

OFFICIAL NAME: Hellenic Republic

CAPITAL: Athens

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Multiparty Republic

AREA: 131,951 Sq Km (50,949 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 10,346,800



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Greece is located on the southern tip of the Balkan Peninsula in South East Europe and the territory also includes several hundred islands in the Ionian and Aegean Seas. It is bound by Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria to the north, Turkey and the Aegean Sea to the east, the Mediterranean Sea to the south and the Ionian Sea to the west. Around 20% of the total land area is accounted for by islands, of which the largest are Crete, Euboea, Lesbos, Rhodes, Khios, Kefallonia, Corfu, Limnos, Samos and Naxos. Mountains and hills dominate the landscape accounting for nearly 80% of the total land area. In the northeast, the Macedonian and Thrace regions are separated from Epirus in the northwest by the Pindhos Mountains, which are a continuation of the Dinaric Alps. The mountain range along the east coast includes Mt. Olympus and continues through to include some of the islands. The Pindhos Mountains continue southeast to Giona and reappear as the islands of Kea, Kithnos, Serifos and Sifnos. Other mountain ranges include Taiyetos in the south and Parnon in the east. In the extreme northeast, Thrace is separated from Bulgaria by the Rhodope Mountains. The principal rivers include the Mesta, Strimon, Arakhthos, Akheloos, Aliakmon, Pinios and Alfios. Major Cities (pop. est.); Athens 772,100, Thessaloniki 384,000, Piraievs 182,700, Patrai 152,600 (1991). Land Use; forested 20%, pastures 41%, agricultural-cultivated 27%, other 12% (1993).

CLIMATE: Greece has a Mediterranean climate with long hot dry summers and mild winters when the majority of rainfall occurs. In the summer the Etesian, a northerly wind, blows across the Aegean Sea while in the mountainous areas, temperatures are generally cooler with severe winter temperatures and heavy rainfall. Average annual precipitation in Athens is 414 mm (16 inches) and the average temperature ranges are from 6 to 13 degrees Celsius (43 to 55 degrees Fahrenheit) in February to 23 to 33 degrees Celsius (73 to 91 degrees Fahrenheit) in August.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Greeks who account for 96% of the population while the "Macedonians of Northern Greece" account for 1.5%, Turks for .9% and 1% are Vlach, Slav, Albanian or Jewish.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 78 persons per sq km (202 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 62.5% urban, 37.5% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 49.0% male, 51.0% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 74.6 years male, 79.8 years female (1990). Age

Breakdown; 19% under 15, 22% 15 to 29, 20% 30 to 44, 19% 45 to 59, 14% 60 to 74, 6% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 10.1 per 1,000 (1992). Death Rate; 9.5 per 1,000 (1992). Increase Rate; 0.6 per 1,000 (1992). Infant Mortality Rate; 8.2 per 1,000 live births (1992).

RELIGIONS: The official religion is Greek Orthodox Christianity which accounts for 98% of the population and there is also a small minority of Muslims which account for 1.5% of the population.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Greek with 98% of the population speaking it, although English and French are also widely understood.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 11.4%, incomplete primary 16.8%, primary 44.1%, lower secondary 6.0%, upper secondary 13.5%, higher 7.4% (1981). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 7,550,000 or 93.2% (1990).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: From 1941 to 1944 the German and Italian Axis forces occupied Greece during World War II. In Aug. 1949 communist rebels known as the National Liberation Front (EAM) were defeated in northern Greece by Marshal Alexander Papagos with the support of the Allies. In 1952 Greece joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In 1954 Papagos signed the Balkan Treaty with Yugoslavia and Turkey. In 1964 George Panadreu won a parliamentary majority and resigned in July 1965 after a clash with King Constantine II over constitutional changes. In April 1967 a military coup led by Col. George Papadopoulos seized power, suspended the constitution and dissolved the Parliament. In Dec. 1967 an abortive countercoup led by King Constantine forced the King into exile and a new constitution was approved by Greek voters in 1968, in which Papadopoulos abolished the monarchy and proclaimed Greece a republic. Later, military leaders overthrew the Papadopoulos government which precipitated the Turkish occupation of Cyprus in July 1974. In Nov. 1974 Greece held its first parliamentary elections in more than 10 years and a civilian government was formed under Constantine Karamanlis who in protest of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus withdrew Greek military participation in NATO. In Dec. 1974 Greece held a referendum which voted against the restoration of the monarchy and a new constitution in June 1975 declared Greece a presidential parliamentary republic. In May 1980 Karamanlis was elected President. In Oct. 1980 Greece rejoined NATO militarily and in 1981 became a member of the European Community (EC). In Mar. 1985 Pres. Karamanlis resigned and was succeeded by Christos Sartzetakis. During 1988 a major financial affair known as the Koskotas Affair alleged the involvement of parliamentary ministers and officials in massive fraud and embezzlement of the Bank of Crete. In Aug. 1988 Greece technically ended its war with Albania which existed since 1940 and in the same month the closure of the US air base at Hellenikon was announced. In July 1990 a co-operation agreement was signed which allowed for a reduced American presence in Greece

and in mid 1990 Karamanlis was again re-elected President. During 1991 relations with Turkey were further strained over the treatment of Turkish-speaking Muslim minority in Thrace as well as the continuing diplomatic problems over Cyprus. On Mar. 11, 1991 a trial linking the former Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou to a \$200 million Bank of Crete scandal began in Athens. In July 1991 the Communist-led Alliance for the Left and Progress when the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) formed its own parliamentary group. In Sept. 1991 Greek anxiety escalated over the independence of the former Macedonian republic of Yugoslavia, raising fears that old hostilities over claims of oppressed Slav-Macedonian minorities in northern Greece would re-appear. As a result Greece has refused to recognize the new state under the name of Macedonia. Also during 1991 there has been a massive increase in illegal Albanian immigrants, although the government has dealt with the problem through mass expulsions. On Oct. 7, 1991 Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis signed a 20-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Bulgaria. In Jan. 1992 the former Prime Minister Papandreou was exonerated of any charges relating to the Bank of Crete scandal, although two of his former ministers were convicted with heavy prison sentences. On January 3, 1992 and April 30, 1992 unsuccessful bilateral meetings were held in an attempt to settle the dispute of the use of the name Macedonia by the former Yugoslav republic while in June 1992 as a result of Greek pressure the EU reluctantly agreed to withhold recognition of the former Yugoslav state, although Turkey, Bulgaria and Russia extended diplomatic recognition of the new republic. Also in April 1992, the foreign affairs minister, Antonis Samaras was dismissed after Mitsotakis held him responsible for the insurgence of nationalism due to his hard line policy of no compromise on the Macedonian issue. On July 31, 1992 the Greek Parliament ratified the EU's Maastricht Treaty with a 286 to 8 vote, following which public-sector wages were frozen, appointments in the public administration were suspended, new taxes were levied and privatization of state enterprises were hastened. As a result there were violent street demonstrations, strikes, mass protest rallies and numerous strikes, although the unrest gradually diminished after the Parliament passed the austerity reforms. During 1993 diplomatic strains continued between Greece and its Balkan neighbors with Albania deporting a Greece priest accusing him of attempting to instigate the union of southern Albania (Epirus) with Greece. On Oct. 10, 1993 elections were held that brought Andreas Papandreou's Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) back to power, following which Mitsotakis resigned as leader of the New Democracy party, a position he had held for 9 years. Following Papandreou's election win he announced his intention to scrap the former Prime Minister's privatization program which had brought down inflation to under 13% and enabled foreign reserves to reach their highest level of over US \$6 billion. Also during 1993 the EU provide Greece with funds for public works that included a subway system in Athens, a new international airport, vital highway networks and large irrigation projects.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Euro divided into 100 cents.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$76,679,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$16,193,000,000 (1993). Imports; Dr 5,050,531,000,000 (1993). Exports; Dr 1,933,432,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$3,293,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; Dr -2,113,500,000,000 (1992). Economically Active Population; 4,118,400 or 39.7% of total population (1993). Unemployed; 9.7% (1993).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the USA, other EU countries as well as the Middle East and North African countries.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Barytes, Bauxite, Chrome, Cotton, Crude Oil, Fruit and Vegetables, Grapes, Iron Ore, Lead, Lignite, Livestock, Marble, Magnesite, Nickel, Olives, Salt, Sugar Beets, Tobacco, Wheat, Zinc.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Aluminum Smelting, Cement, Chemicals, Fertilizers, Food Processing, Steel, Textiles, Tobacco Products.

MAIN EXPORTS: Aluminum, Cement, Chemicals, Clothing, Fruit and Vegetables, Iron and Steel, Metal Ores, Petroleum Products, Pharmaceuticals, Textiles, Tobacco.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 2,479 km (1,540 mi) (1988), passenger-km 1,512,000,000 (940,000,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 660,000,000 (452,034,000 short ton-mi) (1989). Roads; length 103,306 km (64,191 mi) (1985). Vehicles; cars 1,691,070 (1990), trucks and buses 781,320 (1990). Merchant Marine; vessels 1,814 (1990), deadweight tonnage 37,205,340 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 8,016,000,000 (4,981,000,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 114,144,000 (78,177,000 short ton-mi) (1989).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 144 with a total circulation N/A (1993). Radio; receivers 4,085,492 (1993). Television; receivers 2,300,000 (1993). Telephones; units 5,571,293 (1993).

MILITARY: 159,300 (1994) total active duty personnel with 70.9% army, 12.3% navy and 16.8% air force while military expenditure accounts for 5.5% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).