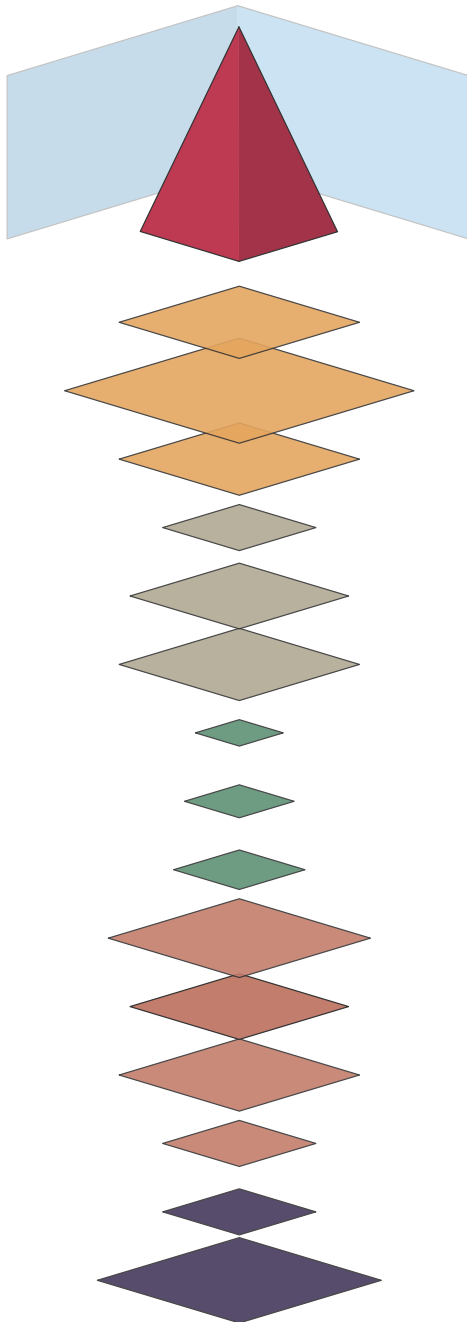


 **GREECE**



 **5.35**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

79th of 193 countries
13th of 44 European countries
3rd of 8 Southern European countries

 **CRIMINAL MARKETS** **4.70**

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	5.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	8.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	5.50
ARMS TRAFFICKING	3.50
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	5.50
FLORA CRIMES	2.00
FAUNA CRIMES	2.50
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.00
HEROIN TRADE	6.00
COCAINE TRADE	5.00
CANNABIS TRADE	5.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	3.50
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	3.50
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.50

 **CRIMINAL ACTORS** **6.00**

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	7.50
FOREIGN ACTORS	6.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	6.50

 **5.17**
RESILIENCE SCORE



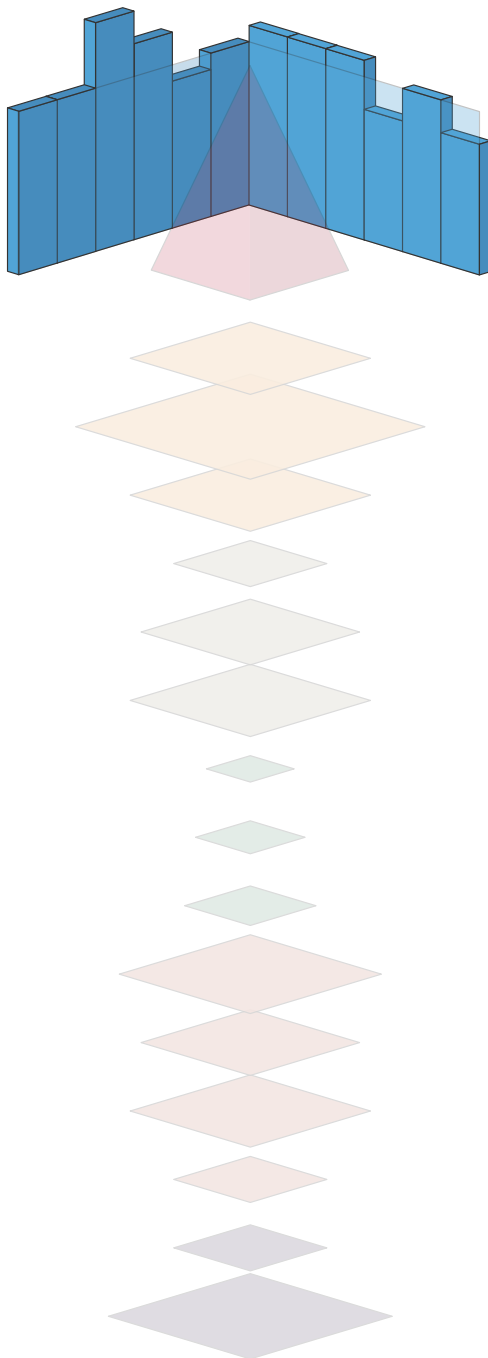
Funding provided by the United States Government.



Funded by the European Union

ENACT is funded by the European Union and implemented by the Institute for Security Studies and INTERPOL, in affiliation with the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

 **GREECE**





 **5.17**
RESILIENCE SCORE

81st of 193 countries
33rd of 44 European countries
6th of 8 Southern European countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	5.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	7.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	4.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	5.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	5.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	4.00
PREVENTION	5.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	4.00

 **5.35**
CRIMINALITY SCORE

 CRIMINAL MARKETS	4.70
 CRIMINAL ACTORS	6.00



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Greece's strategic location as a gateway to Europe through the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean, combined with the demand for cheap services and labour, has made it a hub for human trafficking. Women and girls make up the majority of victims, with sexual exploitation being the primary form of exploitation, although there has also been an increase in forced begging by minors and illegal adoption. Organized criminal groups control the human trafficking market, with Albanian nationals operating about half of the female-trafficking networks in Greece. The COVID-19 pandemic has made identifying victims more difficult, as authorities have forcibly pushed back smuggled individuals and asylum seekers. This has discouraged potential trafficking victims from cooperating with the authorities. Online child sexual abuse and exploitation are also on the rise.

Human smuggling remains one of the biggest criminal markets in Greece, amidst ongoing tensions with Turkey, which has been accused of facilitating the travel of people to Greece. The number of migrants arriving in the country by land or sea doubled in 2022, compared to the previous year. Many rely on the services of smugglers for their journey. Greece is primarily a transit country for smuggled individuals, with the most commonly used route beginning in Turkey and traveling through Greece to Italy. NGOs have also reportedly been implicated in aiding human smuggling networks. Currently, smugglers are using new and dangerous sea routes to avoid heavily-controlled Greek waters, resulting in multiple boat capsizings and numerous deaths.

Extortion and protection racketeering are prevalent in the Attica/Athens region, with compelling evidence of both illicit and licit actors' complicity. Recent assassinations of individuals linked to these networks highlight the severity of this issue. Extortion methods include abductions, illegal detention of smuggled individuals and exploitation of their relatives for payment, with foreign criminal actors often behind these schemes. Protection rackets in establishments such as health clinics or nightclubs are also common and involve threats of violence.

TRADE

Although the local market for arms trafficking is relatively insignificant, there are hundreds of thousands of easily-accessible illicit arms in Greece, mostly stolen from Albanian military caches. The country primarily serves as a destination and transit point, with the main source countries in the

Balkans. The arms are destined for Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Libya and several EU countries. Illegal arms purchases are effortless and inexpensive, particularly in Omonia, where foreign criminals are well established. The ownership of guns also carries a certain cultural status in Crete, resulting in a market for illicit arms. Organized crime groups involved in various criminal activities are typically the suppliers of illicit arms in Greece, with independent actors also working on an ad-hoc basis. The dark web is also frequently used to purchase illicit firearms. Guns are smuggled into Greece by air, sea and land corridors in the south and east, mainly from North Africa and the Levant.

Greece is also a major destination and transit point for counterfeit and pirated goods, thanks to its geographic location and high number of visitors. The country accounts for the vast majority of suspected counterfeit goods seized in the EU, with sea transport playing a significant role in bringing in counterfeit products. Despite the pandemic, detentions related to counterfeit products increased, with the misuse of e-commerce being the most significant trend. Counterfeit products are intertwined with other illicit activities, such as smuggling and trademark infringement, and Greece serves as a gateway for such products to enter the EU. However, it is worth mentioning that, according to recent reports, the trade in counterfeit goods seems to be on the verge of a gradual overall decline in the country from 2021, after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had exacerbated this market.

Illicit trade in excise goods is also a significant problem linked to tax evasion, corruption and fraud. The illicit tobacco market is one of the most significant issues, with billions of contraband cigarettes sold annually. Greece is also a source country for parallel trade in pharmaceuticals, and the number of reported cases of medicines illegally imported from Greece, repackaged and sold to other EU countries has increased. In terms of alcoholic beverages, Greece is one of the EU countries most affected by the illicit market, with millions of bottles trafficked every year.

ENVIRONMENT

There is no evidence of a well-developed local criminal market for plants. Illegal logging for firewood is the most significant flora-related crimes in Greece, primarily driven by austerity measures and rising fuel prices. Greece is mainly a transit country for illegal timber. Albanian organized crime groups are heavily involved in this activity, and the Epirus region is the most vulnerable as a result of its proximity to the Albanian border. Illegal timber from Myanmar also enters Greece via China.

Wildlife crime is also an issue in Greece, as the country serves as a transit point for illegal wildlife trafficking from Northern Africa and Caspian countries to Western Europe. Russian and African crime groups collaborate with Turkish groups to smuggle animals such as birds of prey, caviar and tortoises into Europe. Songbirds and chameleons are among the most poached wildlife in the country, with millions of songbirds killed illegally in the Mediterranean each year. These animals are mostly used for bait, as pets or in gourmet meals. The domestic demand for songbirds is primarily in cities like Athens and Thessaloniki. The situation is further compounded by the lack of law enforcement resources allocated to reduce wildlife crime.

The country is still considered a transit route for various non-renewable resource crimes, such as smuggling petroleum and aluminium to and from Europe and Turkey. Greece's shadow economy and perceived level of corruption create an attractive environment for criminal groups involved in the illegal market for non-renewables, such as illicit fuel and gold extraction. Several cases involving illegal gold trading networks and robberies have been reported, where gold and silver were smuggled abroad to Turkey and Germany. The current economic hardship and the energy market situation may increase the value generated by these phenomena, although their significance will probably remain local.

DRUGS

Greece is a major transit and destination point for the heroin trade. Local organized crime groups collaborate with transnational groups, and the trade is dominated by poly-drug groups consisting of Greek nationals, Albanians and Roma. The transnational routes crossing Greece are estimated to be worth billions of dollars, with Attica, Thessaloniki, Epirus, the Ionian Islands and Crete being hotspots. The heroin is transported through land, air and sea corridors, often concealed on commercial flights, air couriers, postal services or even small boats. Law enforcement officials have noticed a recent increase in the use of an alternative route from Turkey to Greece, and from there to Bulgaria, Albania or North Macedonia.

Greece is primarily a transit country for the cocaine trade, with Latin American criminal groups using it as a gateway to enter European markets. Nonetheless, there is also considerable domestic demand for cocaine, primarily in larger cities such as Athens, Thessaloniki and Piraeus. Greece's location makes it ideal for the direct sea transport of cocaine, with the ports of Piraeus and Thessaloniki being the main entry points. Increasing volume of cocaine seizures at these ports suggest greater maritime trafficking, with the notable involvement of criminal groups from Montenegro, Albania and other Balkan countries. Greece is also a source, destination and transit country for cannabis, which is primarily cultivated by Albanians, while Greeks and Albanians together dominate other aspects of the trade. Apart from domestic European production, cannabis is

also trafficked from Morocco and through Western and Central Europe. Cannabis resin is transported by sea and air, while the plant is mainly trafficked from Albania. The cannabis trade hotspots in Greece are Thesprotia and Ioannina, which border Albania.

The country is also a transit point for synthetic drugs, which are transported from the Netherlands or Bulgaria, with Turkey as the end destination. However, there is growing demand for these drugs at the domestic level, especially among Greek university students and tourists. Although synthetic drug usage rates in Greece are lower than in other countries, their popularity seems to be increasing, with ecstasy (MDMA) pills being sold at low prices. Again, an increase in maritime seizures has also been observed, especially for Fentanyl and Captagon.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cybercrime is on the rise in Greece in recent years, with the state showing only moderate resilience and increasing numbers of victims. While there have been no major reports of significant distributed denial-of-service attacks, government institutions have been targeted with ransomware attacks, highlighting their potential for harm. Smaller institutions and companies have also reported cyberattacks.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes, particularly online fraud, are a significant problem in Greece, with new techniques such as SIM swap attacks being employed to gain access to victims' information, usernames and passwords on online banking platforms. Investment scams as well as phishing through emails and messaging, are also becoming more prevalent. The quality of data regarding the number and nature of financial crimes remains controversial and difficult to ascertain. Moreover, corruption and bribery are pervasive in Greece, with tax evasion a significant problem costing the public treasury billions of euros every year. Greece is one of the EU countries most affected by VAT misreporting, which leads to a substantial loss in revenue. Evidence suggests that financial crimes, particularly tax-related ones, have increased in recent years. Criminals often target vulnerable victims, such as the elderly, or people who purchase products and goods online. Organized crime groups use document falsification equipment or collaborate with counterfeiters and professionals like doctors, lawyers and notaries to carry out their activities. Even banks have been involved in the misuse of public funds and resources to generate profits.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

State-embedded actors are a significant problem in Greece, as police officers have often been identified as members of criminal organizations. The lack of prosecutions carried out for crimes such as drug trafficking highlights

the strong relationships organized criminal groups have historically had with political elites and magistrates. In addition, corrupt politicians award public procurement processes to companies that have bribed them. The private sector also plays a significant role in criminal markets in Greece, with indications of their involvement in corruption cases in sectors such as telecommunications, energy and pharmaceuticals. In some cases, private sector actors are forced to participate in illegal activities, while in others, involvement is a matter of survival. The permeation of crime through the already weakened Greek economy is expected to worsen the situation.

Loose criminal networks are prevalent in Greece, with hundreds of known domestic crime bosses operating in the country. These groups engage in every criminal market and are involved in terrorist groups; they have also infiltrated

the Greek banking system. The presence of foreign mafia groups in Greece also continues to be a problem, with the most prominent European criminal groups, such as Serbian organizations, particularly active in the country. Greek and foreign national actors are known to be complicit in some criminal activities, particularly in drug trafficking. However, Greek nationals largely dominate criminal activities once the drugs, humans or arms arrive in the country. With regard to domestic mafia-style groups, these are known to operate in Greece in various illegal markets, including human smuggling, arms trafficking, drug trafficking and illicit trade in cigarettes, alcohol and fuel. During the pandemic, reduced revenue in nightlife establishments led to an uptick in competition between these groups, with each trying to keep the largest share of the extortion market. They also have significant influence within the prison system.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Greek government's commitment to combating corruption and organized crime is questioned, with critics arguing that the government's anti-crime policy prioritizes combating visible street crime over the activities of criminal organizations. The opposition alleges that police and security departments are understaffed and lack operational plans to combat organized crime, which has led to the country becoming a hub for gangs. Furthermore, the ongoing conflict between Turkey and Greece has created internal fears of the possibility of Turkey's economic crisis being exported to the Aegean. In that case, organized crime groups could take advantage of the situation to carry out activities such as concealing and transporting potential terrorists into Europe.

Despite minor improvements, corruption is still a significant concern in Greece, as it remains ingrained in society. Scandals involving politicians occur frequently, with the vast majority of Greeks believing that the country has a significant problem with corruption, perpetuated mainly by the political system and its clientelism. A major obstacle to achieving government transparency and accountability is the lack of a culture of accountability and meritocracy in the public sector. Additionally, access to information remains poor, and administrative controls and penal investigations are inefficient. Tax evasion and financial crimes committed by government officials, civilians and even NGOs are still widespread.

Greece actively cooperates internationally on matters of defence, security and law enforcement, and has ratified major treaties against transnational crime. It also maintains

extradition treaties with several non-EU states. Greek law enforcement agencies cooperate with their counterparts in other countries to investigate and seize assets related to organized crime. Greece is also committed to promoting stability and security as a NATO ally and enhancing Europe's resilience in the face of security threats from malign actors. In terms of national policies and laws, Greece's legal framework covers all criminal markets, including economic crimes, which have become a concern for the public. Amongst the most recent initiatives, updates to the Criminal Code have been underway, the sentencing for heinous and atrocious crimes has been tightened up and a measure to hasten trial of cases before the Civil, Criminal and Administrative Courts has been implemented. However, the impact of these measures has yet to be assessed and some deficiencies persist.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

The judicial system in Greece is widely believed to lack independence, with corruption and political influence being pervasive issues. Despite recent efforts to address these problems, including tougher penalties for active bribery and increased digitalization in the judiciary, the system still suffers from delays and inconsistent judgments. In particular, the prison system is facing significant problems, such as chronic staff shortages, overcrowding and high levels of violence and intimidation among prisoners. In fact, authorities have acknowledged that the prison system is a hotbed of organized crime and under the control of the Greek prison mafia.

The Greek police intelligence division is responsible for combating all forms of crime, including serious and organized crime and terrorism. However, it faces several challenges, such as performing duties not officially prescribed in policing, an increase in criminality due to economic and migrant crises, and the failure to revise the police educational structure for almost two decades. Furthermore, trust between law enforcement and the public is still low due to incidents of excessive use of force.

Greece has a long coastline, including remote and porous entry and exit points that are vulnerable to criminal activity. Despite this, the Greek state has demonstrated its capacity to defend its territorial integrity. Nevertheless, the Greek coast guard faces the challenge of identifying ever-changing entry and exit points, particularly those resulting from successful feeding strategies employed by smugglers and traffickers. The country is a gateway to Europe for traffickers smuggling cannabis and heroin from the Middle East and Southwest Asia to the West, as well as precursor chemicals to the East. Additionally, the crossing with Albania is another weak spot on the Greek border, historically used by Albanians seeking work in Greece. Furthermore, Greece has successfully built a considerable portion of a border wall with Turkey, complete with high-tech surveillance towers equipped with long-range cameras, heat-sensing capabilities and an artificial intelligence-driven system that monitors the irregular crossing of people along the border wall.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The Greek authorities have been praised for their effective use of financial intelligence to investigate complex organized crime groups involved in money laundering. Each sector vulnerable to money laundering is regulated by appropriate institutions. Overall, Greece is considered a low-risk country for this crime, but certain sectors are particularly vulnerable, including the legal sector, real estate, money- and value-transfer services, and nightlife institutions. Areas in need of improvement include strengthened oversight, implementation of preventive measures, prosecution of money laundering, confiscation of assets, prevention of misuse of legal structures and the non-profit sector, and formal extradition.

Greece suffers from high debt and non-performing loans, limited credit growth and extensive bureaucracy and regulations that hinder business expansion. The COVID-19 lockdowns led to economic contraction. To address these issues, the government has pursued aggressive economic and investment-friendly reforms to adopt international best practices and cut red tape. Despite the fact that Greece has established a secondary market for its non-performing loans, the Greek banking system still holds the largest ratio of non-performing loans in the EU. This constrains the domestic financial sector's ability to finance the national economy.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victim and witness support in Greece remains inadequate due to lengthy proceedings that can last more than five years for human trafficking cases. This has resulted in the acquittal of numerous criminals. However, the national referral mechanism has been effective in promoting collaboration among a range of front-line professionals from state agencies, international organizations and civil society. It has particularly focused on improving the identification of human trafficking victims and increasing the number of shelters for unaccompanied minors. Nevertheless, funding for these shelters is often provided by international organizations, rather than the state. Although the Greek government has implemented a national action plan and four hotlines to prevent human trafficking, it has not allocated sufficient resources to anti-trafficking efforts.

Greek citizens can file digital complaints for a variety of offences related to cybercrime, including illegal access to a computer, trafficking of audio-visual works via the internet and financial cybercrime involving digital currency. However, Greece's current whistle-blower protection system does not meet the required standard. The prosecutor has discretionary power to decide whether a whistle-blower's contribution substantially contributed to uncovering a crime, and protection is not provided if criminal proceedings are not initiated. Additionally, internal and external reporting channels are not available, and disclosures can only be made to the prosecution. Greece's anti-crime policy focuses primarily on repressive measures to combat organized crime, rather than addressing its sources, which hinders prevention efforts.

Freedom of speech in Greece has declined. The press is largely politically polarized and owned by a few individuals with ties to the political elite. The government sought to control the flow of information during the pandemic and refugee crisis, leading to reports of health workers being banned from speaking to the media and journalists being detained or prevented from reporting on events. The legal framework governing NGO registration in Greece hinders civil society organizations from providing services and monitoring the treatment of refugees and displaced people. The registration process is not in line with European and international standards on the freedom of association, and its constant revision leads to confusion, misunderstanding and legal uncertainty. This, along with low social trust and a lack of incentives for donations, has weakened civil society.

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