

Greece



GDP real growth rate: 2.8% (2008)
GDP per capita: 32,800 \$ (2008)
GDP per sector: Agriculture 3.5%,
Industry 23.4%, Services 73.1%
Human Development Index: 0.942 (rank 25)
Number of inhabitants (in 000's) : 11,238
Major industries: Tourism, food and tobacco
processing, textiles, chemicals, metal products,
mining, shipping.

Main Issues related to SCP

The main areas of action related to SCP have included the fight against climate change, the reduction of atmospheric pollution, the reduction and rational management of waste products, management of water resources, and the protection of biodiversity and natural areas of special interest. Acoustic pollution continues to be a problem, with important consequences for the tourist industry. However, significant progress has been made in the last few years.

Waste:

Waste management based on recycling in the industrial sector has been adequately established after initial problems in the application of legislation. Despite noteworthy efforts it has not been possible to establish an integrated waste disposal system for the treatment of urban residue.

Water:

The legislative framework from 2003 onwards has introduced a new and global approach to water management with main objectives being the long-term protection of water resources. Emphasis has been given to water management and tariffs, with the aim of reflecting the real cost of the resource. As for the treatment of urban waste water, there is a deficit in treatment plants and, particularly in sewage and drainage systems.

Atmospheric Emission:

Since 2005 Greece has participated in the European Union Trading CO2 Scheme. The National Allocation Plan (NAP) 2008-2012, with the objective of a 16.7% reduction, was approved and is already operational. The major problems of atmospheric pollution are to be found around the large urban centres, the lignite mines and in several industrial areas.

Policies and Strategic Framework

The Greek National Strategy for Sustainable Development dates back to 2002. SCP was one of the main issues incorporated, however no specific chapter was actually dedicated to it, and it was instead treated as a cross subject. The Strategy serves as a framework for different activities relating to sustainable consumption.

Some inter-ministerial agreements are included in this framework - for example, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Development collaborate in supporting both the EMAS system and the eco label. Energy efficiency has been promoted in the public sector through a joint decision involving five ministries.

The National Strategic Plan of Reference 2007-2013 highlights an important deficit still relating to the treatment and elimination of industrial and dangerous waste products. It recommends special attention be given to the most dangerous contaminants (particulate matter, benzene, ozone). The seriousness of the problem increases in abandoned areas where there was previously industrial activity.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

Greece opted to apply the IPPC Directive through an existing system of environmental permits. Permits are based on the Protection of the Environment Law and a ministerial decision which establishes the basis for environmental impact assessment (EIA). Greece has incorporated the EU regulations regarding energy efficiency and the labelling of electrical equipment within its legal code. A recent law offers incentives to save primary energy, avoid energy waste in power plants and aims to promote investment in energy saving. In 2003 a new framework was enforced for the management of water involving a radical reorientation of the Greek administrative capacities and introducing an integrated approach that recognized the ecological function of water.

Subsidies and aid for CP projects are granted solely to companies that have implemented an EMAS, ISO 14001 or a certifiable eco label.

The legal framework for Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) is gradually being established. Only a few isolated cases and pilot projects have been established by local authorities.

Greening Industry and Society

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a very recent concept in Greece. Society and company interest had been limited. However, 2008 marked a turning point, with the official insertion of two international initiatives, UN Global Compact and WBCSD, for the promotion of CSR.

The European Eco- Label has been awarded to more than 130 Greek products, and was particularly promoted in the textile industry and within hotel facilities.

The number of firms implementing EMAS has increased sharply in the last few years. More than 500 installations and organizations are currently registered. The “Competitiveness” Operation Programme supports companies financially during the implementation phase of their environmental management system.

Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) is not very well developed in Greece, despite the first steps having already been taken. The National Bank of Greece launched an “ethical fund” in 2003, but the market for these financial products is

Main Actors and Projects

Major actors in promoting SCP are the **Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Development** and the **National Centre for the Environment and Sustainable Development**

Some important projects supporting SCP are:

The Eco-Textile Project aimed at promoting the eco label system in the Greek textile industry. The main objective was to increase the knowledge of the European eco label among Greek consumers, from 1.2% to 30%.

The “Green Drachma II” Project, financed by the Life-Environment Programme, applied a series of innovative actions, including a campaign to raise public awareness, and the pilot application of the European Eco-Label to improve sustainable tourism in the region of Chalkidiki.

The LEAP project (Local Authority EMAS and Procurement), financed by LIFE and aiming at the development of a more systematic and efficient action for green procurement by local authorities.

