming and fishing).

<b>Labour Force:</b>
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Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)

**Industry:**

Many of the Greek Islands (especially the Saronic and some of the Aegean) were historically very involved in ship-building. This continues today but on a very small scale. The shipping industry, however, is big business on the islands, both in the transportation of cargo as well as providing transportation for the thousands of tourists that visit the region annually, as well as locals. Land-based industry on most of the islands today is intimately connected to fishing, construction, or wine or olive-oil production. Some of the larger islands, such as Crete, have manufacturing industries mainly connected to processing, packing and shipping of goods. Crete also has mining (of marble), plastic producing industries, and manufacturing industries linked to the production of products that support agriculture. With the discovery of natural gas and petroleum deposits under the North Aegean, industry associated to tapping these resources has also developed.

**Niche Industry:**

Tourism is currently the niche industry for all of the Greek Islands. Agriculture is also highly valued but much less so than in the past. Crete has a number of export-oriented industries such as the production of spare car parts, hospital equipment, biotechnology and software products, which are taking advantage of the specialized knowledge of the islands' technicians and scientists. Directly connected to tourism and their strategic location, shipping is a niche industry in the region, however most (but not all) of the companies are mainland-owned.

**Tourism:**

Tourism is the number one economic sector on the Greek Islands. In 2003 the islands represented 58.5% of all hotels in Greece, hosting 62.6% of all tourists. Many of the islands have turned to package tourism with very little consideration for maintaining the traditional architecture or culture. Main activities are hiking, sunbathing, swimming, water-skiing, wind-surfing, snorkelling, scuba-diving, sailing, fishing, and cycling. Most visitors to the Greek islands are European and Greek, with a small number coming from the US, Canada, and other parts of the world.

Imports and Exports:	
Main Imports: Main imports on most of the islands are similar, perhaps with the exception of Crete, and to a lesser extent, Rhodes. Imports are fuel, mechanical and electrical goods, machinery, vehicles, clothing, and foodstuffs. Main Exports: Ionian: olives, olive oil, grapes, wine, honey, fish; North Aegean: natural gas, petroleum, wine, oilives, olive oil, fish; East Aegean: Chios: mastic, olives, figs, grapes, wine; Lesbos: fish, ouzo, olives; Samos: tobacco, grapes, wine, olive oil, citrus fruit; Sporades: wine, olives, olive oil, fish, fruit, walnuts, honey; Cyclades: wine, fruit, vegetables, wheat, olive oil, tobacco; Dodecanese: olives, olive oil, wine, walnuts, almonds, honey, grains; Saronic: olives, pistachios, fruit, fish; Crete: raisins, wine, olives, olive oil, fresh fruit (mainly grapes, tangerines, melons, water melons, kiwis, avocados, bananas), fresh horticultural products (mainly cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, pumpkins, eggplants, peppers, beans), honey, pharmaceutical and aromatic plants and herbs, bottled water, marble, plastic-based materials, cultivating machinery, arts and crafts.	
<b>Tot. Value of Imports</b>	0.00 ()
<b>From Eu:</b>	
<b>Import Partners (EU:)</b>	
<b>Partners Outside EU:</b>	
<b>Import Partners:</b>	
<b>Tot. Value of Exports</b>	()
<b>To Eu:</b>	
<b>Export Partners:</b>	
<b>Partners Outside EU::</b>	
<b>Export Partners:</b>	
<b>Main Imports:</b>	
<b>Main Exports:</b>	



**TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS**

**External:**

**Number of Airports:**

Ionian: There are airports on Corfu, Kefallonia, Zakynthos, and Kythira. Traffic is limited to charter flights. Olympic Airways flies from Athens to all four airports, and Corfu receives many charter flights from the UK, and other northern European cities. East Aegean: Chios, Lesbos, Samos, Icaria and Lemnos all have airports with between 4 and 5 daily flights to Athens, and weekly flights to Thessaloniki. There are also inter-island flights, as well as flights from Samos to the islands of Mikonos and Santorini. Sporades: Out of the four Saronic islands, only two, Skyros and Skiathos, have airports. Both have numerous flights to Athens and Skiathos has charter flights from European cities. Cyclades: There are airports on Naxos, Syros, Santorini, Mykonos, Paros, and Milos. Olympic Airways links all of these islands to Athens, as well as providing the only inter-island flights. There are also direct flights from Santorini to Mykonos, Thessaloniki, Iraklio (Crete), and Rhodes; and flights from Mykonos to Thessaloniki and Rhodes. Dodecanese: Astypalea, Karpathos, Kos, Leros, and Rhodes all have direct flights to Athens. Rhodes also has direct flights to Iraklio, Kasos, Thessaloniki, and in the summer to Mykonos and Santorini (in the Cyclades) as well as to Kos, Leros and Astypalea. Flights are available between the islands of Rhodes and Kastellorizo, Karpathos and Kassos. Crete: Flights are available from Athens on the mainland as well as from other European cities (mainly charter flights offered during the summer) to Iraklion and Chania. Airlines are Olympic, Air Greece, and Transavia.

**Number of Main Ports:**

**Ionian:** All seven of the main Ionian islands have ports. Ferries run from many ports in the Peloponnese to ports on the islands: from Patras to Kefallonia, Ithaki, Paxi and Corfu; from Kyllini to Kefallonia and Zakynthos; and Piraeus, Neapoli, and Gythio to Kythira. You can also sail from Crete to Kythira, from Igoumenitsa (in the periphery of Epiros) to Corfu and Paxi, and from Astakos (in the periphery of Western Greece) to Ithaki and Kefallonia. Ferries also sail from Corfu to the Italian ports of Bari, Brindisi, Ancona, Trieste, and Venice. Once a week there is a ferry connecting Kefallonia and Brindisi. Traveling between the islands is done by ferry as there are no direct inter-island air services. Even in the summer these ferries can run only once or twice a day. All the ferries take cars. Some islands have inter-town ferries along the coast. **North Aegean:** Thassos and Samothrace can be reached by ferry and hydrofoil service from Kavala, and Evros. **Eastern Aegean:** Chios, Lesbos, Samos, Icaria and Lemnos all have ports with regular service between them and to Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Kavala, Alexandroupolis, Rhodes, Kos, Paros, Mykonos, Santorini, Syros, Patmos, Leros, and Kalymnos. Chios has service to the Turkish port of Cesme; Lesbos to the Turkish port of Ayvalik; and Samos to the Turkish port of Kusadasi (Ephesus). Hydrofoils run in the summer with more frequency than the ferries. **Sporades:** There are ports on all four of the main Sporades. Skopelos has ferries 3 times a day (summer) to Alonissos and Agios Konstantinos; 4 times a day to Volos; 5 times a day to Skiathos; and 3 times a week to Thessaloniki. Skiathos, Alonissos, and Skyros have similar connections. All the islands are also served by hydrofoils which are more frequent than the ferries, in the summer. **Cyclades:** For the purposes of ferry routes, the Cyclades are divided into western, northern, central and eastern subgroups. Most ferries serving the islands connect one of these subgroups to the mainland ports of Piraeus, Lavrio, or Rafina. The most visited central group (Paros, Naxos, Ios, and Santorini) have the best links with the mainland – usually Piraeus. The northern Cyclades (Andros, Tinos, Syros, and Mikonos) also have good connections. The western Cyclades (Kea, Kythnos, Milos, Serifos, Sifnos, Folegandros and Sikinos) have less-frequent connections with the mainland, and the eastern Cyclades (Anafi, Amorgos, Iraklia, Shinousa, Koufonisia, and Donousa) have the fewest links. Ferries to Cyprus and Israel from Piraeus stop at Santorini and Tinos. Ferries and hydrofoils (mainly in the summer) connect the islands to each other and to the mainland. **Dodecanese:** Ferries run between Piraeus and Rhodes (28 hours), and from Crete to the Dodecanese. There are daily hydrofoil services from the north-eastern Aegean island of Samos to the northern Dodecanese, and occasionally from Icaria. There are also ferries and hydrofoils from Rhodes and Kos to the Turkish ports of Marmaris and Bodrum, and day trips from Kastellorizo and Symi to Turkey. All of the islands are connected to each other by ferry or excursion boat as well as hydrofoils from Rhodes to most of the other islands. Most of these services run daily, but the more remote islands only have twice-weekly ferry service. **Crete:** Crete has two main ports at Heraklion and Chania, and two smaller ports at Rethymno and Ayios Nikolaos. Ferries connect Crete to the mainland ports of Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Rhodes, Kalamata, Glythio, as well as some of the Cyclades and Kythira. There are also ferries to the Italian ports of Brindisi, Ancona, Bari, and Venice. Ferries connect towns along the southern coast, as well as connecting Crete to other islands. **Saronic:** All of the Saronic islands can be reached easily by ferry boat or hydrofoil from Perama, a suburb of Piraeus. Hydra and Spetses also have high-speed taxi boats to get from one town to another along the coast.

**Internal:**

**Air**

**Road:**

**Ionian:** Ithaki and Kythira are the only islands without a relatively good bus service. Taxis are available as are rental cars. Lefkada is joined to the mainland by a causeway. **North Aegean:** There are buses, rental cars, mopeds and taxis on both Thassos and Samothrace. **Eastern Aegean:** Cars, mopeds, buses, and taxis are available in Chios, Lesbos, Samos, Icaria and Lemnos. **Sporades:** Cars, mopeds, buses, and taxis are available in Skyros, Alonissos, Skiathos, and Skopelos. **Cyclades:** There are cars and mopeds on the main islands, as well as buses on some of the islands. **Dodecanese:** Cars are available on most islands that are inhabited, as are Mopeds. **Crete:** A bus system runs along the northern coast, and less frequent runs connect the north coast to the south coast via the interior. Cars and mopeds can be rented, and taxis are also available. **Saronic:** As of 2004 a bridge connects the Saronic island of Salamina to Perama, a suburb of Piraeus, on the mainland. Private vehicles are not allowed on Hydra and Spetses, but mopeds can be rented on Spetses.

**Sea:**

**Other Forms of Transportation:**

**Ionian:** Bicycles are for rent, and many walk the shorter distances. **North Aegean:** Bicycles can be rented on both Thassos and Samothrace. **Eastern Aegean:** Bicycles can be rented on Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Icaria, and Lemnos. **Cyclades:** There are bicycles for rent on some of the islands. Walking is the only alternative. **Dodecanese:** Many towns and islands are so small that walking is the way to get around. Bicycles are also available on some of the more tourist-oriented islands. **Crete:** Like the other islands, Crete has bicycles for rent. **Saronic:** Bicycles can be rented, and Hydra and Spetses have horse and carriage transport also, as well as donkeys.

**Economic Zones:**

There are fiscal benefits for business activities opening up services on small Greek islands that have a population of less than 3,100 inhabitants. This legislation applies until 2006 and is aimed at tourist operations and hotels. Businesses that qualify for the regime receive a 40% reduction in all business taxes.

**Energy Policy:**

The Greek islands have an extremely high potential for alternative energy development, as well as an incentive to tap these resources, given the high cost of both importing fuel and distributing it. Despite the potential, currently all of the islands are still predominantly reliant upon liquid fuel (heavy fuel oil and diesel). Nevertheless, an increasing number of energy projects are being developed. There were 63 thermal units installed in the Greek islands with a power of 1,370 MW in total and a production of 4,360,187 MWh for the year 2002. These units are installed by PPC S.A., which is the exclusive provider of electric energy and operator of the electricity supply network in the Greek islands. As of 2004, 50 wind parks with a total power of almost 120 MW and 300 KW of photovoltaic power systems had been installed in the Greek Islands. There was also one small hydroelectric unit (300 KW) and one biogas-burning unit (166 KW) in Crete. As of July, 2004, 19 more wind parks on Greek islands had been approved and more were pending. There is another project underway that involves developing geothermal, biomass, photovoltaic, and hybrid energy sources to fuel desalination plants for the Greek islands. 59% of the funding for these projects is coming from private sources, 30% from the EU and 10% from national sources. Significant progress has been made but there is an extremely unequal development of renewable energy on the islands; there, inequalities are not due to potential.

		Type			Sector					
Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)	Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)

**Official Currency:**  
The Euro

**Banking and Insurance:**

Number of Banks and Credit Unions:  
Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:  
Number of Insurance Companies:



Most of the main islands in all of the groups have both Greek as well as international banks and modern banking and insurance services. Some also have local banks.

#### **Financial Services:**

Modern financial services are available on the main Greek islands for the establishment of local entities, but the islands are not considered an international financial services centre. Some of the more remote islands still do not have access to financial services, or only have access to an extremely limited number of options. This is an issue that has led to public dissatisfaction on the part of islanders inhabiting the more remote islands, and has undoubtedly contributed to migration.

#### **Communications/E-Commerce:**

E-Commerce has taken off in the Greek islands and is a major means of attracting business to the area, especially for tourism. Due to their remoteness, e-commerce is the perfect way for many islanders to advertise their businesses and connect with the rest of the world. All of the major islands and most of the more remote islands have modern communications infrastructure with access to phone, fax, and internet. However some of the more remote islands still have communal phones shared by more than one family, and many inhabitants on both the main and more remote islands simply have not invested in a computer in order to access the internet.

#### **Public Ownership:**

The amount of publicly owned land varies dramatically depending on the island. Foreigners are not allowed to purchase land in certain border areas which are considered to be militarily sensitive. These areas include many of the Aegean islands. Property tax in Greece is relatively low.

#### **Land Use:**

On all of the Greek islands, a large percentage of the total land area is devoted to agricultural production (often times 50% or more). Urban areas are concentrated, and there is little sprawl apart from on larger islands such as Crete.

#### **Agriculture/Forestry:**

Agriculture plays a major role in the economies of most Greek Islands despite the difficulties encountered, such as the small size of plots – which makes the use of mechanized equipment inefficiently; and the severe lack of water on many of the islands, and poor soil quality, both of which reduce annual yields. The Greek government owns two-thirds of the whole country's forestland, and has been promoting reforestation efforts for many years. Despite this, there are very few Greek Islands where deforestation is not a problem mainly due to historical use of the wood for shipbuilding, the effects of grazing in forested (or previously forested) areas, and the ravages of both world wars. Main agricultural products include citrus and other types of fruit, tobacco, almonds, walnuts, pistachios, and a variety of vegetables. Bee farming is very common, as is animal husbandry (goats and sheep) for both meat and milk to make cheese and yoghurt.

#### **Marine Activity:**

##### **Fishing:**

200 m depth, territorial sea: 6nm (there have been numerous disputes with Turkey over continental shelf area). The sea is controlled by mainland Greece. Fishing is carried out at some scale on almost all of the Greek Islands. While it used to be a major source of income for many of the islands, overfishing has led to stock collapses and with the increased revenue from tourism, islanders are shifting away from fishing as a livelihood to the relying increasingly on the service sector. Sponge fishing is still a major component of the fishery on many Greek Islands.

##### **Marine Life:**

Conservation: Greece has two national marine parks – one surrounding the island of Alonissos in the Sporades islands, and one around Zakynthos in the Ionian islands (to provide protection for the island's endangered loggerhead turtles, monk seals, and coastal marine ecosystems). Desalination: The Greek Power Corporation has looked to the US consultants, engineering companies, and manufacturers of desalination equipment and machinery for the provision of materials and services in the construction of desalination plants off the coastal areas of some of the Aegean Islands. The islands of Andros, Syros, Mykonos, and Patmos are at the top of the list to receive these new plants which are expected to produce between 10,000 and 30,000 cubic metres of water a day and cover the needs of between 50,000 and 150,000 island inhabitants.

#### **Critical Issues:**

Many of the Greek Islands have over-developed their shorelines (and many their interiors as well), in the interests of promoting mass tourism. This has led to ugly, unplanned development, overcrowded beaches, and pressure on already limited natural – and especially water resources. The increased traffic, people and development has been threatening marine life for years. The problem has not yet been seriously addressed and unbridled development continues on many islands today. Marine pollution from the many ferries and hydrofoils, dynamite fishing, as well as over-fishing have dramatically reduced fish stocks so that today the seas around all of the islands are severely depleted of marine life. The increasing dependence upon tourism and the service sector in general at the cost of traditional economic pursuits instead of in conjunction with them is leading most of the islands to become overly reliant upon the outside, with little backup if the market were to crash. Unless steps are taken to better manage development strategies, the tourism market will undoubtedly drop in the future as the natural beauty for which the tourists are coming becomes more and more rare to find.

## **JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES**

#### **Capital:**

Ionian Islands: Corfu (except Kythira, a prefecture in the periphery of Attica, whose capital is Athens); Saronic Islands: Part of the prefecture of Attica, whose capital is Athens; Crete: Heraklion; South Aegean: Ermoupolis (on Syros Island – with a suboffice in Rhodes); North Aegean: There are two North Aegean islands. Thassos is part of the prefecture of Kavala, whose capital is Kavala; and Samothrace is part of the prefecture of Evros, whose capital is Alexandroupolis; East Aegean: Mytilene (on Lesbos); Northern Sporades: Part of the prefecture of Magnesia, whose capital is Volos; Southern Sporades: Part of the prefecture of Euboea, whose capital is Chalkis (Chalkida).

#### **Political System:**

Administratively Greece is divided into a number of levels of government. The regional or peripheries are considered the most overarching and are at the state level. There are 13 peripheries. The next level down is the prefectural administration level. There are currently 51 prefectures, composed of 147 provinces. The lowest and most decentralized level of government includes both municipalities as well as communities. There are 900 municipalities in Greece, which are in turn divided into communities. Greece is a Parliamentary Republic. The Chief of State is the President, and the head of Government is the Prime Minister. A Parliament of 300 members is elected every four years. Communities (or localities): The communities are governed by a Communal Council and a Community President who implements the decisions of the communal council. The Council varies in size depending on the number of inhabitants in the community. Communities with a population of less than 2,000 are represented by seven members, and communities with a population over 5,000 inhabitants have eleven members. Municipalities (Demoi): The municipalities are governed by a Municipal Council which makes decisions related to matters of municipal interest that are not the responsibility of the mayor or the town hall committee; the town hall committee; and the mayor, who implements the decisions of the municipal council. The number of Municipal Council members varies depending on the number of inhabitants in the municipality, ranging from eleven for municipalities of 5,000 or less to 41 for municipalities of over 500,000. Likewise, the composition of the Town Hall Committee depends on the number of Municipal Council members; fifteen or less meaning a Town Hall Committee of two plus the Mayor, and more than 31 meaning a Town Hall Committee of six plus the mayor. Municipalities and communities have overall responsibility for the administration of local matters and care for the promotion of social, financial, cultural and spiritual interests of their citizens. Local affairs are all the affairs the range of which does not exceed the municipal and communal territory. Provinces (eparchia): In some cases and within the framework of the second level local authorities, the law makes provision for the creation of administrative subdivisions called «eparchion» mainly in the insular regions and the isolated areas of the prefectures. Prefectures: The prefecture consists of three administrative organs: the prefectural council, the

prefectural committee and the prefect. The prefectural council is responsible for all matters of prefectural interest that are not the responsibility of the prefectural committee or the prefect. The number of council members varies according to population: under 100,000 being represented by twenty-one council members, and over 200,000 by 37. The prefectural committee consists of a chairperson and four members if the prefectural council has up to twenty-five members, or six members if the prefectural council has more than thirty-one members. The prefect is the representative of the local authority and implements the decisions made by the prefectural council. Each prefecture has a financial and social committee, which is a consultative organ with representatives from the local union of municipalities and communities; organizations of employers and employees; chambers and scientific organizations; associations, and the personnel. Representatives at the community, municipal and prefecture level of local government are elected by universal suffrage every four years. Three-fifths of all seats go to the group obtaining the majority and two-fifths to the other groups. Prefectural committee and town hall committee members are elected by direct ballot by the members of the prefectural and municipal councils. Committee members are elected for a period of two years. The competencies of the prefectures are twofold: first the administration of local matters as a prefectural level, and second the administration of public state functions that have been assigned to the prefecture by state law. The prefectural level of administration was created in 1994 in an attempt to promote decentralization. The areas that are not within their administrative jurisdiction are those issues concerning national defense, foreign affairs, finance and justice, the supervision of the local government (which is considered an entirely separate entity from the prefectures), the collection of national statistics, and medical veterinary control border stations, and some functions of the Ministry of Agriculture. Peripheries: The administrative organs of the peripheries are the Secretary General, and the Regional Council. The Secretary General of the region (periphery) is a representative of the government, responsible for implementing government policy at the regional level. He or she is the head of all regional administrative departments as well as the police, and the port and fire brigade services in the periphery. He or she is the chairperson of the Regional Council and of the Regional Development Fund board, and is responsible for co-ordination and supervision of regional services, as well as supervising all public employees who do not fall under the jurisdiction of the prefectures, municipalities, or communities. The Regional Council consists of the Secretary General of the Region as chairperson; the chairpersons of the Expanded Prefectural Self-Administration and the Prefects of the prefectures that belong to the Region; and one representative from the Local Union of both Municipalities and Communities of the Region, one representative from the regional agencies of the chambers of the productive classes, the Technical Chamber of Greece, the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, the Financial Chamber of Greece, the Supreme Administration of Public Servants Unions, the Panhellenic Confederation of Unions of Agricultural Co-operatives, and the Panhellenic Confederation of Workers. The Regional Councils of Attiki, Central Macedonia, Western Macedonia, Northern Aegean, and Southern Aegean have a greater number of representatives. The Council is responsible for formulating proposals to the central agencies of the public sector on public works and policy measures of national importance that concern the region; drafting the regional development plan based on local proposals and within the framework of the national plan; deciding on annual development plans of the prefectures; and allocating funds from the public investment plan to local and prefectural public works. The periphery exercises state responsibility at a regional level. The periphery implements national and EU policies which concern the financial, social, and cultural development of the region; supports central state services at the regional level; plays a leading role in the co-ordination and control of state policies; and connects the state administration to citizens and their concerns. There are very few areas in which jurisdiction falls solely to the local level.

#### **Political Parties:**

Political parties on the islands reflects those on the mainland, which are the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), nationalist, democratic socialist; New Democracy Party (ND), right of centre; Democratic Renewal (DIANA), centrist; Communist Party (KKE), left wing; and Political Spring, moderate, left of centre.

#### **Important Legislation:**

The main legislative texts concerning first and second level local authorities as well as regional administration are: -Law 1416 (1984) for the reinforcement of first level local authorities. -Law 1622 (1986) and P. D. 5111987, which divides the country into regions. -Law 2218 (1994) as modified and completed by Law 2240 (1994) and Law 2307 (1995) which creates the second level local authorities. -Presidential Decree 410 (1995) (Municipal and Communal Code) which codifies the legislation concerning municipalities and communities. -Presidential Decree 30 (1996), which codifies the legislation concerning second level local authorities in a single legal text. -Law 2503 (1997) which makes the Region a new decentralised level of the central State services. -Law 2539 (1997) which forms new municipalities and communities following the merging of the existing ones in each prefecture. -Law 2647 (1998) which transfers competencies from the State both to Regions and local authorities.

#### **Principal Taxes:**

The source of revenues depends on the level of government. Communities and municipalities' sources of revenue differ from that of prefectures. At both the first (community and municipality), and the second (prefecture) levels of local government, local revenues are divided into two categories: ordinary and extraordinary. At the first level of government, ordinary revenues include state budget funds allocated to the local administrative regions, taxes on moveable and immovable property, fees and charges, and other taxes. Extraordinary includes loans, donations, and inheritances; and the auction of assets, as well as any other source of revenue. At the secondary level of government, ordinary revenues come from taxes, fees, charges and rates; moveable and immovable property taxes; special annual grants from the state budget in order to cover the cost of the state responsibilities exercised by regions; a percentage of the Central Autonomous Funds; credits of the Public Investment Budget; and fees, charges and rates that are compensatory. Extraordinary revenues come from fees on the use of works financed by loans; loans, donations, and inheritances; grants from public sector agencies; the auction of assets; EU and other international organization funds; and other sources. All fixed taxes are set by the state by law. Such taxes are imposed on: real estate; the use of pavements, piazzas, and other public areas; advertising; vehicle parking; construction license; the use of natural hot springs (mineral water). Similar taxes are imposed on vessels that are out of commission; income from the rental properties; certain categories of stores, as a percentage of their gross income; private quarries; mines; the cleaning of street markets; embarkation of vehicles in ports for abroad; every new service or work established or carried out by local authorities in their district. There are also charges for the use of municipal or communal markets; the use of slaughter-houses; pasturage; cemeteries; and the trade of drinking water from local springs. Taxes are imposed on electricity consumption in commercial and industrial spaces; real estate transfer; beer, on the value of the beer sold inland; the execution of public works; value of immovable property in incorporated areas; and properties in densely populated areas. Among all these taxes and rates only the tax on beer is levied by the State and allocated to local authorities. The rest are levied either by local authorities or by other public law legal entities (i.e. Public Enterprise of Electricity) on behalf of local authorities.

#### **Associated Power:**

Hellenic Republic

#### **Citizenship:**

The Greek Islanders have Greek citizenship. This affords them the right to move to, work and vote in mainland Greece, as well as on any other of the Greek islands.

#### **Paradiplomacy:**

Local authorities are able to develop international cooperative relationships with local authorities from other states. These relationships are developed by the municipal or communal councils with the consent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The relationships which involve the exchange of artists and/or scientists are governed by bilateral or international treaties signed by both Greece and the other state. The budgets of the relevant local authorities are charged with the expenses disposed of by the municipal and community councils for the twinning, exchanges and invitations of cultural or artistic groups. Within the framework of implementation of European Union programmes, there are also numerous co-operative initiatives between Greek and foreign local authorities. In these cases, local authorities participate jointly with local authorities of other countries as contracting parties in projects carried out by national authorities through the initiative of the EU. Many of the main islands have foreign consulates or consular representatives.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

Ionian: 199,400; North Aegean: 32,000; East Aegean: 225,000; Sporades: 19,100; South Aegean (Cyclades & Dodecanese): Cyclades: 113,050;

Dodecanese: 162,000; Crete: 540,054; Saronic: 22,000. Year 1991 Resident Population: North Aegean: 198,241; South Aegean: 257,522; Crete: 536,980; Ionian: 191,003.

2001			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
Ionian	0	199,400	%
North Aegean	0	32,000	%
East Aegean	0	225,000	%
Sporades	0	19,100	%
South Aegean (Cyclades)	0	113,050	%
South Aegean (Dodecanese)	0	162,000	%
Crete	0	540,054	%
Saronic	0	22,000	%

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up

#### Migration:

Most of the Greek islands have experienced a loss of population due to lack of opportunities and low incomes, as well as natural disasters, such as the 1954 earthquake which levelled most of the Ionian Islands. This trend however seems to be stabilizing on the islands that have developed a tertiary sector, however many of the smaller, less developed and more remote islands are continuing to be depopulated as islanders migrate to larger islands and the mainland. There is a large diaspora of Greeks, many of whom are also islanders, in Cyprus, Egypt, Lebanon, and other Middle-Eastern countries as well as South Africa, Australia, the US and Canada (among other places).

Crude Birth Rate:

#### Life Expedctancy:

Mainland figures: 78.5 (81 women; 76 men).

Crude Death Rate:

#### Ethnicity:

Greek. Main minorities are Turks, Slavs, Albanians, Macedonians.

#### Class Division:

Class divisions on the Greek islands exist to varying degrees. As the economies shift from traditional economic sectors such as farming and fishing to tourism and other services, economic differences become more apparent, but in general Greeks are very interconnected (everyone is related), and everyone takes care of everyone else. Extreme poverty and homelessness are not a problem on the islands today.

#### Languages:

The official language of the Aegean Islands is Greek. Classical Greek is taught in the schools, but each region has its own dialect. Many Greek islanders speak English, and some speak Italian and French.

#### Religion:

The main religion on the Greek Islands is Greek Orthodoxy (95-98%), but there are also smaller groups of other Christian denominations (main concentration of Roman Catholics is in the Cyclades), as well as followers of Islam, and some Jews.

#### Literacy:

Mainland numbers: 99% men; 96% women (2003). In 1928, 40% of those over the age of 15 were illiterate. By the mid 1980's illiteracy had dropped to less than 8% for Greece as a whole.

#### Education System:

Greeks place a very high value on education which is reflected in the right of every citizen to free education from preschool through university level (upon passing the entrance exams at the tertiary level). The Greek education system is followed on the islands. There are 6 years of obligatory primary education, 3 years of obligatory high-school education, 3 years of lyceum, and 3-5 years of university. The Greek government does not recognise degrees conferred by foreign institutions of higher education operating in Greece although many foreign universities do have branches on Greek islands. The University of the Aegean has branches in Chios, Rhodes, Samos and Lesbos; and the Ionian University is located in Corfu. Crete has two institutions of higher education: the University of Crete, with schools in Heraklion and Rethimnon, and the Polytechnic of Chania in Chania. Heraklion is also the base for the Foundation for Research and Technology - Hellas, one of the most important research organisations in Greece. The Foundation comprises 7 research institutes, 5 of them being based in Crete: biology, computer science, applied mathematics, laser and microelectronics, and medical studies.

Total Pre-schools:( )	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	
Second Level:	



<b>Third Level:</b>	
<b>Total Secondary Schools:</b>	
<b>Total Professional Schools</b>	
<b>Universities:</b>	

<b>Number of Schools per Island:</b>										
	<b>Pre-school</b>		<b>Elementary</b>			<b>High-school</b>		<b>Prof.</b>	<b>University</b>	
	<b>Pub</b>	<b>Priv</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Pub</b>	<b>Priv</b>		<b>Pub</b>	<b>Priv</b>

<b>Students Enrolled:</b>					
<b>Year:</b>	<b>Pre-School</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>High-school</b>	<b>Prof.</b>	<b>University</b>

<b>Teachers</b>							
<b>Year</b>	<b>Pre-School</b>	<b>Elementary</b>			<b>High-School</b>	<b>Prof.</b>	<b>University</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>			

### Medical Services:

Information on healthcare is only available for certain islands as separate from the mainland. These are as follows: Ionian Islands: In 1999 the Ionian Islands had 14 healthcare facilities: 6 public hospitals, 2 private clinics, and 6 healthcare centres. In 2000 the islands had 686 doctors and 125 dentists, plus 131 pharmacies. Aegean Islands: The Aegean Islands had 10 public hospitals and 4 private, plus 16 healthcare centres. The total number of available beds in the hospitals and clinics was 1,986, and in the healthcare centres, 111 beds. In 2000 the islands had 1,286 doctors and 349 dentists. In 2000 there were 298 pharmacies: 118 in the Dodecanese, 66 in the Cyclades, 59 in Lesbos, 25 in Samos, and 30 in Chios. Crete: Crete had 32 healthcare facilities in 1999: 9 public hospitals, 11 private clinics and 14 healthcare centres. The hospitals and clinics had a bed capacity of 2,989, and the centres had 99 beds. In 2000 there were 2,614 doctors and 496 dentists in Crete. There were 425 pharmacies.

## HISTORY AND CULTURE

### History:

The history of the Greek Islands has varied widely. Below is a brief summary of the history of the islands for which information is available as distinct from mainland Greece: Ionian Islands: The Ionian Islands were settled by Greeks perhaps as early as 1000 BC. In 734 BC the Eretrian settlement at Kerkyra was displaced by colonists from Corinth. The islands were not very central in Ancient Greek times except for Kerkyra, whose conflict with its mother-city Corinth in 434 BC attracted Athenian intervention and triggered the Peloponnesian War. From the 4th century until 146 BC the islands were under Macedon control. They were then annexed by Rome who ruled them for 400 years, after which they passed to the rule of Constantinople where they remained part of the Byzantine Empire of another 900 years, until the fall of Constantinople to the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The French rulers of the Latin Empire based in Constantinople divided up the Byzantine areas among their allies, the Venetians gaining control of Kerkyra, Paxi, and Kythera which became a way-station for maritime trade with the Levant. The Greeks retook Constantinople in 1261, regaining control of some of the Ionian Islands briefly, but the Venetians gradually gained greater control. In the 15th century when the Ottomans occupied Greece, the islands were the only part of the Greek-speaking territory to escape Ottoman rule. The Venetian rule had a great cultural and architectural influence on the region. The Greek national independence movement took root in the Ionian Islands because they were free from Ottoman rule. In 1797 the French captured Venice, putting the islands under French rule until 1809 (with a brief two-year period of Russian rule in 1798) when the British defeated the French. In 1817 the British granted the islands a constitution, and the islanders elected an Assembly of 40 members, who advised the British High Commissioner. The British improved the islands' communications, and introduced modern education and justice systems. After Greek independence in 1830, the islanders began to resent foreign rule and started pushing for "Enosis" – meaning union with Greece. In 1864 the islands became part of the Kingdom of Greece. In 1941 when the Germans invaded Greece, the islands were given to the Italians except for Kythera. In 1943 the Germans replaced the Italians until 1944 when they became under the control of the communist guerrilla army, ELAS. They have remained a left-wing region ever since. The Saronic: The Saronic islands' history was very closely tied to that of Athens due to their close proximity to the mainland and the power held by Athens throughout history. A naval battle at Salamina was an important turning point in the Persian/Greek war. Throughout the period when Athens was ruled by Alexander the Great, the Hellenistic period, and the Roman occupation (330 BC to 300 AD) the area prospered as there were no wars being fought. During the Byzantine period (300AD – 1453 AD) the quality of life declined, and during the Ottoman rule (1453 AD – 1821 AD) conditions on the islands further deteriorated, Hydra being the only island that continued to prosper under a special arrangement with the Ottoman empire that afforded the islands a certain autonomous status and enabled the islands' fleet to continue trading with the Europe. Despite the 1863 Greek Revolution and subsequent naming of Athens as the new capital, the islands did not begin to prosper again economically until tourism began to take off. The Cyclades: The Cyclades are comprised of around 220 islands which have been inhabited since at least 7000 BC. Many of the islands were occupied by the Minoans between 2000 and 1500 BC. The islands were taken by the Mycenaeans between 1500 and 1100 BC, followed by the Dorians in the 8th century BC. Most of the Cyclades joined the Delian League in 478 BC, and by the middle of the 5th century were members of the Athenian empire. They later fell under the control of the Ptolemies, and then the Macedonians. In 146 BC they became a Roman province, and after the division of the Roman Empire into western and eastern entities in 395 AD, the Cyclades were ruled from Constantinople. The Franks gave the islands to Venice when Constantinople was sacked in 1204. In 1537 the Cyclades came under Turkish rule and became greatly neglected with frequent pirate raids. The piracy led to massive emigration, and by 1563 only five out of the sixteen islands that had been inhabited still had residents. The Cyclades were annexed by the Russians, but then reclaimed by the Ottomans. They became havens for people escaping the massacres during Greece's War of Independence from the Turks. During WWII the islands were occupied by the Italians, followed by another period of depopulation. In the 1970s tourism started to turn the economy around and emigration slowed. Today tourism is booming on the main islands while the less developed islands are struggling to make a living off of traditional occupations such as fishing and farming. The Dodecanese: There are 163 islands in the Dodecanese grouping, of which 26 are inhabited. Twelve of these are main islands – hence the name. The Dodecanese were part of the Minoans civilization for several millennia. They were then ruled by the Achaeans, followed by the Dorians (1100 BC). During the Dorian period the islands began to prosper as an independent entity – they developed a thriving economy and culture. By the early Archaic period Rhodes and Kos emerged as the major islands in the group. The Persian Wars interrupted their development, but the Persians were defeated by the Athenians in 478 BC and the islands joined the Athenian-dominated Delian

league. They were later occupied by the Persians again, who were defeated by Alexander the Great, becoming part of the Macedonian Empire. After Alexander died the islands were split up among a number of generals all wanting to succeed him, developing strong commercial ties with the Ptolemies in Egypt and developing into maritime, commercial and cultural centres. In 164 BC they signed a treaty with Rome enabling them to be aligned with the Roman Empire while maintaining their autonomy, but when Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC the islands were invaded, becoming part of the Empire. In the 1st century, both Saint Paul and Saint John visited the islands, converting them to Christianity and making them one of the first Christian regions. The Dodecanese became part of the Byzantine Empire when the Roman Empire split into east and west. In the 13th century the Italians invaded some of the Dodecanese; the Venetians and Genoese held some of them for short periods. The Byzantine Empire came to an end with the invasion of the Knights Hospitaller who made Rhodes their stronghold. The Ottoman Empire took over in 1522, ruling for several hundred years. The islands paid the Ottoman rulers a special tax in return for a special status that prevented interference or mistreating the population. These guarantees, in combination with their strategic shipping location, enabled them to prosper. The islanders, despite feeling very Greek, did not take part in the Greek War of Independence, continuing instead to maintain their semi-autonomous status under the Ottoman Empire. The islands declared their independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912, proclaiming themselves an independent state. This did not last long as the Italians invaded and established a military protectorate over them. During WWI the islands became an important British and French naval base, but after the war the Italians again took control over all of the region. Mussolini's policies of repression and attempts to impose Italian language and culture on the Dodecanese led to great numbers of islanders emigrating, despite the contribution that the regime made to the improvement of infrastructure. During WWII the Dodecanese were a naval centre, becoming occupied by the Germans in 1943 and remaining under their control until the end of the war. The islands became a British protectorate until they were united with Greece in 1947. Sporades: The Sporades have been occupied by humans continuously since the Palaeolithic period. The took part in the Athenian-led alliance of 478 BC, and were later occupied by the Romans, and then the Byzantines. From 1207 until the Turkish conquest in 1538, the islands were occupied by the Venetians. In 1830 the Sporades became a part of the Greek State. North Aegean: Thassos and Samothrace form the geographical region of the northern Aegean. Thassos was initially settled by the Phoenicians around 1500 BC. They were driven off the island by both the Thracians and the Persians, turning Thassos into a prosperous and civilized region by 400 BC. The island was invaded and occupied by the Persians, who were defeated by Athens. The island then became a member of the Delian League, but heavy taxes levied by Athens, among other things led to disputes between the mainland and the island. In 360 BC the island was taken over by the Macedonians, until Roman occupation in 196 BC. It started exporting wine and merchants from Thassos connected Thrace and southern Greece. They also started exporting marble and olive oil. The medieval period brought a succession of occupations and pirate raids, and the capital was moved to the interior of the island. In 1455 Thassos was occupied by the Ottomans and both the Turkish conquerors and pirates caused widespread destruction on the island. In 1813 Thassos was given to Egypt, and in 1912 it was taken back into Greek hands, officially becoming part of Greece in 1914. In 1916 it was again occupied however by Allied forces, and in 1941 by Bulgaria. Samothrace was the centre for the cult of Cabeiri – a non-Hellenic religion focusing on the protecting of seafarers and fertility. Later in history, the island joined the Delian League also, and was under Macedonian, Roman, Frankish, Genoese, and Turkish rule before joining Greece in the 20th century. East Aegean: The East Aegean consists of Chios, Lesbos and Samos (as well as Limnos and Icaria). Chios was colonized by Ionians but has been occupied by the Persians, was a part of the Delian League and the Byzantine Empire, and went on to be ruled by Constantinople, the Genoese, and the Ottomans. Chios became part of Greece after the First Balkan War of 1912. Lesbos has been inhabited since the Bronze Age, was also part of the Delian League, and is most famous for its poet Sappho. Samos was the classical centre for Ionian culture and luxury. It was a part of the Persian Empire, and during the Peloponnesian War provided its port to the Athenian fleet in their fight against Sparta. Samos went on to be a part of the Roman Empire, the Eastern Roman Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. In 1832 it became a semi-autonomous principality under a Christian head of state, that paid tribute to the Ottomans. In 1913 it became unified with Greece as a result of the Balkan Wars. Crete: The first people in Crete (5700-2800) were hunter-gatherers, who farmed and raised livestock. The Minoans arrived in around 3000 BC bringing with them bronze-making skills – these allowed them to build more advanced boats and expand trade opportunities. After the Minoan civilization ended Crete went through three millennia of occupation by the Mycenaean, the Dorians, the Romans, the Byzantines, the Arabs, the Venetians, the Egyptians and the Ottomans. In 1898 the Turks were removed from Crete and the island ruled by an international administration. Greece and the world powers resisted Crete's desire to be unified with Greece until 1913. During WWII Greece was overrun by German forces, and Crete fought a battle against the Germans and lost, remaining occupied until 1945.

#### Referenda:

Greek legislation does not have a provision for either local or regional referenda. Thus all referenda take place at the national level.

#### Recent Significant Events:

There have been no recent natural disasters that have had a major impact on the economies of the Greek Islands although many of them are prone to frequent (mostly mild) earthquakes.

#### Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

All of the Greek Islands are well known for their traditional music and dances, which vary from island to island. Main handicrafts are embroidery, lace-work, weaving, basket-making, and pottery.

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