

## Greece Country Report

<http://gis.ermis.gov.gr/sdportal/index.jsp>

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### *Contents*

1	Introduction .....	3
2	Availability and quality of PSC services .....	5
2.1	Provision of information on the types of administrative requirements applicable to both establishment and temporary cross-border scenarios .....	8
2.1.1	Availability and quality of information .....	8
2.1.2	Good practice: Nice graphics.....	9
2.2	Electronic completion of procedures: coverage and level of sophistication .....	11
2.2.1	Best Practice: STORK functionality – SPOCS modules.....	13
2.3	Assistance to PSC users.....	19
2.4	Overall quality of PSC services for users from other countries.....	19
2.4.1	Language support.....	19
2.4.2	Finding the relevant information on applicable procedures.....	20
2.4.3	Completing procedures electronically .....	20
3	Use and usability .....	21
3.1	Task completion.....	21
3.1.1	Identifying the right procedures and finding appropriate information .....	21
3.1.2	Completion of procedures .....	22
3.1.3	Comparison of results between national focus group and other focus group .....	22
3.2	General usability and user satisfaction .....	23
3.3	Accessibility .....	23
3.4	Take-up, positioning and promotion .....	24
4	Administration, organisation and back office enablers .....	25
4.1	Back office integration and cooperation with competent authorities.....	25
4.2	Finance and resources.....	26
4.3	Status of key technical enablers (eID, e-signatures, e-payments).....	27
5	Future Outlook.....	28
6	Strengths, weaknesses and recommendations.....	31

6.1	Availability and quality of PSC services .....	31
6.2	Summarising expert assessment .....	32
6.3	Use and usability .....	32
6.4	Administration, organisation and back office enablers .....	32

# 1 Introduction

This country report provides an overview of existing Point of Single Contact (PSC) infrastructure and services offered in Greece. The report provides details about the availability and quality of services found during portal testing by eGovernment experts, views obtained from end-users from Greece and Cyprus during focus group sessions<sup>1</sup> about usability of the portal and the views of portal staff and other eGovernment experts about the development and functioning of the portal.

For ease of cross-referencing the text in this document with the appropriate tables, the tables have been placed in a separate annex. Annex B provides the tables referred to in this document. Annex A provides details of six scenarios used during the study; these are referred to in Section 2.

The Greek PSC was built on an existing e-government website, namely ERMIS Infrastructure ([www.ermis.gov.gr](http://www.ermis.gov.gr)) that hosts the official Greek portal for Public Administration providing citizens and businesses alike a central information and e-services hub (e-Government Portal)<sup>2</sup>. The Greek PSC (<http://gis.ermis.gov.gr/sdportal/index.jsp>) was developed as a Guide for service provisioning in Greece and implementation of the Services Directive. The EUGO logo appears on ERMIS homepage directing to the Greek PSC, where the EUGO logo also appears, linking the Greek PSC with the central European Commission PSC homepage ([http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/eu-go](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/eu-go)).

It should be noted that as far as business start up and activity in Greece are concerned, the Greek PSC mostly covers the licensing procedures, whereas the business launching and registration procedures are covered by different governmental sites, such as StartUpGreece ([www.startupgreece.gov.gr](http://www.startupgreece.gov.gr)) that shares information about starting a business in Greece and funding opportunities, and the General Commercial Registry ([www.businessportal.gr](http://www.businessportal.gr)). These portals and their connection to the Greek PSC will be further analysed in this report.

The thematic areas covered by the portal can be found in Table 1. They include: starting up a business (advice on grants, loans, funding, intellectual property), starting up a business (advice on legal structures, company registrations, permits, insurance), taxes and social security issues, international trade, growing a business.

The launch, development and management of the Greek PSC lie within the power of the Hellenic Ministry of Administrative Reform and eGovernance. As far as the

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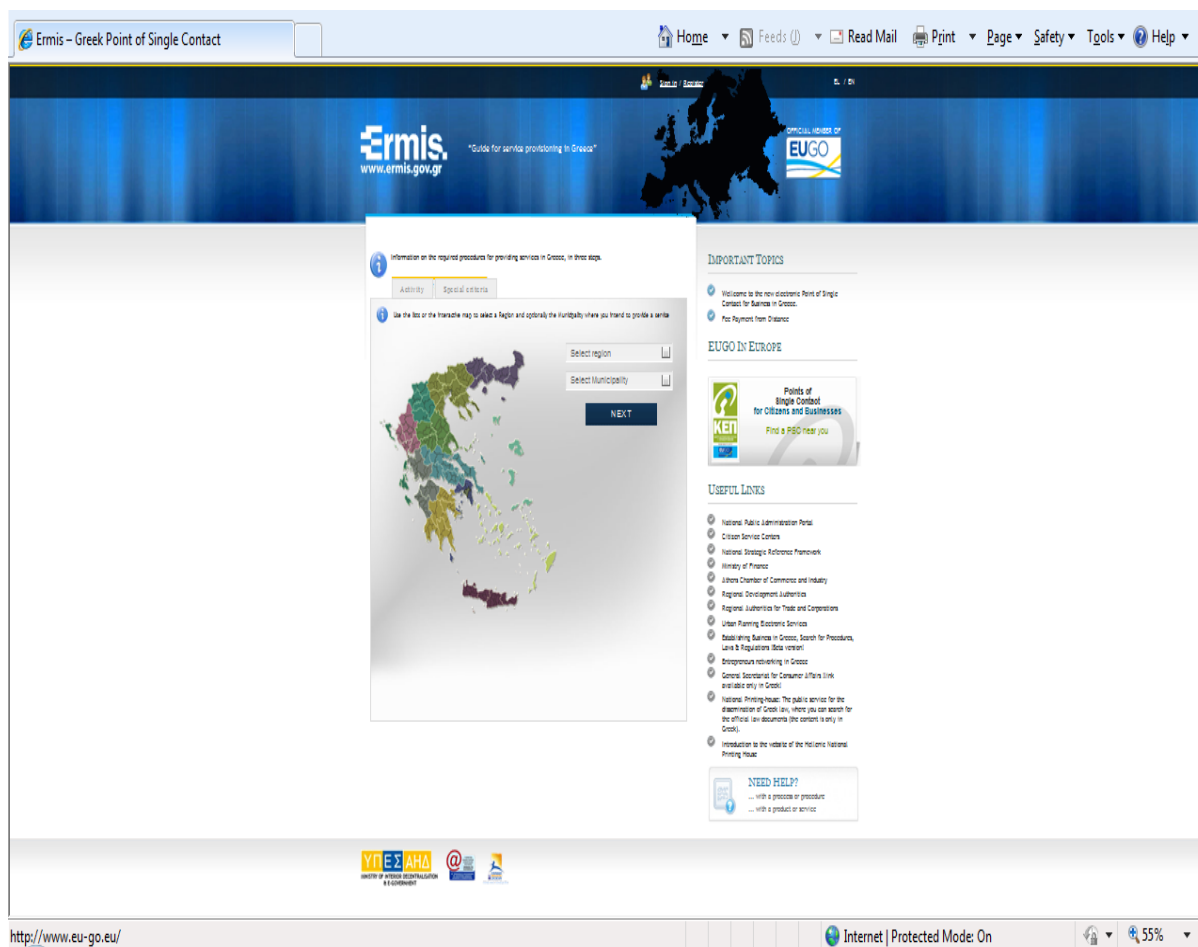
<sup>1</sup> End-user testing was undertaken by focus group participants and Deloitte experts in each country studied. Participants examined the PSC in their home country and one 'other' country. Details of the scenarios and country 'pairings' can be found in Annex A.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that ERMIS Portal has been nominated with the Interoperability Infrastructure for Service Transformation Award at the 4th European eGovernment Awards 2009.

content - licensing procedures and regularities - of the Greek PSC is concerned, the responsibility lies under the governmental competent authorities.

It should also be noted that the Greek PSC is linked to a network of 54 physical PSCs, which have been selected to serve the Services Directive purposes out of a wider network of 1.100 Citizen Service Centres – KEP- that have been operating in Greece for about a decade. The electronic PSC serves as a central hub, transferring information and applications to the physical PSCs, according to their geographic area of responsibility.

The development of the Greek PSC commenced in July 2008 and the website went live for users in September 2009.



The Greek PSC has a Greek and an English version, although the English version is not fully developed as explained further below.

## **2 Availability and quality of PSC services**

Points of Single Contact are the most visible benefit of the Services Directive for businesses. They are meant to become fully fledged e-government portals allowing future entrepreneurs and existing businesses to easily obtain online all relevant information relating to their activities (applicable regulations, procedures to be completed, deadlines, etc.) and to complete electronically the relevant administrative procedures. The services offered by PSCs need to be available not only in the country of the administration but they must also be accessible for businesses from other countries, across borders.

The degree of availability of services through the PSCs was analysed on the basis of six business scenarios. The six scenarios focused on concrete examples in three sample sectors – architecture, restaurants/catering and tourism. One set of three scenarios focused on establishing a permanent business in the specific sector in Greece – these are called the 'establishment' scenarios. Three other scenarios investigated the steps required if someone from another country wants to temporarily provide a service in Greece – these are called the 'temporary cross border' scenarios. These terms are used throughout the tables and text in this report. Details of the scenarios can be found in Annex A.

For each scenario, eight groupings of administrative formalities (e.g. authorization schemes, licenses, other procedures etc) that businesses are most typically obliged to fulfil in order to provide their service activities were examined. For each grouping, the study analysed to what degree information was available through the PSC and to what extent a business was able to complete the relevant procedures electronically.

The eight groupings (henceforth called 'types of administrative requirements') are:

1. Company registration
2. Obtaining a general business license
3. Procedures relating specifically to the service provider/ profession that they are exercising (licenses to act as a travel agent, architect, recognition of qualifications etc.)
4. Tax and financial formalities
5. Social security formalities
6. Regulations relating to the premises of the provider, such as providing proof of the location and/or ownership of the premises.
7. Procedures relating to the way the service are carried out and the place the service is carried out, such as applying for authorization to make outdoor sales or serve food on a street. (called 'operations and location' in later tables)
8. Procedures applying only or specifically to cross border provision of services

These eight types of administrative requirements cover the most common procedures businesses usually need to comply with when starting their activities. In order to complete the above requirements, service providers are often required to provide specific supporting documentation (e.g. proof of insurance coverage, proof of good repute, etc.). The different supporting documents are referred to in the tables contained in the annex as "Procedural components that may be relevant to the preceding procedures". They include:

- Provide a translation of legal documents produced in another country;
- Provide details of the location of the business;
- Provide proof of the ownership of the business;
- Demonstrate proficiency in the local language;
- Demonstrate good repute or the lack of a criminal record;
- Prove accreditation from a financial organisation guaranteeing funds if the business should fail;
- Provide official proof of your experience or qualifications;
- Provide official proof of your identity;
- Provide proof that you are not bankrupt;
- Provide proof that you have sufficient financial resources / solvency;
- Provide evidence of relevant insurance;
- Provide proof that you have no outstanding tax payments.

The availability of most of these procedures is mandatory under the Services Directive, for others it is not (in particular social security and tax procedures). However, from a business perspective, it is strongly recommended to make available all these procedures through the PSCs as they are the main steps required to start a business or to provide cross-border services.

In this section the availability and quality of the three main tasks of the PSC are assessed: provision of information to businesses, completion of online procedures and assistance to PSC users.

The regulatory environment in Greece can be defined as quite heavy. The implementation of the Directive has supported the streamlining of administrative procedures and the online availability of services.

As far as the Greek PSC's coverage of the aforementioned 'types of administrative requirements' is concerned, the main conclusions can be summarised as follows:

1. ***Company registration:*** the Greek PSC does not serve as a company registration portal; however there are links to respective informative sites such as StartUpGreece, Regional Authorities for Trade and Corporations, ERMIS main portal etc. However, there is no link to the national General Commercial Registry (available only in Greek), which is run by the Hellenic Ministry of Development, Competitiveness and Maritime Affairs. The latter comprises a One-Stop-Shop for the establishment of

companies in Greece (connected to Chambers and Notaries – official designated bodies for company set-up).

2. ***Obtaining a general business license:*** A general business license is not required in Greece.
3. ***Procedures relating specifically to the service provider/ profession that they are exercising:*** The Greek PSC mainly serves as portal with information and electronic submission possibilities regarding this type of procedures and licenses. However, it should be noted that the Greek PSC does not cover procedures related to the recognition of professional qualifications (as set out under Directive 2005/36/EC). The responsible Ministry, the Hellenic Ministry of Education, has been hesitant to get involved in the PSC project. Therefore, at this stage, it is not possible for a professional to have his qualifications recognised electronically through the PSC.
4. ***Tax and financial formalities: There is no such information on the Greek PSC portal. There is*** a link to the Hellenic Ministry of Finance, however it is not a direct link to the General Secretariat of Informational Systems (belonging to the MoF), which is the competent authority providing information and on-line completion possibilities on its portal ([www.gsis.gr](http://www.gsis.gr) - available only in Greek). StartUpGreece portal, which is linked to the Greek PSC, also provides information on tax and financial formalities and a direct link to the GSIS portal.
5. ***Social security formalities:*** Social Security Registration of companies is part of *the company set up*. *There is* no such information on the Greek PSC portal, nor is there a direct link to any competent authority. Information is only accessible via the StartUpGreece portal – within the description of company set up procedures – for which there is a link on the Greek PSC. As far as sole traders are concerned, there is no information on social security at all.
6. ***Regulations relating to the premises of the provider, such as providing proof of the location and/or ownership of the premises:*** There is no such information on the Greek PSC portal, but there is a link to the Urban Planning Electronic Services portal (available only in Greek [www.poleodomia.gov.gr](http://www.poleodomia.gov.gr)).
7. ***Procedures relating to the way the service is carried out and the place the service is carried out, such as applying for authorization to make outdoor sales or serve food on a street. (So called 'operations and location'):*** Information on such procedures is sometimes covered for certain service sectors. However, it is often missing and, where it is available, it is usually very vague. It is not possible to complete such procedures electronically through the PSC.

8. *Procedures applying only or specifically to cross border provision of services:* The Greek PSC in general makes a clear distinction between the requirements that apply to establishment and those that apply to cases of cross-border service provision. However, as Greek legislation until recently did not make any distinction between these two scenarios, there are still many cases, where currently the PSC will display the same list of requirements for both establishment and cross border service provision. The legislative framework is now under review and is being progressively updated to become compliant with the Services Directive. Information on the PSC is gradually being updated.

## 2.1 Provision of information on the types of administrative requirements applicable to both establishment and temporary cross-border scenarios

The obligation to set up PSCs means in practice that businesses must be able to complete the entire cycle of all procedures and formalities relating to the access to or the exercise of their activities without having to contact any institutional interlocutors other than the PSC. The first key requirement for the PSCs is to make available all relevant information concerning applicable procedures.

### 2.1.1 Availability and quality of information

In a first exercise we looked at the **number and coverage** by the portal of requirements or process steps needed for permanent establishment or temporary services provision based on the business scenarios described above, see Table 3.

Table 3 shows that the Greek portal provides comprehensive access to relevant information and/or services to fulfil the requirements of four out of the six establishment and temporary cross-border scenarios – there was no information regarding licensing procedures for restaurant and catering activities. In total, 74 regulatory requirements need to be undertaken to complete the four scenarios relating to architecture and travel / tourism activities scenarios. Twenty-two of these (30%) were covered by the main portal. 38 procedures (51%) were covered by the web sites of competent authorities linked to by the portal (mainly procedures covered by the aforementioned governmental sites). Fourteen procedures out of the 74 (19%), (the procedures regarding the restaurant and catering activities), were not covered by the Greek PSC or other sites.

As far as the licensing procedures on the Greek PSC are concerned, focus groups stated that information was relatively easy to find. On the other hand participants remarked that information on company set-up, tax and financial formalities etc – which is served via links on the PSC – was more difficult to find, since the links, although obvious on the PSC home page, do not have a detailed description of the purposes they serve.



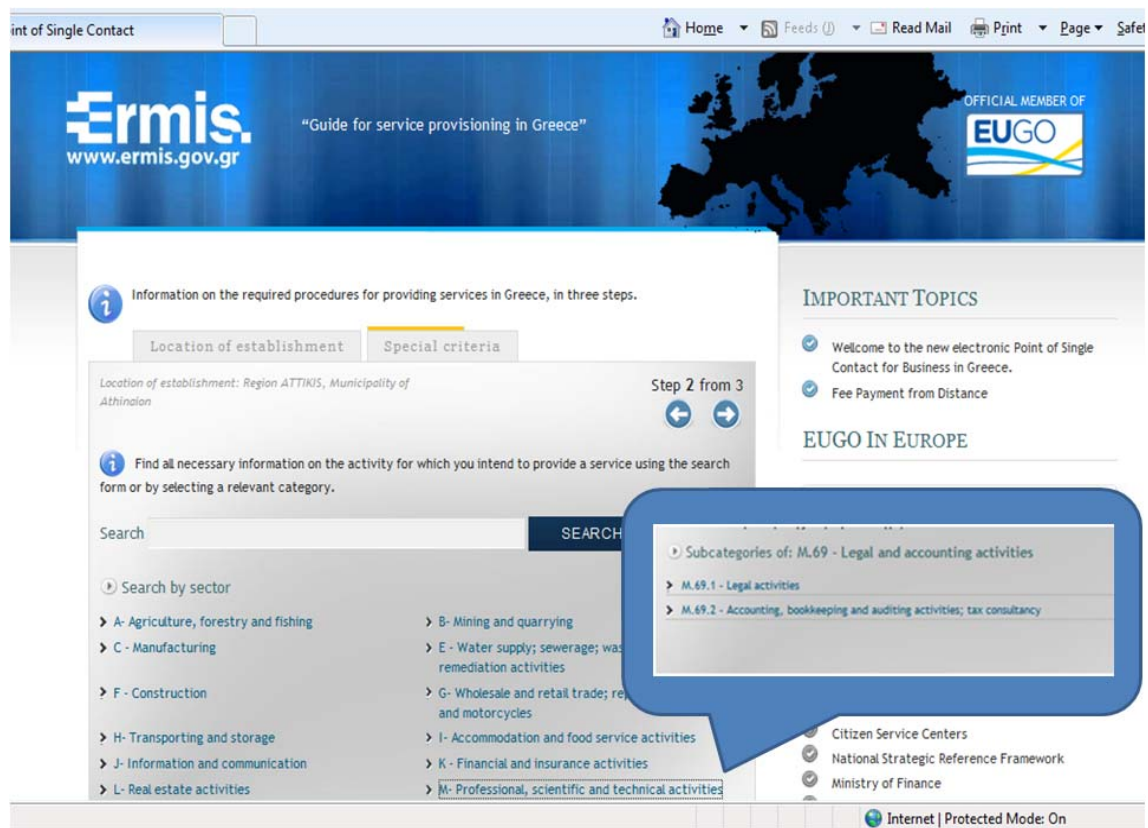
Logically the establishment scenarios have significantly more regulatory requirements than the cross-border service provision scenarios without a new establishment as they are of higher complexity and usually involve formalities relating to premises, the environment, etc.

In a second exercise we assessed the **quality of the information** provided by the portal for the eight types of administrative requirements mentioned previously. Table 4 summarises information availability on the Greek portal. In general, the portal is moderately good at providing relevant information for the seven types (excluding General Business License which is not required in Greece) of administrative requirements, though much of the information is provided via links to other competent authorities sites. The Greek PSC scores higher in terms of information provision regarding Sector Specific licensing procedures (with the important exception of the missing information on procedures relating to the recognition of professional qualifications), and lower with regard to premises / operations and location requirements. Additionally, portals linked to the PSC score high in terms of information provision regarding company registration procedures and medium with regard to tax /financial and social security formalities. As stated above, regarding cross border provision of services, the PSC does provide for a general distinction but at this stage the specific information is often incorrect or missing due to the ongoing review of the legislative framework.

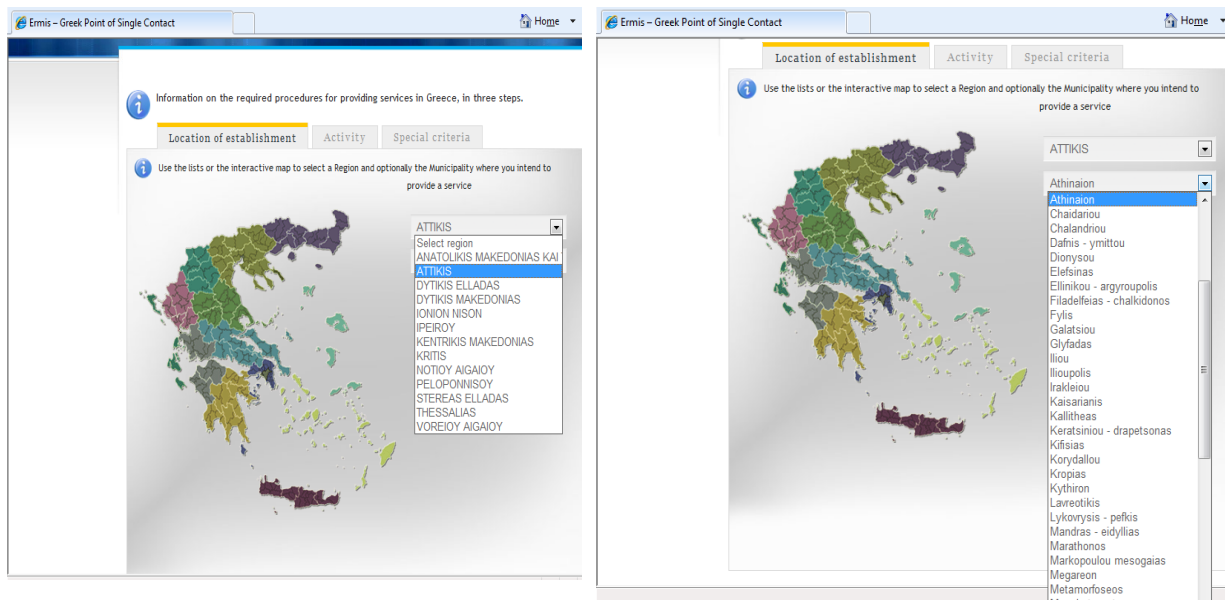
For travel guide licensing procedures, the PSC states clearly what is required for cross-border service provision. For architects, the listed requirements are currently the same as the ones required for the establishment of a business. For catering activities the information is completely missing (but the same applies for information concerning the establishment scenario). However, it should be noted again that missing information on cross-border provision of services is to a large extent the consequence of the non-existent (until recently) relevant regulatory framework.

### 2.1.2 Good practice: Nice graphics

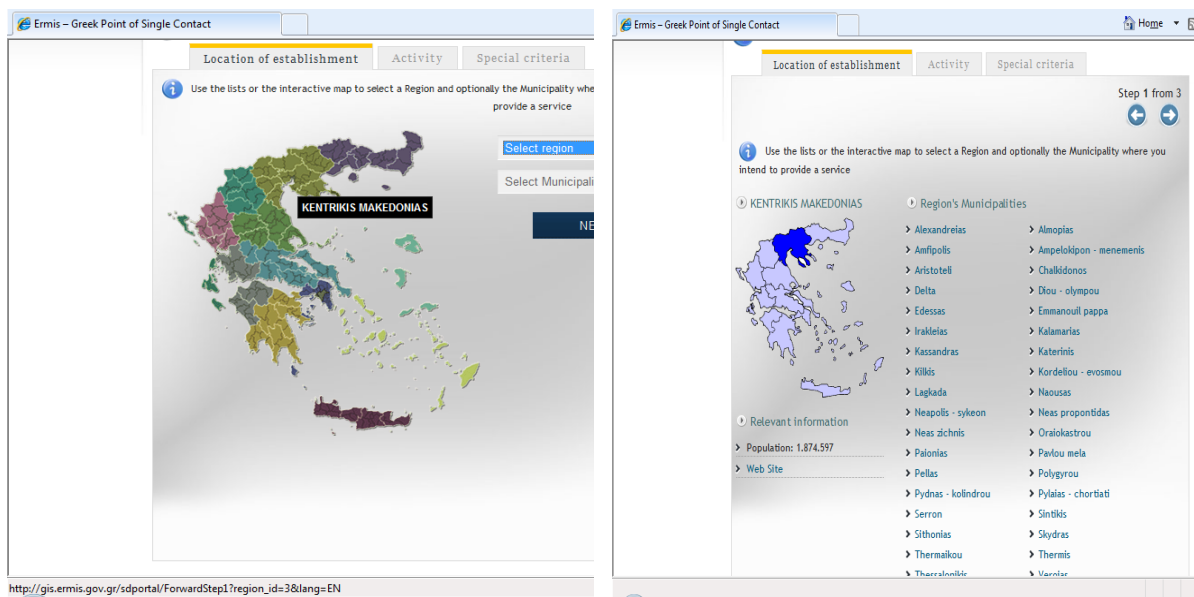
One of the best features of the Greek portal is the interactive search tree that provides checklists by service sector as well as the navigation environment, which is accompanied by nice graphics. The portal has a well operating search machine (in Greek – searching in English depends on the degree of specific procedures translation). Licensing procedures and administrative requirements have been carefully structured under services sectors, on the EU NACE basis, a fact that makes (in most of the cases) navigation through services relatively easy and comparable for all potential EU providers.



Apart from the service sector selection, the tool requires users to insert details about the location of the activities for which they want to obtain a license. Location details refer to the respective Prefecture and Municipality. Selection can be done either by selecting on from a drop down list,



or by clicking on the map.



The selection tool was assessed as being obvious, focused and providing clear information for each procedure that was included in the Greek portal.

The breakdown of procedures by service sectors was considered simple and focused, as well as supported by a well-operating search engine. Other search possibilities (such as by type of users or by stage in the business life cycle) are not developed (as shown in Table 5). Those features, however, could provide added value to users (as well as a thematic indexing of procedures with the highest demand/visits).

## 2.2 Electronic completion of procedures: coverage and level of sophistication

The Services Directive establishes an obligation on Member States to make it possible for service providers to complete a number of key administrative formalities related to the establishment or cross-border provision of services online and across borders. This includes both the submission of an application (with supportive documents) as well as the receipt of the administrative decision from the responsible competent authority.

If e-signatures are required in the context of e-procedures, Member States have to accept as a minimum advanced e-signatures supported by a qualified certificate and, if justified, also supported by a secure signature creation device (i.e. the qualified e-signatures)<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, MS have to be able to technically process certain formats of advanced e-signatures (C/X/PAdES)<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Decision 2009/767/EC

<sup>4</sup> Decision 2011/130/EU

The sophistication of the PSC portals in terms of online completion of procedures is examined with a commonly adopted eGovernment maturity model with a four-step scale. The four steps or stages of development are:

1. *Information*: only the information required to understand how to complete the procedure is available;
2. *One-way interaction*: forms concerning the procedure that can be downloaded and printed are available (these can then be returned by post, email or taken directly to relevant competent authority offices);
3. *Two-way interaction*: forms concerning the procedure can be downloaded and uploaded, which enables the entrepreneur to *start* the procedure electronically. However, procedures are not fully online, some tasks need to be completed via alternative means (e.g. by post or visit to an office);
4. *Full case handling*: the whole procedure can be completed online (including the receipt of the administrative decision).

The main types of procedures that can be completed electronically directly through the PSC portal are the type of procedures relating specifically to the service provider, with the great exception of professional qualifications recognition. In addition, formalities relating to company set up, taxes and financial formalities can be handled through other portals. Most of them (but not all) are linked to the PSC.

For example, Company Registration cannot be entirely processed electronically since it requires the intermediation of a Notary; but certain tax and financial formalities included in the procedure can be partially processed electronically via the portal of the MoF – General Secretariat of Informational Systems (e.g. Register for Income Tax/Apply for an (income) tax identification card/number). The electronic proceeding mainly involves downloading of forms, which are completed and then send by the Notary to the competent authority via e-mail.

Table 6B shows that none of the eight types of administrative requirements (and only 6 out of 74, i.e. 8%, of the actual procedural steps) can be undertaken online as full case handling. A further 12% were offered as two-way interaction and an additional 30% could at least be launched as a 'One-way interaction' step. In 30% of the cases, only information was available and in almost 20% of the procedures covered by the study (the restaurant and catering scenarios); the PSC did not provide any information (or access to the electronic completion of procedures) at all.

There is no comprehensive eGovernment strategy and no common approach to handling administrative procedures electronically for the different services sectors studied. What is more, the electronic completion of procedures requires the users to have obtained beforehand all necessary documentation. Obtaining the necessary documentation is not guaranteed to be easily done through other portals and sometimes it requires physical presence of the provider (e.g. some documentation regarding premises).

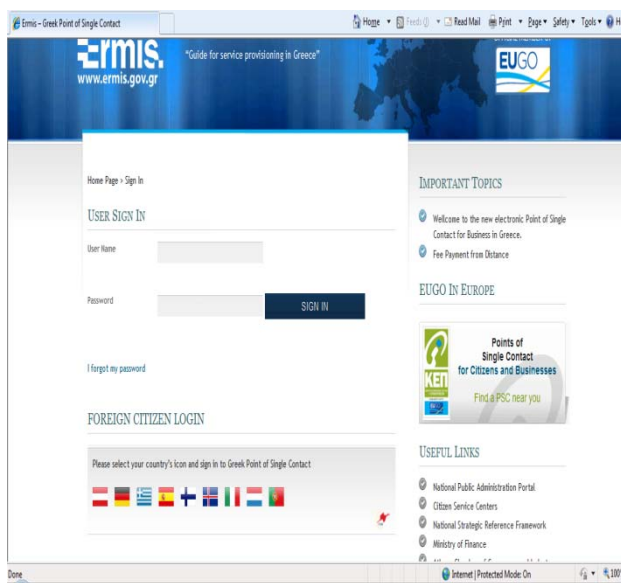
In sum, there is still a long way to go in order to establish full electronic procedures and on-line services for service providers.

Table 7 shows that **identification** is required to complete the scenarios but use of **e-signatures** is not required to complete the procedures. The provision of identification is required at the stage of submission of application, which is reasonable and also makes information (up to the stage of submission of application) available to any visitor /user of the portal. Identification methods include mainly the use of username and password using generic web form registration. Certain smart cards and soft certificates can also been used in some cases, based on STORK and SPOCS modules, as will be explained below, but this is not general practice yet.

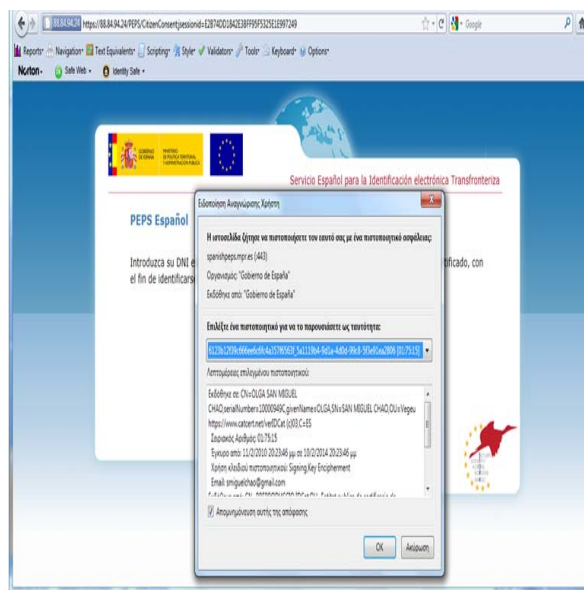
### 2.2.1 Best Practice: STORK functionality – SPOCS modules

What can be considered as a Best Practice with regard to the Greek PSC portal, and especially with regard to the use of e-IDs, is the **incorporation of STORK functionality**, which allows for e-ID holders from a number of other Member-States to use them.

Below there is an example of a Spanish citizen / user signing in the portal using his e-ID.



*Spanish citizen sign-in*



*Identification of Spanish citizen by Spain*

*Authorization to send data (e-ID) to Greece  
(Greek PSC portal)*

*Spanish citizen signed-in*

In addition, the **interconnection with SPOCS** allows for the use of “**Greek SPOCS eSafe Portal**”. This portal ensures the safe transmission of documents between e-government systems and the control of sufficiency, validity and equivalence of all certification at a European level. Mapping of equivalent documents - MIDB – is also included.

It has to be remarked however that the SPOCS project is currently only a pilot project (started in 2009), whose technical solutions are used only in a limited number of sectors (pilots are active in building and construction, travel and real estate). There are thus important limitations.





As far as **e-signatures** are concerned, there is no systematic requirement so far to use e-signatures in the Greek PSC or in interactions with competent authorities. The **STORK functionality** though allows for the use of electronic signatures issued in some other Member States, as some of the eIDs supported by STORK are built around e-signature solutions.

Smart cards, USB tokens and digital certificates are also available for the PSC staff throughout Greece, but their use is still limited. Training on the use of e-signatures is underway. It should also be noted that in general the use of e-signatures in Greece is not widespread at all; this also partially explains why e-signatures are not required of service providers using the PSC. Many documents required for the provision of licenses are simple copies of original documents that are uploaded on the system and no digital signing is required, whereas documents needed to be completed with information can be downloaded (whether from the PSC or the respective authority's portal), completed, signed by hand and then uploaded on the system. Since the use of e-signatures in Greece is not common practice yet, documents transferred through the PSC system by nationals (Greek users and Greek authorities) are not signed electronically.

However, comitology decisions on trusted lists and signature verification have been taken in mind with regard to the PSC system. Authentication of electronic signatures from abroad can be performed via TLS (a cryptography security protocol) as well as through inspection by the PSC staff to verify that a document has not been distorted. In general, with regard to the use of e-signatures in Greece, it should be stated that the regulatory framework has been completed with the issue of the eGovernance Law in 2011 and on an organisational level all actions have been taken to support

digital signing within the public sector<sup>5</sup>. However, as stated before, e-signatures are not being used yet, either by Greek authorities or by Greek citizens or companies.

There is a general plan by the government (included in the three year eGovernance implementation roadmap) to spread its use within the public sector and to raise awareness among citizens and the private sector, but still a few actions have been implemented:

- PSC staff has been trained on the use of e-signatures and the PSC system supports digital signing, however, as stated by the PSC managers, it has not been tested yet if systems from other Member-States can validate e-signatures from the Greek PSC system.
- Training of Citizen Service Centres staff is underway and it is expected to be completed in about 3 months.
- Staff training of some specific authorities (e.g. Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) has taken place or is being planned.

Continuing with the scenario testing and respective results with regard to completion of procedures, as seen on Table 9, 5 procedures (referring only to those for which data were found) required 36 *documents to be exchanged* to complete the tasks. The portal or linked portals were not able to support the exchange of all these documents. These documents could be provided in a variety of ways including digital copies, the submission of copies of originals by post or personally at an appropriate office or locations where the document can be verified as an original. As noted earlier in 2.1 the precise documentary requirements are largely determined by individual competent authorities for the respective regulatory framework.

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<sup>5</sup> Other relevant regulatory framework: In compliance with Directive 1999/93/EC on a Community Framework for electronic signatures, the Presidential Decree 150/200120 was adopted, which transposes almost verbatim the provisions of the Directive. The Presidential Decree 150/2001 of 25 June 2001 follows the definitions of the European Directive. It thus defines electronic signatures and advanced electronic signatures (or else digital signatures). It also deals with the legal consequences of electronic signatures, liability of certification providers, the obligation to protect personal information, terms in effect for recognised certificates and certification providers; it contains provisions for secure signature-creation devices for secure signature verification. In view of the creation of a high level certification regime, a voluntary accreditation scheme is foreseen. Such voluntary accreditation to certification service providers is provided by the Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission (EETT), following written application of the interested certification service provider. It is important to note that EETT is not allowed to limit the number of certification service providers who can be accredited, provided that they fulfill the prerequisites for this. A list of certification service providers for electronic signatures is available online at the website of EETT. Shortly after the adoption of P.D.150/2001, EETT published a Regulation on the Provision of Electronic Signature Certification Services. In 2004 EETT adopted a Decision for the selection of technological solution for the implementation of the Voluntary Accreditation scheme. EETT also adopted several Regulations on the designation of bodies for the conformity assessment of secure-signature-creation devices and secure cryptographic modules and on the designation of bodies for the conformity assessment of certification service providers using the voluntary accreditation criteria, on the conformity assessment of secure signature creation devices and secure cryptographic modules and on the voluntary accreditation of certification service providers



Table 9 shows that Company Registration entails the biggest number of documentation, more than half of which (9 out of 16) can be downloaded from the portal, in order to be completed and then sent by the Notary to the competent authority via e-mail (no on-line submission is available). Sector specific procedures allow only for one document (Application) to be completed on-line, but all required complementary documentation can be uploaded along with the application and be submitted on-line via the PSC portal. As far as requirements for the submission of certified copies is concerned, this varies according to the procedure. Findings show that for company registration and sector specific licensing procedures certified copies are needed, whereas for tax and social security formalities and cross border procedures originals are needed. Moreover, translation of supportive documents for non-Greeks is generally required in all procedures. However, it should be noted that, since the PSC portal has not been updated with regard to simplified regulatory framework for licensing procedures, many relevant simplifications in this field have not been incorporated in the portal yet.

The submission of supportive documents is determined centrally. Requirements are determined by competent authorities responsible for developing the regulatory framework. Document formats are either common (e.g. Solemn Declarations, which are widely used in licensing procedures, have a specific format that has been specified centrally and is unique), or procedure specific. The need for submission of originals or copies is established within each licensing regulatory framework. The replacement of certified copies of original documents by copies is a process that had begun before the Services Directive implementation. Action was started centrally by the Hellenic Ministry of Administrative Reform & eGovernance (ex Ministry of Interior and Decentralization and e-Government/ General Secretariat of Public Administration and e-Government) along with other competent authorities. Now this process has been accelerated and certified copies are mostly encountered in licensing procedures adhering to the Professional Qualifications Directive.

It should be also noted that, although regulatory framework concerning each licensing procedure is set centrally by the respective Ministry, hands-on experience has shown that local authorities who are responsible for the issuing of many licenses to service providers, sometimes require different numbers or types of documents to complete the same task.

Documents can usually be uploaded at the time of interaction with the PSC by users, or they can be added later if the user has registered.

The Greek portal allows online submission of forms and documents attached to a web form. Application form for all procedures served by the portal can be completed online and required documentation (in variety of file formats, including MS Word, TXT, PDF, ODT, JPEG and TIF) can be attached, so as for the whole 'application package' to be submitted via the portal. Table 10 shows that four out of five types of administrative requirements (excluding the ones for which data were not found *with regard to the scenarios testing*) to be undertaken in Greece require

*payment*. The only task that does not require payment is cross-border provision of services.

As far as **e-payment** is concerned, online processing is not incorporated yet in the portal, since there are some unsolved problems with the handling of transaction routing by the Greek Treasury, but still the e-payment issue is under consideration at a central level and respective arrangements are underway. Implementation plans are related to the issue and implementation of the Law 3979/2011, which represents the latest most important initiative regarding e-government in Greece. Nevertheless, service providers have the possibility to make the payment to a central bank account and then upload the receipt along with other documentation accompanying their application. Notably, this provision is a step forward with regard to transactions, since before its implementation (which was launched for the PSC operation), applicants had to visit tax authorities in order to pay the fee and receive respective documentation / proof of payment to submit later on to the authority responsible for the issuing the licence.

As far as **electronic tracking and delivery** of an administrative decision is concerned, Table 11 shows that only one administrative requirement (of those examined within the scenario testing framework) provides tracking services so that users can monitor the progress of the services they require. This administrative procedure is the 'Sector Specific: Person' one, which is served by the PSC portal. The PSC portal provides applicants with the possibility to monitor the progress of their application through the mailbox functionality (Greek SPOCS e-safe portal / citizen's portal). Moreover the users have a link that gathers all the communication with the PSC for a specific case. The PSC through this communication channel informs the Service Provider on the steps of the procedure that have been fulfilled. With regard to company registration, tracking services are provided only after the company has been registered in the national Commercial Registry.

For other administrative procedures, no clear information was found during scenario testing. Generally government services do not provide tracking facilities, but they use email, phone and letters to communicate progress to the users.

In summary, full case handling of administrative tasks is not possible, even though several procedures can be fully completed online. In general, users are redirected to the sites of competent authorities. The required infrastructure to ensure compliance with the Commission Decisions governing cross-border acceptance of eSignatures and eID is in good stage thanks to the integration of the STORK functionality, at least for eIDs issued in Member States participating to the STORK project, whereas TLS authentication exists for digitally signed documents originating from another Member State.

With regard to major eGovernment advances, it should be noted that Law 3979/2011, issued in June 2011, is the latest most important initiative regarding e-government in Greece and its implementation is expected to impact on the Services

Directive as well. It is a framework law accompanied by a roadmap for its implementation, incorporating, among others, formalities regarding:

- the right of entities to electronic transactions with the public sector and exclusive rights;
- public portals, open sources and cloud computing;
- electronic documents, copies and files;
- e-protocols and possibility for the citizen to electronically monitor the state of applications and requests;
- interoperability of public information systems;
- e-communication between public authorities and with the citizen as well;
- e-submission of applications, statements and relevant documentation;
- e-payments.

## **2.3 Assistance to PSC users**

Portals provide a variety of online and offline support to overcome problems and enhance users' experience of Points of Single Contact.

The Greek PSC portal provides only one way to help users obtain information (as seen on Table 12) and this is via e-mail. General requests such as those regarding the use of the portal are handled centrally by the PSC Managers and generally responses are given within a couple of days. Specific requests regarding licensing procedures are usually disseminated by the PSC Managers to the competent authorities and responses may take a little longer (on average 8 days).

A simple standard query (concerning steps to be undertaken in order to provide temporary architect services, sent to all portals involved in the study) received no answers.

Assistance to PSC users could be an area for improvement, with the incorporation of assistance tools, such as guides, video demonstration, FAQs, telephone line etc.

## **2.4 Overall quality of PSC services for users from other countries**

### **2.4.1 Language support**

To enhance cross-border activities it is recommended that portals are available in the language(s) of neighbouring countries or in one of the most commonly used languages. Table 13 provides details about the availability of pages, services and forms in other languages in the Greek PSC portal. As seen on the table, only a part of the content is translated in English and this has to do with general information and assistance offered via e-mail. Translated general information includes mainly services search criteria and some of the licenses procedures. It should be noted that the obligation of translating information in English – as stated in the respective Circular of the Ministry of Administrative Reform & eGovernance - lies upon the competent authorities; however it has not been set as a first priority obligation. Because of the delays in translating by competent authorities the Ministry is now investigating ways of accelerating this activity (may be at central level). The extent of

translation is enough for non-Greeks to have a clear overview only of general information. As translation is only provided for general information, it is not possible for non-Greek speakers to understand procedural requirements or to fill in forms.

As far as the other platforms are concerned, for which there is a link on the PSC portal, StartUpGreece has sufficient content in English and ERMIS portal has main information translated in English, French and German.

#### **2.4.2 Finding the relevant information on applicable procedures**

Because of the ongoing review of the legislative framework, the Greek PSC does not yet provide a clear distinction between the formalities that apply for foreign businesses considering permanent (i.e. an establishment) and those that only wish to offer their services on a temporary basis in all cases. Clear differentiation between licences adhering to establishment and temporary provision of services is limited to a few licences (travel guides are a good example), because of the fact that there is almost not any regulatory framework to support this distinction (regulations are under reform). As table 14 shows, experts considered as difficult for foreigners without previous knowledge of Greek administration and procedures to understand all the requirements necessary to complete the scenarios. All formalities referring to procedures appear to be the same for natives and foreigners, and only within the description of some procedures there are some extra requirements or distinctions for foreigners.

In general terms, the content of the PSC portal regarding licensing procedures for cross-border service providers has been enhanced during the period of the PSC initial operations. However, there is still need for this content to be enriched, including more licensing procedures and other required procedures for licensing. Moreover, there is also need for the existing content to be updated, since the regulative framework implementing the Services Directive is under constant modification and simplification. For this purpose, the Ministry of Administrative Report & eGovernance issued a Circular at the end of September 2011, calling all competent authorities to delegate two persons that will be responsible for the update of the content on the PSC portal with the help of the Ministry's PSC managers.

#### **2.4.3 Completing procedures electronically**

Table 14B shows that in general, it is possible for non-Greeks to use the Greek PSC. In general, no electronic signatures are required and although identification is required, the Greek PSC can handle electronic signatures of all Member States participating in the STORK project. In addition, it also offers an alternative means of identification for those Member States not involved in STORK.

### **3 Use and usability**

Use and usability is examined through three criteria, which are considered separately below.

The overall ease of use and usability of the portal was examined by focus group participants (in Greece and Cyprus) and eGovernment experts. The nine focus group participants were business people who are active in the three sectors covered by the study (architects, restaurants/catering, tourism). Usability was measured using the System Usability Scale (SUS) methodology, which uses an attitudinal scale where users are asked to respond to statements with a rating on a five-point (Lickert) scale of “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. SUS examines the efficiency, effectiveness and ease of use of the portal.

User satisfaction was also investigated using the Analysis of Web Application Requirements (AWARE) methodology. AWARE uses a similar Lickert based attitudinal scale to SUS. AWARE examines user satisfaction by examining users' views of various features of the portal; these include content, structure, navigation, presentation and user operation.

In addition, this chapter also looks at portal positioning, promotion and take-up by business users so far.

#### **3.1 Task completion**

##### **3.1.1 Identifying the right procedures and finding appropriate information**

A key role for the portal is to enable users to find appropriate procedural and regulatory requirements prior to starting a business or starting cross-border trading. Tables 15, 16 and 17 examine the ability of focus group participants to find the procedural requirements necessary to complete the six business scenarios. Focus group participants had 15 minutes using the portal to find the regulatory requirements and procedures required to complete the establishment and cross-border scenarios they examined.

Section 2.1 highlighted that the Greek PSC portal has a functionality to enable users to find regulatory procedures falling under different service sectors along with a well-operating search machine. This enabled the participants to easily navigate through the PSC content. However, some users ran out of time to complete the more complex scenarios, especially those who spend time to search for content they did not realise was not on the site (e.g. licensing procedures for the restaurant / catering scenarios).

Tables 15, 16 and 17 show that users were generally successful in finding relevant procedures (not only on the PSC portal but also on the linked portals). The food scenario was the exception since the PSC portal contained no relevant licensing procedures, and only in the other portal did participants find some information

(mainly regarding company set up, tax and finance formalities etc). On average, 65% of the procedures identified for establishment scenarios were correctly selected. The highest percentage was for the travel agent establishment scenario (82%), followed by the food - restaurant establishment scenario (58%); the lowest was for the architectural scenario (56%). As far as cross-border scenarios are concerned, the percentage of procedures identified correctly was 52% for the architectural scenario, 44% for the travel scenario and 0% for the food scenario (as could be expected by the fact that a specific regulatory framework for cross-border provision of catering services has not been implemented yet).

### **3.1.2 Completion of procedures**

Focus group participants found a relatively satisfactory level of portal usability for completion of online procedures for the following types of administrative requirements: company registration, tax and social security formalities. Appraisal was negative for procedures relating to premises of the provider, place of provision and cross-border procedures.

Table 18 indicates main conclusions regarding the evaluation of the PSC portal by experts and focus group participants. There is relative satisfaction with regard to the ease of task completion and the best aspect pointed about it is the one-stop-shop operation. However, there are many things that can be done to improve on-line completion, as stated by the evaluators, including on-line completion of more forms, introducing e-signatures, adding business licenses that are missing, update of some information etc.

As Tables 19, 20, 21 and 22 show there is relative satisfaction with regard to the ease of access to the information on the portal and its structure. Nice portal layout was a common appreciation. The search engine was pointed by the participants as a nice feature to have, but as a negative aspect, they mentioned that search only applies to procedure titles and not to procedure content. As far as the quality of the content is concerned, the tables show that Greek participants were dissatisfied, whereas the Cypriot users were relatively satisfied. We suppose that this has to do with the fact that the Greek participants have a better grasp of the procedures relating to their activities and as such they searched for specific content which they did not find on the portal.

Generally, it is seen that although the portal is well structured, quality of the content (missing procedures, not updated content, many links to other portals etc) created a rather neutral or negative overall opinion to the evaluators. However, considering the Greek regulative framework on the start of economic activity, it has to be stated that it is rather difficult to transfer all these procedures in one portal to be properly processed electronically. This requires a notable amount of administrative simplification work, amending regulation both at horizontal and vertical level.

### 3.1.3 Comparison of results between national focus group and other focus group

In general, in Tables 20 and 22, Greek users gave a better assessment of the Greek portal than Cypriot users. Table 20 shows that Greek users gave a higher evaluation for easiness of using the portal to complete tasks, integration of activity, and easiness of completing the steps.

Table 22 shows that against all measures (for content, structure, navigation, presentation and user operation) the assessment of the Greek portal by national users is similar to the average of the other portals included in the study. However, it scores worse than average in terms of overall satisfaction to use the website. Assessment by cross-border users is worse than the average of the portals examined. Cypriot users provided similar or slightly lower scores than their counterparts in other countries<sup>6</sup>.

Both focus groups praised the clear distinction between information concerning the permanent establishment of a business and the temporary cross-border provision of services for the cases where this distinction is provided. They complained about the lack of this clear differentiation for the sectors the legislative framework is still under development.

## 3.2 General usability and user satisfaction

Tables 23 and 24 examine usability using the SUS framework. Experts found it rather difficult to complete the scenarios and also remarked that the various functions for undertaking the activity were not well integrated (Table 23). As far as the accessibility of the PSC portal is concerned (ease of registration, appropriate layout, consistency, etc), both experts and focus group participants gave an overall satisfactory assessment of the portal, as shown in Table 24.

## 3.3 Accessibility

Several evaluation tools were used to examine portal accessibility and the extent to which the portal was usable by people of all abilities and disabilities.

Table 25 provides the number of errors preventing full accessibility found by two of the most commonly used accessibility tools. The lower the number of errors the better. The average number of errors for all tested portals is shown in the right hand column.

Overall the Greek portal has a low level of accessibility, with many errors appearing in comparison to the average of all EU PSC portals. The most important result in terms of usability and accessibility is the W3C Markup Validator<sup>7</sup>. It assesses the html mark-up used in the web site and states whether any errors have occurred. In

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<sup>6</sup> The scores represent the views of focus group participants and experts in each country, they have not been 'standardised'. Thus whilst the table provides a comparison of results between countries an unusually optimistic or pessimistic group of assessors could influence comparative results.

<sup>7</sup> <http://validator.w3.org/>



the Greek portal 38 errors occurred in comparison to 13 errors which is the average of the portals assessed. This could be an area of improvement to take into consideration for the PSC administrators.

Finally, accessibility was measured using the W3C CSS Validator<sup>8</sup>, which measures the degree to which web-sites adhere to web standards as regards cascading style sheets (CSS). CSS errors mean that information does not display correctly, or at all. For a website to be considered of good accessibility, the maximum number of errors should be 100. The Greek portal was found to have 66 errors, which is below the maximum but way beyond the average of the portals, which is 34.

### **3.4 Take-up, positioning and promotion**

The Greek PSC portal has approximately 700 visits per month with an average of 10 page views for each visit. The 10% of the visits comes from EU countries other than Greece. The level of visitors is below PSC portal staff expectations.

It should also be noticed that, according to Ministry officials, the main government portal ERMIS serves around 55.000 users per month. Generally ERMIS infrastructure serves 20.000 applications per day including also 'face to face' communication through the Citizen Service Centre offices (all kind of administrative procedures).

Key PSC related phrases were examined in two search engines. It has to be remarked that the search was performed in national language (Greek in the case of Greece). Table 26 shows that for almost all of these searches the Greek PSC portal was ranked in over 50th position in the search results. Only one term, namely the 'Point of Single Contact' term received high rankings in both search engines (1<sup>st</sup> place in Google search and 3<sup>rd</sup> in yahoo). Therefore, it is advised that the 'search optimization' for the portal is improved, as a way of enhancing the use of the portal.

Table 27 describes the focus group's recognition and awareness of aspects of governmental portals such as its affiliation with the EUGO network. The Greek PSC portal was not known to most of the participants prior to the focus group, although it is a part of the ERMIS portal which is a well-known government portal. Scarcity of awareness campaigns clearly is a cause for that. Both PSC managers and Ministry are considering the relevance of promotion activities. However, given the economic situation in Greece and the resulting austerity measures, it is quite unlikely that a large budget for promotion will be available in the next future, although it is recognized that these activities have a positive impact on economic development.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/>



## **4 Administration, organisation and back office enablers**

This section examines the operational aspects that impact on the practical functioning of the portal activities. This includes the degree of back-office integration (i.e. the interplay between competent authorities responsible for specific procedures handled through the PSC and the portal itself); it investigates the degree of resource availability and it includes the overall eGovernment readiness of a Member State, in particular as regards key technical enablers such as the ability to handle electronic IDs, e-signatures or e-payment means.

### **4.1 Back office integration and cooperation with competent authorities**

For the portal to offer its services to business in an effective manner, it is vital that all competent authorities are closely connected to the portal. Without successful back-office integration, it would be challenging to ensure up-to-date information and electronic application forms are available in a coherent manner across the board. Secondly, providing the means to complete a wide array of electronic procedures through a single portal can potentially offer serious efficiency gains through a push towards a standardization of relevant forms as well as the means to sign applications electronically and to submit application files.

As Table 28 illustrates, the number of authorities dealing with the procedures offered through the portal amounts to 463 (including large numbers of local authorities as well as multiple national government ministries). This has posed a serious challenge. As an example, it has proven particularly difficult to involve authorities competent for recognition of professional qualifications (such as the Ministry of Education).

The extensive and very complicated regulatory framework regarding economic activity commencement in Greece and the large number of different competent authorities has been a great challenge for the Ministry of Administrative Reform and eGovernance. Since the beginning of the Services Directive implementation there has been significant effort placed by the Ministry to co-ordinate all these authorities towards simplification of the regulative framework and launching of the PSC portal. Many Ministerial Decrees, Circulars and guides have been issued for that purpose and effort for the enhancement of respective activities is still being made. As stated by PSC staff, there were significant delays with regard to responses from competent authorities. Also there have been cases where the Services Directive implementation through the PSC portal was not put in the top priorities by competent authorities, since it was not considered the main government business portal. Difficulties were also cumbered by the absence of a comprehensive framework for eGovernment activities up to now, apart from scattered actions. The newly launched eGovernment roadmap is expected to enhance the implementation of the Services Directive, since it incorporates many relevant aspects.

As far as regulation simplification is concerned major progress has been done up to now, with little more than 20% of the licensing procedures regarding the installation of services providers still to be incorporated in the PSC system. These mainly concern licensing procedures within the responsibility of certain Ministries (e.g. Ministry of Competitiveness – General Secretary for Commerce and G.S. for Industry) for which additional Laws and Presidential Decisions need to be issued beforehand. These laws and Decisions will be incorporated by the end of 2011. The following step would be incorporating and updating these simplified procedures in the PSC portal, a responsibility that lies upon each competent authority.

Furthermore, significant delays have been experienced with regard to the incorporation of licensing procedures for cross-border provision of services (at the point of reporting, only 2 Common Ministerial Decision were finalised), since there were no distinction between requirements applicable to cross-border service provision and those applicable to cases of establishment in the regulative system up until this year. The process is underway and it is estimated to be complete by the end of 2011.

It should be noted that the General Government Secretariat has recently been actively involved in the implementation of the Services Directive, taking up a co-coordinating role between Ministries, a fact that has helped the speeding up of implementation procedures.

Finally, it should also be noted that the operation of the PSC portal is linked to the physical PSC back-office system operation. As far as the technical development is concerned, the back-office system integration with the PSC is ready; however it is not up and running yet, since training of the Citizen Service Centres staff is still underway.

## **4.2 Finance and resources**

According to PSC staff, the development of the portal had a cost of € 60.000. This is an additional cost – explicitly directed to the development of the PSC portal – whereas the ERMIS infrastructure on which the PSC was built had an overall cost of approximately € 8.7 M. This infrastructure contains the PKI for the Greek Public Administration and Citizens, the interoperability registry, the public administration portal and the back-office system of the Citizen Service Centres. There has been no additional cost after the launching of the portal. Annual running cost for the PSC (excluding further development costs) is estimated at € 244.000 (of which, approximately € 100.000 for maintenance and approximately € 144.000 for PSC management/administration staff).

The portal is currently administered by approximately six staff (3 technical staff and 3 additional people who are dealing with the implementation of Service Directive), while the technology sub-contractor is working under a different contract, which is to end very soon.

Although resources up to now have been rather limited, austerity cuts will probably impact the funding of the portal in the future. It might be hard in the future to justify the current level of funding with the relatively small number of users that the Greek PSC portal serves, which is below the expectations of PSC staff. An increase in numbers of users would reach the economies that the portal was intended to achieve when first developed.

#### 4.3 Status of key technical enablers (eID, e-signatures, e-payments)

As far as **eIDs** are concerned the incorporation of **STORK functionality** in the Greek PSC portal can be considered as best practice. However, it should be recognised that this functionality only covers a number of Member States (notably Austria, Germany, Spain, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg and Portugal) as well as Iceland. Service providers in other Member States will thus need to register separately using existing web forms.

As far as **e-signatures** are concerned there is no requirement so far within the PSC, since documents are signed by hand and uploaded on the system. Nevertheless, the **STORK functionality** allows for the use of electronic signatures issued in some other Member States and also authentication can be performed via TLS. Smart cards, USB tokens and digital certificates are also available for the PSC staff, but their use is still limited (and is not relevant from the perspective of the service providers or for assessing compliance with the Services Directive). Training on the use of e-signatures has been completed for the PSC staff and is underway for the Citizen Service Centres Staff and some other specific public authorities. It should also be noted that in general the use of e-signatures in Greece is not widespread, but it has been incorporated in the new e-government agenda, along with the endorsement of e-payment procedures.

**Electronic payments** in fact are not currently supported, even though their implementation is under discussion. Nevertheless, online bank transfers are possible, and proof of payments can be submitted electronically.

## 5 Future Outlook

As stated before, there have been recent e-government initiatives that can affect the implementation of the Services Directive in a positive way. Law 3979/2011, issued in June 2011, is the latest most important initiative regarding e-government in Greece. It is a framework law accompanied by a roadmap for its implementation (<http://www.egovroadmap.gr/>).

The law, which is expected to create economic gains of up to 4 bill. € with its implementation, sets the framework for:

- provision of electronic services to Citizens (G2C), Businesses and other Legal Entities (G2B), and Public authorities (G2G);
- unification of former e-government initiatives scattered along different ministries and policy sectors;
- utilisation of existing infrastructure and human resources;
- active involvement of public servants and their training.

Main legislative developments include:

- right of entities to electronic transactions with the public sector and exclusive rights;
- public portals, open sources and cloud computing;
- electronic documents, copies and files;
- e-protocols and possibility for the citizen to electronically monitor the state of applications and requests;
- interoperability of public information systems;
- e-communication between public authorities and with the citizen as well;
- e-submission of applications, statements and relevant documentation;
- e-payments;
- new organizational structures;
- Public Sector Network;
- constant development and enhancement of the public sector services and operations with the active involvement of citizens;
- enhancement of the operation of the Citizen Service Centres.

As it can be seen by the aforementioned, many of the priorities set in the framework law can have a positive effect on the Services Directive implementation.

According to the roadmap<sup>9</sup>, which has a total timeframe of three years, regulatory actions for the specification of the Law will take place within the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the law's issuance<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Last available update - October 2011 (<http://www.egovroadmap.gr/>)

<sup>10</sup> Within this timeframe there are specific actions planned to take place within the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, however delays – many stemming from the current economic situation in Greece – are expected. The roadmap for the implementation of the Law is under constant revision.

In direct connection to the Greek PSC, the Law (article 4.2) states that *“eGovernment services provided by the Citizen Service Centres and the PSCs are defined by Common Ministerial Decrees, signed by the Minister of Administrative Reform and eGovernance and the respective Minister”*. This is further specified in the roadmap, where certain actions and timeframes are set as following:

- Electronic processing (at stage 4) at least for the most important procedures for citizens and companies and at stage 5 for the most popular ones (within the first trimester);
- Electronic processing (at least at stage 3) for the 10-15% of all services provided by respective authorities (within the first semester);
- 25% reduction of administrative burdens of each respective authority for about 50-70% of all services provided and electronic processing of these procedures - at least at stage 4 (within 2012).

Some examples of other actions included in the roadmap which can have an effect on the functionality of the Greek PSC are indicatively the following:

- E-payments. *“The development of a single framework for electronic payments, which will be available for use by every online service or information system of an authority and the Citizen Service Centres”* is included in the roadmap. This will enhance the functionality of the Greek PSC, since many of the licensing procedures supported by the portal include payments. In the roadmap it is also stated that there will be motivation of citizens and companies to use e-payments (respective authority: Ministry of Finance);
- E-signatures. As far as e-signatures are concerned, according to the roadmap, *“preparation for the use of e-signatures by special target-teams, with the co-operation of HTPC<sup>11</sup> through voluntary accreditation of organisations and bodies”* has also been planned (respective authority: Ministry of Administrative Reform & eGovernance);
- E-protocols. *“The development of an e-protocol application which will be reusable by each authority”* is also included in the roadmap. This can have an effect on the functionality of the Greek PSC, since it can enhance electronic communication between authorities involved in licensing procedures (respective authority: Ministry of Administrative Reform & eGovernance);

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<sup>11</sup> Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission. According to P.D. 150/2001 “Adaptation to Directive 99/93/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Community framework for electronic signatures”, and Law 3431/2006 HTPC (EETT) is the authority responsible for control and supervision of certification-service providers for electronic signatures which are established in Greece, as well as for ascertaining compliance with “secure signature creation devices”. In parallel, EETT is responsible for designation and supervision of private- or public-sector bodies for the accreditation of certification providers, as well as for ascertaining compliance with “secure signature creation devices”.

- E-identification. *“It will be possible for users of public electronic services to get e-identification through the TAXISnet infrastructure”*. This could apply to the PSC users as well (respective authority: Ministry of Finance);
- General Commercial Registry. *“Extension of the system to include interoperability services through web services”*. As has been stated before the General Commercial Registry is the official governmental portal for company registration and as such its development can affect the functionality of the PSC in a positive way, under the condition that the two systems are connected;
- Urban Planning Electronic Services (e-Poleodomia). Development of g2b and g2c services, which can affect in a positive way the issuance of licences for the use of premises included in many licensing procedures relevant to the PSC.

The aforementioned are only indicative examples of the actions included in the roadmap for the implementation of the eGovernment Law, which includes a full list of planned actions with respective timeframes. However, it should be noted first that further specification of the Law needs to take place (Presidential Decrees, Ministerial Decisions etc) and secondly that due to the economic situation and the relevant instability in Greece, delays have already occurred and are also expected in the future.

## **6 Strengths, weaknesses and recommendations**

This study examined the readiness of the Greek PSC portal by investigating its ability to support the completion of six business scenarios. The Greek PSC portal was able to support partial access to procedures required to complete the six business scenarios and the relevant (seven out of eight) 'types of administrative requirements'. The Greek PSC portal has a relatively high degree of functionality, but a relatively low degree of readiness for home country and especially for cross-border users in respect to sophistication of the procedures involved. Update of existing and incorporation of missing procedures needs to take place in order for the PSC portal to operate effectively. This is strictly connected with further administrative and regulatory simplification.

### **6.1 Availability and quality of PSC services**

Overall the Greek PSC portal offers a satisfactory level of services online but there are still things to be done to improve its efficiency and to make it a real tool that will be used by service providers and public administration.

Expert analysis found that a relatively small portion of the administrative requirements analysed through the scenarios can be completed online. Part of those can be completed not directly through the PSC portal, but via other portals linked to the PSC, which is not very user-friendly, especially for non-natives.

In terms of information provision, the portal is restricted in providing information only for the specific sector licensing procedures. Recognition of professional qualifications is however not covered by the Greek PSC portal, as the Ministry of Education, Life-long Learning and Religion is the responsible authority for the recognition of professional qualifications and operates for most of the relevant professions on a separate basis. Information and /or on-line completion of other administrative procedures such as company set-up, tax and financial formalities, etc. can only be found through some links that are posted on the PSC homepage. However, based on the testing undertaken, it is clear that for a service provider it is extremely difficult to find the relevant information, to understand how it connects to their wish to start an economic activity and to understand how to actually complete the procedures online (where available).

For the PSC to be more efficient at least information on the whole life cycle of an economic activity should be provided, as well as clear explanation of the purpose that each link will serve. Furthermore, all the content should also be translated at least in English.

The quality of the search facility, as stated before, is satisfactory enough; however the quality of the content varies, since there are procedures missing and procedures which have not been updated according to the latest simplifications of the regulative

framework. Assistance to PSC users could be an area for improvement, with the incorporation of other assistance tools, apart from the e-mail facility, such as guides, video demonstrations, FAQs, telephone line etc.

Finally, it is obvious that, since only a small portion of the tested procedures could be completed online, more needs to be done to ensure the full online completion of administrative procedures through the PSC portal or other selected and linked portals.

## **6.2 Summarising expert assessment**

Table 18B shows that in general the expert assessment of the portal was similar to their counterparts in other Member States. The expert assessment of the portal was above the average for structure and organisation of information, navigation tools and identification of relevant procedures, multilingual assistance, tracking ongoing procedures, submission and storing of eDocuments and forms. The portal received below average scores for assistance channels, translation of information/forms, eID/eSignature services for non-nationals, and online payment tools.

## **6.3 Use and usability**

Overall the use and usability of the Greek PSC was perceived as quite satisfactory. Key attributes were thought to be:

- Clear and professional appearance;
- Nice graphics;
- Simple and clear language, not too complicated;
- Its role in providing a one-stop source for information and services.

Nonetheless, experts and focus group participants suggested some areas for improvement. These included:

- on-line completion of more forms;
- incorporation of e-signatures;
- introduction of business licenses that are missing;
- update of some information;
- more information on the functionality and purpose of the EUGO;
- more information about specific administrative procedures, such as those having to do with the use of premises;
- more information on cross-border provision of services;
- incorporation of municipality links for the licenses issued by them.

It should also be mentioned that technical experts reviewing the Greek PSC portal also stated that a notable feature of the Greek portal is its development from the existing ERMIS infrastructure. On their opinion, this provides the possibility to easily extend the portal use by including several additional electronic services.



#### **6.4 Administration, organisation and back office enablers**

The Ministry of Administrative Reform & eGovernance has placed a lot of effort to co-ordinate competent authorities in order for them to monitor and update the content of the PSC which lies under their responsibility. A lot of progress has been done with regard to simplification of the services regulatory framework. More time and stronger commitment from competent authorities will guarantee the integration of the updated and simplified procedures in the PSC portal.

On the other hand, significant delays have been mentioned with regard to the incorporation of licensing procedures for cross-border provision of services, since there were no such defined procedures in the regulative system up to now. The process is underway and it is estimated to be completed by the end of 2011.

As stated before, the Greek PSC portal, in order to operate properly and efficiently, needs to be synchronized to the back-office system of the physical PSCs. As far as the technical development is concerned, the back-office system integration with the PSC is ready. However it is not up and running yet, since training of the Citizen Service Centres staff is still underway.

Finally, it is obvious that in order for the existence and operation of the PSC portal to be justified, the numbers of portal users will need to increase considerably in the future. However, the budget for promoting the portal is quite low at the moment. More support or resources to promote the site should increase portal visibility and use and help to improve 'returns' from the current level of investment (not only in monetary terms, but also in effort and opportunities linked to general economic development).