



Public administration characteristics and performance in EU28:

Greece

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1 SIZE OF GOVERNMENT

Compared to the EU-28 in terms of public sector expenditure, the Greek public sector is among the biggest spenders in the EU (government expenditure being 55 per cent of Greece's GDP in 2015). This is due not so much to the size of public employment or the remuneration of public employees, as to the fact that Greece's GDP, i.e. the denominator in the fraction of expenditure over GDP, has dramatically shrunk since 2008, when the economic crisis erupted. On average in 2005-2015 the annual negative growth of Greece's GDP was -2.1% (Eurostat data).

Table 1: General government budget data

GREECE	2010	EU 28 Rank	2015	EU 28 Rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Total expenditures (in % GDP)	52.48	7	55.41	4	+2.93	+3
Central government share (%)	75.70	6	77.47	5	+1.77	+1
State government share (%)						
Local government share (%)	7.33		6.16			
Public investment (in % GDP)	3.69	16	3.94	13	+0.25	+3
Debt in % GDP	146.25	28	177.39	28	+31.14	0
Deficit in % GDP	-11.2	26	-7.5	28	+3.7	-2

Sources: AMECO, Eurostat

With regard to the scale of public sector employment, Greece is middle ranked among the EU-12 countries taken into account in the first of the two tables shown below. Indeed, despite common impressions about Greece's over-inflated public sector, the data shows that in itself the scale of public employment is not as worrying. The problem with Greece's public-sector employment is a different one. What further analysis - made in this report - underlines is that public employees are inefficiently distributed, transferred or promoted in various quarters of the Greek state administration and all this is done on the basis of non-meritocratic criteria. The result is that some public services are overstaffed, while others are understaffed. Some of them have over-qualified personnel, while others lack skilled labour. In other words, the problem with the Greek public sector is not that it is too large, but rather that it is very uneven.

Another indication of this unevenness is the large discrepancy between public sector employment as a share of the total labour force and central government employment as a share of the total labour force. The former is quite extensive compared to the latter. This is a pattern related to the fact that large state-owned enterprises, i.e. public corporations controlled and managed by political appointees, such as the state-run public radio and television broadcaster (ERT) or the Public Power Corporation (DEI), have a large work force. The personnel policy of such public corporations has not always followed principles of economic efficiency, but rather criteria of political accommodation of voters of governing parties, alternating in power.

Moreover, Greece is one of the least decentralised administrative systems of the EU with local government having only a 6.6% share in government expenditure in 2015. This is corroborated by the fact that compared to other OECD countries a very large share of all government employees (77,08%) work for the central government.

Table 2: Public sector employment*

GREECE	2005	OECD EU18 rank	2011	OECD EU12 rank	Δ Value
Total public sector employment in % of total labour force	19.90	14	20.70	7	+0.80
	2005	OECD EU21 rank	2011	OECD EU19 rank	Δ Value
General government employment in % of total labour force	7.20	21	7.90	19	+0.70
			2011	OECD EU17 rank	
Central government share of general government employment			77.08	2	

Sources: OECD - Government at a glance

*According to the OECD, public sector employment includes public corporations, while general government employment excludes public corporations.

GREECE	2015
(1) General government employment*	566 913
share of central government (%)	84.2%
share of state/regional government (%)	1.2%
share of local government (%)	14.6%
(2) Public employment in social security roles (in millions)	16 490
(3) Public employment in the army (in millions)	78 506
(4) Public employment in the police (in millions)	67 784
(5) Public employment in employment services (in millions)	included in (2) above
(6) Public employment in schools (in millions)	135 417
(7) Public employment in universities (in millions)	12 418
(8) Public employment in hospitals (in millions)	47 931
(9) Public employment in core public administration (in millions)	208 367
(10) Core public administration employment in % of general government employment	36.8%

Sources: National statistics. All categories of civil servants and public employees under indefinite period contracts are included (thus, practically speaking, all tenured personnel are included). Categories of personnel not included in the above table: (a) fixed-term or project based contractual personnel, (b) public corporations' personnel, (c) elected personnel, e.g. MPs, mayors, members of regional and municipal councils etc. and (d) political appointees, serving in ministries, state agencies etc. If (a), (b), (c), and (d) are included, then total public employment (in millions) is 653 463 (data for December 2015).

2 SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

2.1 State system and multi-level governance

Greece's central government has been majoritarian for a very long time since the 1974 transition from the Colonels' regime to a democracy. This means that in 1974-2012 only single party majority governments were formed (with a small exception of a nine-month long period in 1988-1989, when unstable coalition governments were formed). For a period of about forty years (1975-2011), the centre-right party of New Democracy (ND) and the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK, today a centre-left party), alternated in power. In 2011-2014, coalition governments of the centre-right with the centre-left were in power. Since January 2015, a coalition of the radical left and the far right (consisting of the Syriza and Anel parties) has governed the country.

After the eruption of the economic crisis in Greece (2010) and the signing of Memoranda of Understanding between Greece on the one hand and the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the other, governance and governing policies, including policies for public administration, have been under the very close supervision of a 'Troika' of representatives of these three institutions (EC, ECB, IMF). In 2010-2017 the 'Troika' (called 'institutions' after the government turnover of 2015) performed at least three tasks: it negotiated policy measures with the government, oversaw their implementation and decided on whether further instalments of loans granted to Greece should be released or not, based on reviews of the progress of reforms Greece undertook (or neglected) and on the result of on-going negotiations between Greece and its lenders on further reforms. Most reforms aimed at fiscal consolidation.

After 1974, Greece's democratic regime was built not on a consensual process but on political polarisation, fuelled by an electoral system which disproportionately favoured the party which was first past the post. The electoral system was close to a winner-takes-all system. Thus, governments relied exclusively on the political party that won the elections. The winner of elections used to populate the public administration, the public bodies and state agencies with political appointees (Sotiropoulos 1996).

The governing party also bent the Civil Service Code or changed it at will in order to collaborate with senior civil servants who were pro-government. This pattern has led to an extreme politicisation of the administrative system (Sotiropoulos 2000, Makrydemetres 2013). Trusting only the pro-government civil servants and mistrusting the rest of the civil service, government ministers set themselves an impossible double task: on the one hand they formulated public policies and on the other hand, supported by groups of political appointees, they also closely monitored the implementation of policies.

Indeed, to this day there is such a strong overview of all levels of administration from the centre of government in Athens that decentralised services of ministries and state agencies (e.g. tax authorities in the periphery of the country, public hospitals, etc.) do not apply any legislation unless they receive very detailed circulars, drafted by ministers and their entourage, with very concrete step-by-step instructions on how to interpret and apply legislation. Centralisation of decision-making was further enhanced after the crisis erupted, as central authorities imposed strict fiscal discipline on sub-national levels of government.

At a purely formal level, the situation looks different. According to the Greek constitution, public administration is in principle decentralised (article 101 of the Constitution). Yet, as even a cursory observer of Greece would notice, public administration in Greece is highly centralised. Most government expenditure flows from the central government, while sub-national authorities have relatively few resources and competences. The central government consists of the central services of Ministries, each overseeing a plethora of public bodies and state agencies. There are also seven decentralised administrations (essentially branches of the central administration in Greece's periphery), 13 regional authorities (founded in 1986 and headed by elected regional governors and regional councils) and 325 municipalities (created in 2011 by merging 1034 municipalities and headed by mayors and municipal councils).

Such merging of municipalities was deemed necessary in 2011 in order to create economies of scale, decrease local government expenditure and establish local government units sizeable enough to marshal resources and skills useful for the absorption of EU funding. In the past small, inadequately-resourced municipalities could not access adequate funding. However, the permeation of local politics by the nationwide political party competition and the replication of national political feuds at the sub-national level, a result of Greece's polarised party system, did not allow for the full exploitation of any new administrative capacities. Mergers of smaller municipalities into larger ones occurred but did not necessarily produce the desired results because other prerequisites were missing. For example, the formal educational credentials and skill level of local government employees traditionally lagged behind the corresponding credentials and skills of central government employees.

Centralisation of decision-making is evident not only with regard to local government, but also sectoral policies. Legal entities, such as public hospitals and public universities, are under the very close supervision of the central government which decides on petitions by universities and hospitals to hire personnel (e.g. medical doctors, professors, researchers) and whether to channel state budget funding towards these legal entities or not. The same holds for numerous other state agencies, including, for example, Greece's state-owned railway company (*OSE*) or the state-owned Athens Water Supply and Sewerage Company (*EYDAP*).

With the exception of some policy sectors in which implementation is relegated to the municipal level and – less often – to the regional level, most powers remain in the hands of the central government. In practice, even if sub-national authorities have exclusive powers, they enjoy rather limited autonomy and discretion. The reason for this dependence of the periphery on the centre of the Greek state is that almost all tax revenue is raised by the central government. Moreover, the central government also frequently changes the general policies and specific regulations governing centre-periphery relations in the Greek administration. As a result, rarely have any agreements and negotiations taken place between the different government levels.

Pressure 'from below' to change tendencies of over-centralisation is not forthcoming. For instance, the central association of municipalities (*KEDE*), which is a national-level organisation representing municipalities, has often been internally divided along political party lines and has never had the economic resources or the political leverage to act independently of the Ministry of Interior, which oversees local government in Greece.

Nevertheless, there are elections for mayors and municipal councils every five years, coinciding with elections for governors and the governing councils of regions. As already

noted, in parallel with regional and local government, there are seven decentralised branches of the central government, called 'decentralised administrations'. Founded in 2011, these administrations are headed by a government appointee and are assigned the task to supervise regional and municipal authorities. Based on the Constitution of Greece (articles 102 and 103) and law 3852/2010, the seven decentralised administrations have all those competences which - according to the constitution - should not be managed by the local government. Examples of such competences include assessment of legality of administrative acts issued by municipal authorities, protection of forests, and management of state assets such as landed property.

'Decentralised administrations' are similar to the French 'préfet' system. After all, since its inception in 1830, the Greek administrative system and administrative law bore many influences exerted by France, one of the major European powers which had sided with Greece in the War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire in 1821-1830. For a long time afterwards and until the regional elections of 1994, Greece's regional governors and/or 'préfets' were selected by the government-of-the-day. Overall there were 50 'prefectures' which today are subsumed under the 13 regional administrations, while 'préfets' are now elected in the same elections as regional governors. In the past, however, things were different. Greek 'préfets' were political appointees entrusted with the task of monitoring the elected mayors in their own 'prefecture'. Further on, depending on the local political circumstances, mayors disputed the authority of the 'préfets'. In this context, today's seven 'decentralised administrations' (smaller in number but larger in size) can be understood as a legacy of the system of the former 50 'prefectures' and a compromise of the long historical tension between elected officials and appointed officials in charge of Greece's sub-national authorities.

Over time and owing to pressures from EU authorities, regional authorities have acquired some administrative competences. Since their establishment in 1986, the 13 regional authorities have also absorbed EU funds, supplied by the Union's regional policy. However, as the following table shows, most competences largely remain in the hands of central government. Most importantly, there are competences shared between the central government and sub-national authorities on different policy issues, allowing the central government to have a hand in the daily management of regional and local issues.

GREECE Government level:	Legislation	Regulation	Funding	Provision
Central Government				
Defence				
Foreign Policy				
Police				
Education (universities)				
Primary and Secondary Education				
Science & Research				
Regional Development				
Tourism				
Family and Child Policy				
Water and Drainage				

Public Health			
Industrial Development			
Commerce			
Labour Relations			
Town Planning			
Agriculture and Fisheries			
Public Protection and Disaster Relief			
Energy and Minerals			
Courts (Civil & Administrative Law)			
Social Welfare			
Commerce and Local Markets			
Telecommunications			
Transportation			
Public Transport			
Public Works, Ports, Infrastructure			
Waste Management			
Environmental Protection			
Culture			
Sports			
Social Care			
Social Inclusion			
Public Hygiene			
Regional Development			
Regional Government			
Regional Development			
Social Welfare			
Family and Child Policy			
Water and Drainage			
Public Health			
Sports			
Primary and Secondary Education			
Industrial Development (factories, arts and crafts)			
Commerce and Local Markets			
Telecommunicatio			

ns				
Transport (e.g. vehicle licences)				
Labour Relations				
Agriculture and Fisheries				
Public Works, Ports, Infrastructure				
Waste Management				
Environmental Protection				
Civil Protection and Disaster Relief				
Local Government				
Agriculture and Fisheries				
Water and Drainage				
Public Works and Infrastructure				
Transport (e.g. vehicle licenses)				
Public Transport				
Environmental Protection				
Town Planning				
Waste Management				
Education				
Social Care				
Social Inclusion				
Modern Culture (theatres, museums)				
Ancient Culture (archaeological sites etc.)				
Public Hygiene				
Sports				

Note: This table has not been made available by a Greek authority and is tentative. The distribution of competences between the central, regional and local authorities may change frequently. Competences may be concurrent. The table was created by the author and was based on the most recent compilation of very long and detailed lists of competences by the Ministry of Interior (28 February 2017). The compiling of lists was performed by a special ministerial committee entrusted with the task to list competences and suggest reforms in regional and local government.

In contrast to other states of Southern Europe (Sotiropoulos 2004), such as Italy or Spain, in Greece there are few, if any, consolidated regional identities, couched in terms of religion, language or history. Thus, regional administrations are not really distinguishable from the central administration on the basis of regional identities of the kind one finds in other South European countries. What is more, the long-term centralising tendencies of successive Greek governments (Hlepas 1999, Spanou 2008) mean that the central government may any time encroach on exclusive regional and local powers, including in policy fields in which in the past it has delegated powers to

sub-national government levels. Notably, regional governors were appointed by the central government until 1994, when the first regional elections took place.

Moreover, the overall administrative capacity of the regional and local government levels is very uneven. With a few exceptions, civil servants working in regional and local government are not as skilled as civil servants working in central government. The effectiveness of sub-national levels of government is clearly suboptimal. The flow of resources - for example personnel, funds and digital infrastructure - channelled from the centre to the periphery of Greece's public administration is often inadequate for policy implementation.

Responsibilities, budget and capacity are aligned to the extent that the Ministry of Interior can impose discipline on regional and local authorities. Since the beginning of the crisis, this task has been assumed practically by the Ministry of Finance (Hlepas 2015, Sotiropoulos 2015). The latter has drastically cut funding, as in the past mayors and regional governors tended to overspend by hiring excess administrative personnel, such as temporary employees, in a typical public jobs-for-votes exchange. Mayors used to count on either the central government's last-minute intervention to cover deficits in municipal budgets or on the availability of loans granted to municipal authorities by state and private banks. The fiscal consolidation of 2010-2017, imposed by the 'Troika', in order to manage Greece's soaring public debt, has ended all this. The reform of municipalities in 2011 was guided to a great extent by the need to decrease central government outlays channelled to the local government. However, before the crisis erupted, the finances of many municipalities were already unsustainable, and mayors had incurred large debts. As a consequence, many municipalities are in the red, while one municipality in the Peloponnese and two large municipalities located in the vicinity of Athens officially declared default in 2016-2017. They are currently under separate rescue programmes supervised by the Ministry of Finance.

In view of the above, the cooperation between the various government levels is usually strained. Political conflict arising from the fact that competent ministers and regional governors or mayors belong to opposing parties is often exacerbated by the scarcity of funding. This pattern became particularly evident after Greece came to the brink of sovereign default in 2010, 2012 and 2015. Thus, owing to fiscal constraints imposed on the Greek central, regional and local governments by the Troika, the system is less fragmented than in the past, but it is not necessarily homogeneous. The government's and the administration's lack of homogeneity results from the high frequency of national elections (four national elections in 2012-2015) and the frequent re-shuffling of governments, evident in the rapid turnover of government ministers appointed to the Ministries of Finance or Interior. Naturally, such an unstable political environment has a negative impact on homogeneity and continuity in centre-periphery relations in the Greek administration.

With regard to public administrative reform, sub-national government levels are not relevant in the sense that they rarely initiate reform (Makrydemetres, Zervopoulos and Pravita 2016). All administrative reforms are conceived, formulated, introduced to the legislature and implemented 'from above', namely by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Public Reconstruction (formerly, before the rise of Syriza-Anel to government, Ministry of Administrative Reform and E-governance). Obviously, reforms materialise to the extent that the Ministry of Finance releases earmarked funds, something which

should not be taken for granted. Since 2010, fiscal management has been under the periodic supervision of Greece’s creditors and more specifically the ‘Troika’ officials who regularly inspect the state’s finances.

If anything, sub-national government levels usually mobilise political resources to resist administrative reform. This was quite evident after the eruption of the economic crisis in 2010 in Greece. At the forefront of resistance against all and any reforms were mayors elected through the support of parties of the opposition and unions of municipal employees.

In fact, regardless of the party in power, there is also a collective actor which actively resists reforms in local government. This is the nationwide union of public employees working in municipalities (*OME-OTA*), dominated by left-wing labour union representatives. Part of the union’s leadership is situated on the left of the governing radical left party Syriza (in power since 2015). The union forms part of the larger, nationwide Confederation of Civil Service Unions (*ADEDY*). The union and the confederation, supported by parties of the left, including Syriza and the Communist Party, have blocked various reforms required by the Memoranda of Understanding, signed between Greece and its creditors, including, for instance, the introduction of a performance review of public employees. The relations between the Syriza-Anel government and the unions were initially cordial. Soon their relations became strained after the Syriza-Anel government first supported the ‘no’ vote in the national referendum on the new austerity package, negotiated with Greece’s creditors, in July 2015 and then approved such a package in August 2015.

State structure (federal - unitary) (coordinated – fragmented)	Executive government (consensus – intermediate – majoritarian)	Minister-mandarin relations (separate – shared) (politicised – depoliticised)	Implementation (centralised - decentralised)
Unitary	Majoritarian	Separate Politicised	Partially decentralised, but heavily monitored by the central government

2.2 Structure of executive government (central government level)

There are a total of 18 Ministries, each headed by one minister and a few alternate ministers and deputy ministers, all of whom are hand-picked by the Prime Minister from Members of Parliament (MPs) or cadres of the governing party or from pro-government experts, usually university professors. In 2017, there were 49 government ministers, including the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister. This is not an exceptional situation related to the economic crisis or stemming from the over-politicised inclinations of the incumbent radical left/far right government coalition of the Syriza and Anel parties. It is a forty-year long pattern, established by the centre-right ND and the centre-left Pasok parties even when the latter two parties used to form single-party majority governments. The tendency to form oversized cabinets emanates from the aforementioned traditional mistrust of incoming governments towards the public administration. And it is another symptom of the aforementioned traditional politicisation of the upper echelons of the central government level and public administration, which after the 1974 transition to democracy was initiated by ND, then expanded by Pasok and at the time of writing (2017) practiced by Syriza and Anel.

In the past, ministries used to be relatively autonomous from the Prime Minister and Prime Minister's Office (PMO), but things changed after the economic crisis broke out. The streamlining of the state's finances required that the Prime Minister and his Office, aided by a Minister of the State and the General Secretariat of the Government, closely monitor ministries. This was a crucial shift in government organisation after 2010, as beforehand ministers used to deviate from the government's line regarding public spending and hiring of personnel (Featherstone and Papadimitriou 2015). The fact that, based on traditional patronage relations, a minister would bring votes to his (or her) party used to give the minister leeway to deviate from the PM's policy line.

Normally a ministry is headed by a Minister and his or her Deputy Ministers, each with his (or her) ministerial cabinet, consisting of scores of political appointees, namely policy advisors, secretaries and governing party cadres. Further down from this inflated top political level, the hierarchical organisation of a ministry includes a Secretary General. He (or she) is also a political appointee, hand-picked by the minister and entrusted with the task of supervising the ministry's civil servants. The latter serve in administrative units belonging to General Directorates (GD) of which there are several in each ministry or state agency. Each GD has Directorates, Sections and Bureaus, the latter being the lowest ranking administrative units in a ministry's pyramidal organisational structure.

Greece has followed the international trend of agencification. The stimulus to establish new agencies has come from the country's increasing integration into the EU as well as the realisation that central services of ministries are incapable or unwilling to adapt to the changing requirements of a modern economy and to new ICT management and working methods.

Indeed, with a few exceptions, such as some expertise-requiring directorates of the Ministry of Finance or the General Secretariat of Research and Technology, the traditional and slow-paced central services of ministries are still today staffed by tenure-track political supporters of successive governing parties. Civil servants are appointed to an administrative unit at the beginning of their careers in the civil service. Appointments to one administrative unit rather than another may be based on political or personal criteria or pressures from a ministry's trade unions. Once a civil servant has been appointed in a unit, he or she is rarely moved to a different unit, as horizontal mobility is neither part of the Greek administrative culture nor a transparent process, based on rational criteria, such as an improved division of labour. In 2017, under pressure from the European Commission, projects of horizontal mobility of civil servants were initiated in seven ministries, but results of this initiative remained unclear.

In fact, some, if not many, administrative units may exist in order to serve not so much an efficient division of labour, but rather the career ambitions of civil servants. For example, unnecessary directorates and sections have been established in order to enlarge the number of high-ranking management posts to which civil servants could be promoted, in order to enjoy an additional allowance linked to all such management posts. Irrationally-created and inadequately-staffed administrative units regularly show bureaucratic inertia and provoke complications in policy implementation. However, owing to pressures from the 'Troika', over the past five years there have been mergers between administrative units in the central services of ministries in Athens, while in each ministry a new GD, responsible for overseeing the ministry's finances, has been established.

It is therefore not surprising that, as has happened in some other EU Member States, public services often could not implement new EU-wide policies as formulated in Brussels in the form of Regulations and Directives; nor were Greece's public services able to efficiently absorb EU funds, made available by the European Commission and by funding lines of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) or Cohesion Policy and particularly by the European Social Fund (ESF) throughout the previous programmatic period (2007-2013).

Therefore, particularly in the 1990s and the 2000s, new agencies were created on the side of central services of ministries such as, for instance, the Management Organisation

Unit of Development Programmes (*MOD*). This is an autonomous state agency supervised by the Ministry of Economy and Development that assists the Ministry in the effective management of EU-funded programmes.

There are key mechanisms of audit and enforcing accountability. To start with, there is a supreme administrative court, the Council of the State (*Symvoulío tis Epikrateias*), which ultimately decides on all cases of administrative law, including law suits submitted by any citizen against the state for a law violation on the part of the state. There is also the Audit Office, which audits the administration's expenditure, accounts, balance sheets and contracts of large financial value signed by the state. It is required to compile a relevant comprehensive report once a year and submit it to the parliament.

The Audit Office is essentially a branch of the justice system. Recruitment to this Office is periodic and is done through the same competitive entrance examinations which are required for entry to any other compartment of the justice system, such as the aforementioned Council of the State. In practice, the Audit Office's reports are not considered either by legislators or by the government. This is another indication of the overall imbalance among the executive, the legislative and the judicial branches. The executive branch, based on constitutional provisions and political tradition, has a disproportionate share of decision-making power in public policy formulation and implementation. Finally, there is the Legal Council of the State which belongs to the executive rather than the judiciary. This Council's functions include advising the government on legal matters and defending the state's interest in court.

There are also independent administrative and regulatory authorities, for example, the Greek Ombudsman, the Personal Data Protection Authority, and bodies of inspectors, for instance the Financial and Economic Crime Unit (*SDOE*). Independent authorities have multiplied since the late 1990s in order to increase control on the public administration and make it more transparent and responsive to citizens. Sometimes, however, such authorities have been sidelined by government ministers. For example, in the late summer of 2016 the Minister of the State sidelined the National Council of Radio and Television (*ESR*) in his attempt to restrict the number of private TV channels allowed to broadcast nationally to only four channels. (The attempt was annulled later in the same year by the courts, i.e. the Council of the State).

A separate inter-ministerial body, the Governmental Council of Administrative Reform, is formally responsible for steering administrative reform. In practice, however, this Council is sparsely staffed, while all reform initiatives stem from the Prime Minister (PM) and his close entourage in the PMO. More often than not, administrative reform takes the form of establishing new institutions rather than changing management structures and processes, let alone the daily routines, of the central, regional and local administration (Spanou and Sotiropoulos 2010).

In other words, the centre of government is found at the PMO, which is staffed by governing party cadres and experts affiliated with the governing party. In the same headquarters as those of the PMO, one finds a coordinating organ, the General Secretariat of the Government. This secretariat is also staffed by governing cadres and experts. They are supervised by a General Secretary who in turn is supervised by the PM. All staff members of the PMO and the Secretariat are political appointees and they are reshuffled every time the PM changes. The size of the staff supporting the PM has varied. Between 2010 and 2013 the number of designated posts for appointees in the PMO and the Secretariat has fluctuated from 151 to 208 posts (Featherstone and Papadimitriou 2015: Table 9.1, p. 226).

There are no career civil servants serving in the PMO nor are there clearly demarcated posts for line officials in that Office. Furthermore, the PMO does not have a stable organisational structure, as PMs, often at the beginning of their term in power, tend to add to the PMO new posts of political appointees either at the level of Minister or at the level of policy advisor. For example, in 2017 there were three Ministers of the State, i.e. ministers without portfolio, assisting the PM.

There is therefore little continuity over time in the PMO and there is a very uneven capacity of coordination (Featherstone and Papadimitriou 2015). The PMO's resources, capacity and performance clearly depend on the personal skills or experience of the cadres and experts who staff this Office as well as on the personality and working habits of the PM himself (or herself). There are also informal actors, such as governing party cadres and managers of opinion poll companies, who participate in the decision-making process. In other words, the popularity of alternative policy options is measured and is factored in, along with considerations of political ideology, efficiency and obviously – in the case of an over-indebted state such as Greece – pressures exerted by the country's creditors. There is therefore an assortment of formal and informal actors who take part in decision-making at the top level of the government. The network around the PMO, in which they partake, often changes its composition and has a rather fluid structure.

The Cabinet or Council of Ministers is the supreme body of government that steers government policy and convenes to decide on major policy issues. It consists of the Prime Minister (PM), the Deputy Prime Minister and the ministers. Deputy Ministers may attend the sessions. The Cabinet does not meet at predictable time intervals, and the agenda of its sessions wholly depends on the PM. The Cabinet therefore often plays a ceremonial role. In other words, it plays the role of a forum where the PM announces new political initiatives, although sometimes there is some discussion of government policy.

Decisions of the Cabinet are prepared by the PMO and the General Secretariat of the Government. There are also government commissions, composed of ministers and secretaries of state, entrusted with the task of deciding on policies in specific, strategic areas. Examples are the government commission of Economic Affairs or Defence. Again, no such commission actually convenes, unless the PM takes the initiative to convene it or at least approves a session of a commission taking place.

The system of commissions is complemented by an informal network of policy advisors and party cadres who form the entourage of each Minister, namely his or her 'ministerial cabinet'. Such 'cabinets' contact each other, but rarely is there an institutionalised interaction among them. Notably, general secretaries of ministries also have their own 'cabinets'. Unavoidably then the political tier of ministries is inflated, while administrative tiers are substantively suppressed as far as their policy-making or even policy-implementation functions are concerned.

Inside ministries, civil servants prepare the legal and technical documentation of policy decisions, when they are not side-lined by politically-appointed legal and technical experts serving in the aforementioned ministerial cabinets. Generally, civil servants are rarely consulted on the substance of policy measures under preparation. Their views are taken into consideration when there are insurmountable legal obstacles.

In general, the aforesaid network of political appointees and policy advisors, spread across the PMO, ministries and general secretariats, contributes to an inchoate style of policy-making, with little coherence. The primary reason for this problem is that there are very few, if any, channels of inter-ministerial coordination. Ministers rarely collaborate among themselves, unless such collaboration is facilitated by the PMO. In 2010-2017, intense pressure from Greece's creditors to implement many simultaneous reforms in numerous policy sectors probably facilitated the passage of some reforms which were 'pushed through' the above maze of formal and informal groups and

institutions, but also probably aggravated the inchoate character of decision-making in Greece.

3 KEY FEATURES OF THE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM

3.1 Status and categories of public employees

In the Greek public administration, there are basically two broad categories of public sector employees: civil servants on the one hand and public employees with a labour contract on the other. The latter may have a contract for an indefinite time period or a fixed-term contract. As shown in the table on general government employment, included in section 1 of this report, in December 2015 (most recent month available) in total there were 566 913 civil servants of the central, regional and local government in Greece. If one adds to this number the sum total of public employees who are not civil servants but work for the central and local government under various types of contracts, total government employment rises to 653 463. The share of fixed term employees was 10 per cent (own calculations based on official data drawn on http://apografi.yap.gov.gr/apografi/2015/Flows_2015.htm). Another 47 373 employees worked for public corporations and among those employees 23 per cent were under fixed term contracts.

In principle, public employees with contracts for indefinite periods could be laid off, but court decisions have actually equated the status of civil servants with that of employees under indefinite period contracts. By contrast, public employees under fixed-term or project-based contracts, regulated by Labour Law, do not enjoy tenure. Sub-groups of such employees were indeed dismissed in the beginning of the Greek crisis.

Civil servants are appointed with tenure and their employment relation with the state is regulated by the Civil Service Code (included in Laws 3528/2007, 3584/2007 and 4057/2012). Civil servants who are trusted supporters of the governing party may also be temporarily recruited into the 'ministerial cabinets' mentioned in the previous section. Despite their political affiliation or policy preferences, all categories of civil servants and public employees under contract are officially required to serve the public interest.

3.2 Civil service regulation at central government level

In Greece there is a career system rather than a position system. There are also many different corps of civil servants, constituted on the basis of occupational specialisation (e.g. agronomists, computer technicians, etc.) The system of corps is currently under reform, as the number of corps is excessive. The Ministry of Administrative Reconstruction has leaked to the press that it plans to reduce the total number of roughly 1440 corps down to about 400 corps (Mpitsika 2017). The *corps*, shaped after the French career model, are the gateway for entry into public administration, but do not enjoy the social esteem or substantive power of the corresponding French *corps* or Spanish *cuerpos*. They merely reflect minute divisions of specialisation within the body of civil servants. The access to a *corps* determines the range of positions that a civil servant is entitled to apply once this person has passed the public competition exams, managed by an independent authority, the Higher Council for Personnel Selection (*ASEP*).

Once a civil servant is hired by a ministry or other public entity, there is very little if any horizontal mobility for him or her between sectors or government levels. Civil servants

and contract employees have rights and obligations defined by the Civil Service Code. Individual rights include the right to privacy, the right of non-dismissal, the right to participate in political activities, the right of association and belonging to a political party and the right to strike. Major obligations include the requirement to discharge one's duties with impartiality and integrity, under the supervision and guiding orders of one's superior in the administrative hierarchy.

3.3 Key characteristics of the central government HR System

HR policy and management fall within the Ministry of Administrative Reconstruction. However, in practice this ministry collaborates with - if does not fully succumb to decisions of - the Ministry of Finance on a number of HR issues. The latter include the grade system, pay system, pension system, and control of payroll of civil servants. The Ministry of Administrative Reconstruction is responsible for standardising recruitment and skills profiles, overseeing the initial and in-service training of civil servants in the National Centre of Public Administration (*EKDD*) and monitoring the conduct of competitions for entry-level civil servants, i.e. competitions which are assigned to the independent authority of Higher Council for Personnel Selection (*ASEP*).

According to the Constitution of Greece (art. 103), objective criteria are applied to the recruitment procedures of the civil service. Vacancies are filled through competition, based on written examinations followed by interviews with candidates. Announcements of job openings include the required credentials and the specific *corps* (e.g. *corps* of economists, civil engineers, etc.) to which successful candidates will belong. There is a probation period for newly hired civil servants, but no one among new recruits is ever dismissed. Regardless of their point of entry or time of entry into the civil service, civil servants (and public employees with indefinite time contracts) may receive in-service training, which counts in advancing their career. Still, it is not uncommon to find a discrepancy between the title of one's administrative post, the content of one's daily tasks and the type of training received. This probably results from the fact there is still no detailed job description for each post, a project which is still under way in Greek ministries.

Separate entrance competitions are conducted by the *EKDD* centre, mentioned above, in order to recruit future higher civil servants. Successful candidates are trained at the National School of Public Administration (*ESDD*), and during training receive a salary. Since 2016, there is a National Registry for Senior Executives (Laws 4369/2016 and 4389/2016, still in the very early stages of implementation). Civil servants wishing to participate in internal competitions for higher civil service posts in ministries and state agencies are expected to register in this senior executive system. In practice, there are various amendments to the legislation on senior executives. Meanwhile, ministers prefer to hand pick civil servants and appoint them to senior level posts on a temporary basis which unfortunately leads to a sequence of successive temporary appointments of the same favoured employees.

Civil service unions in Greece are organised in the traditional, *state corporatist* sense. In other words, there are no unions competing for the loyalty of civil servants. All unions belong to the aforementioned single nationwide confederation (*ADEDY*), the administrative council of which is elected in highly contested elections in which collateral organisations of ND, Pasok, Syriza, the Communist Party and smaller far left political parties take part. Parties put forward candidates, i.e. party cadres who happen to be civil servants. The *ADEDY* confederation of civil service unions and separately some of its

member-unions, such as the *OME-OTA* union mentioned above, the union of public hospital personnel and the unions of teachers of primary and secondary education (*DOE*, *OLME*) are wholly dominated by political parties and in fact often strike against the government. Naturally such unions reject salary cuts and pensions cuts resulting from austerity policies such as those adopted over the last eight years (2010-2017). They also regularly resist any major or minor attempts at administrative reform (e.g. the transfer of personnel from one public service to another, the relocation and transfer of a ministry's offices to new headquarters, the re-drafting of a ministry's organisational chart and the like). They also fight against any changes in personnel policy (except for the hiring of new personnel).

Greece's salary system is complicated because on the one hand there are three components in each salary and on the other hand there are variations by ministry and by state agency. The three components are the following: a) the basic salary which depends on educational level, b) a seniority allowance added to the basic salary every three years; and c) a post allowance only for the civil servants who serve in managerial posts, e.g. the post of a director who heads a directorate. Basic salary, seniority and post allowance are established by law, which often changes on an annual basis, depending on the condition of the state's finances. For instance, since the eruption of the economic crisis in 2010 there have been annual decreases in the salaries of civil servants. In detail, between 2009 and 2013 the average income of civil servants fell by eight per cent (Giannitsis and Zografakis 2015:35), while the average income of employees of public corporations (starting from a comparatively much higher level) fell by 25.2 per cent. In comparison, salaries in the non-banking private sector fell by 19.1 per cent in the same time period (Giannitsis and Zografakis 2015: Table 4.8, p. 35).

One has to factor in that salaries of employees of public corporations, which have decreased the most, used to be on average far above the salaries of either civil servants or private sector employees. A general pattern of salary shifts cannot be precisely described, since salaries varied and still vary by public corporation and also by ministry. For instance, allowances, paid on top of salaries, may differ a lot from one ministry to the other and are determined by each ministry. This tendency has declined since 2010, but is still evident, for example, if one contrasts the salaries of civil servants of the Ministry of Finance with the much lower salaries of civil servants of comparable rank serving in other Ministries.

There are no performance-related bonuses. Successive governments have passed a relevant performance-based evaluation law, but eventually hesitated to implement it. Civil service unions, plus all left-wing parties and also traditional, patronage-bred politicians of the parties of the centre and the right have converged on a reluctance to establish any evaluation scheme. Unions and critics on the left, including cadres of the governing party Syriza, claim that performance-based evaluation is a neo-liberal practice leading to dismissals of civil servants and public employees.

Civil service unions are particularly hostile to any performance-based evaluation review of civil service personnel, even though in autumn 2017 the competent minister linked refusal to apply performance-based evaluation to participation in mobility schemes which could be favourable for career advancement in the civil service. The complete rejection of any performance-based evaluation is convenient in quarters of the public administration exhibiting absenteeism and/or reluctance on the part of some civil servants to discharge any of their duties. On the other hand, resistance to any performance-based evaluation is also owed to past legacies of discrimination of civil

servants on the grounds of their political beliefs and also to fears of dismissals or further salary cuts imposed on public employees.

Although civil service unions have since 1999 obtained the right to negotiate salaries, in practice governments used to determine salary levels even before the economic crisis struck. They could thus retain the pattern of uneven salary levels prevailing in different ministries and state agencies, aiming to win the political support of ministry-based unions. After 2010, owing to pressure by Greece's creditors, the government started determining salary levels by fiat.

Nevertheless, civil servants were not as negatively affected by the economic crisis as private sector employees. Although expectedly the salaries of top managers of the largest private companies by far exceed those of high-level civil servants, traditionally the entry-level and also average salaries of civil servants were and still are higher than the salaries of people working in the private sector.

Effects owing to the crisis were also visible on the size of the public sector. The downsizing of public employment started after 2010. It took approximately two years to become visible as there was a lot of political resistance and bureaucratic inertia regarding any quantitative or qualitative reform of the public sector.

In December 2009, the total number of civil servants and public employees working in the central, regional, and local government (excluding public corporations) was 942 625 (official data made available by the Ministry of Administrative Reconstruction at http://apografi.yap.gov.gr/apografi/2013/Flows_2009_2013.htm). As noted above in Section 1, by December 2015 this number had fallen to 566 913.

In view of the above, it is evident that politicisation is rampant in the Greek administration. While access to the civil service is merit-based for central, regional and local government, there is a lot of political interference at all stages, namely in the recruitment, transfer and promotions of civil servants (Spanou 1996, Sotiropoulos 1999). Temporary employment in the form of short-term, patronage-based recruitment to the public sector is rampant. Promotion is formally based on a transparent selection procedure by a competent committee in each ministry and state agency, but in practice party patronage plays a major role in this process (Sotiropoulos 2004). None of these are new phenomena but have been observed by successive teams of experts visiting Greece to review the public administration since the 1950 (Makrydemetres and Michalopoulos 2000) and also by more recent reports of international organisations (OECD 2012).

Despite the passing of new legislation in 2016, which provided for the creation of an administrative elite (the Registry of Senior Executives stipulated by Law 4069/2016), in practice the procedure to streamline promotions never took off. As already noted, ministers tend to make temporary appointments to posts of heads of administrative units. Temporary appointments are usually renewed and thus heads of units are hand-picked and appointed on purely political criteria. Depending on the organisational structure of each ministry, there is therefore a set of high-ranking posts within the civil service which are open to discretionary appointments.

HR system (Career vs position based)	Employment status (civil servant as standard; dual; employee as standard)	Differences between civil servants and public employees (high, medium, low)	Turnover (high, medium, low)
Career	Civil servant as standard	High	Low

To sum up, the starting salary of civil servants and public employees is usually far higher than the starting salary of private-sector employees. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to make precise estimations, because, firstly, successive Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed between Greece and its creditors in 2010 – 2016 have changed remuneration levels; and secondly, despite austerity packages based on the successive MoUs, various categories of civil servants and particularly so employees of public corporations have fought for and succeeded in retaining higher remuneration levels than other employees of the public-sector employees.

In other words, the remuneration system is extremely fragmented. Different interest groups of civil servants and public employees, composed of personnel belonging to the same corps, personnel of the same ministry or personnel of the same public corporations enjoy highly differentiated remuneration levels. These HR systems of the Greek public administration are not cohesive. There is a lower remuneration level in the central and local public administration than in the public sector for employees of all ranks; and there is a high level of politicisation at the regional level (see table).

Coherence between different government levels (high, medium, low)	Remuneration level vs private sector (much higher, higher, same, lower, much lower)	Formal politicisation through appointments (high, medium, low)	Functional politicisation (high, medium, low)
Very low	On average, much lower for private-sector employees; on average much higher for employees of public corporations, in comparison with private-sector employees and civil servants	High	High

4 POLITICAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

4.1 Policy-making, coordination and implementation

Greece has a unitary administrative system with relatively little autonomy accorded to regional authorities. The country has a parliamentary regime and the government is formed by the PM and ministers who ask for a vote of confidence by the parliament after each election or at times when parliamentary majority may be shaken (e.g. when a new Memorandum of Understanding is debated between Greece and its creditors).

Recent democratic governments have been short-lived and unstable. Between 2007 and 2017, six national parliamentary elections were called, either because the PM considered that he and his party could win them or because no government coalition could be

formed after the previous elections. In other words, the PM has the tool of dissolving the parliament, by asking the usually ceremonial President of the Republic to do so. The PM uses this discretionary power at will.

There was almost no experience with coalition governments before 2011, but then, as Greece was almost at the brink of financial collapse, a three-party coalition government was formed. Only coalition governments have been formed since then, as the once stable two-party system, consisting of the Pasok and ND parties, collapsed when voters – angry about prolonged austerity – turned to the far right (the Golden Dawn party) or – to a much greater extent – to the radical left (the Syriza party).

As already noted, the upper echelons of ministries are very much politicised. Few positions of political appointees are filled by civil servants. The phenomenon of a revolving door process is rather rare. Rarely, if ever, do management-level private sector employees enter the civil service and vice versa. The neutrality of civil servants, although stipulated by the Civil Service Code, is never taken for granted. Unsurprisingly then, there is little consultation in public administration. In general, line ministries do not have their own consultation bodies in order to get support for their policies, except for the Ministry of Finance which houses the 'Council of Economic Advisors'.

Nor is there much consultation outside ministries. NGOs and think tanks never really shape public discourse on any issues, although they may be called upon to offer opinions or even actively implement government policy. The rolling back of public services and the deployment of willing NGOs was in fact what happened in 2015-2017, in the sectors of migration and refugee policy implementation in the easternmost Greek islands (islands of the Aegean Sea, facing the Turkish coast).

In view of the above, today most policy advice is monopolised by governing party cadres and ministerial cabinets (and, of course, advice offered by the 'Troika'). Since governing parties change frequently, as they enter or leave coalitions, and ministers are often reshuffled, policy advisors also change frequently even within the life span of one and the same government. Policy implementation also suffers from the frequent reshuffling of the Cabinet.

Unions and associations focusing on economic topics used to be influential before 2010. The association of industrialists (*SEV*) and the confederation of unions of workers and employees of private sector (*GSEE*) used to be frequent interlocutors of successive governments. The *GSEE* confederation primarily, if not exclusively, represented the interests of well-protected wage and salary-earners, such as bank employees, partly privatised but still state-managed companies, large insurance companies and the like.

Some associations and unions had actually accomplished policy capture (Iordanoglou 2013). For instance, the liberal professions and employees of state-owned enterprises had carved their own niches in the pension system. These were among Greece's strongest interest groups. They benefited from regulations facilitating early retirement or rather generous welfare benefits and had their pension schemes supported by earmarked funds of the state budget. Such collective players have obstructed modernisation and Europeanisation in more than one policy sectors, for example in privatisations, pension reform and public administration reform (Spanou 2001, Featherstone and Papadimitriou 2008, Passas and Tsekos 2009).

In other words, the influence of certain interest groups such as businessmen, lawyers, doctors, engineers and groups of insiders of the labour market was traditionally very high. These trends were curbed after the crisis erupted, as the 'Troika' demanded and to

an extent provoked major policy shifts, gradually erasing the preferential treatment of the aforementioned interest groups or at least slashing available financial resources for these groups.

In the past, citizen participation and mobilisation regarding policy-making was thin, but things changed after 2010 (Clarke, Huliaras and Sotiropoulos 2015). The onset of the economic crisis triggered the creation of fluid and temporary social movements, self-help groups and social solidarity networks (Sotiropoulos 2017). Soon many of these collective actors aligned themselves with and were actually supported by the Syriza party organisation, which thus rode on the waves of popular discontent in the two parliamentary elections of January 2015 and September 2015.

In summary, the system has a very loosely coordinated policy style. It suffers from instability in policy-making, depending for instance on the political ideology of the governing party, the outcome of domestic pressures on the government and the changing direction of negotiations between Greece and the international actors currently guiding the course of the Greek economy. Policy-making bears unclear traits, sometimes shaped by the preponderance of the central government over all other players and other times shaped by external actors, such as Greece's creditors, while citizen participation in policy-making is very weak.

Distribution of powers	Coordination quality (high, medium, low)	Fragmentation (high, medium, low)
Not shared, but concentrated in the hands of most majoritarian governments up until the start of the economic crisis and coalition governments after the start of the crisis.	Low at the high, medium and low levels of the ministerial hierarchy, particularly up until the start of the economic crisis; medium at the high levels after the start of the crisis.	High

Political economy (liberal – coordinated)	Interest intermediation (corporatist – pluralistic)	Citizen participation (strong – weak)	Policy style
Coordinated	Excessively corporatist	Very weak	Incrementalism

Sources of policy advice (mandarins, cabinets, external experts)	Administrative autonomy (high – medium – low)	Patronage & politicisation (formal, functional) (merit – patronage) (high – medium – low)	Public service bargaining (Agency – Trustee)	Stability (high – low – no turnover after elections)
Cabinets and external experts, including foreign advisors and officials after the start of the economic crisis.	Very low	Extensive patronage at the high and medium ranks; less extensive although still existing at the lower ranks.	Agency bargaining dominant	Low at high levels; higher at medium and lower levels

4.2 Administrative tradition and culture

Hofstede national culture dimensions		
Dimension	Value	Average EU28
Power Distance	60	52
Individualism/Collectivism	35	57
Masculinity/Feminity	57	44
Uncertainty Avoidance	100	70
Long-term Orientation	45	57
Indulgence/Self-restraint	50	44

Sources: Geert Hofstede's national culture dimensions, <https://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>.¹

Greek public bureaucracy is based on rule of law principles, and the State is widely considered as responsible for steering economy and society. This is a tendency which dates back to the birth of the modern Greek state in 1831, when Greece won its national independence from the Ottoman Empire. The Napoleonic state tradition, which was inaugurated then, is still prevalent. As we have seen in this report (Section 2.1 above), regional elections took place for the first time only in 1994 while substantive decentralisation reform has taken place only since the late 1990s and certainly from 2011. Despite all this, Athens continues to play a supreme role in Greece's little-decentralised State.

Most civil servants have training in law, the social sciences and the humanities. Formalism, namely an overemphasis on the letter rather than the substance of the law, predominates (Mouzelis 1978). In a nutshell, a procedural logic dominates over a managerial logic in the Greek government and administration. Even today, when the 'Troika' presses Greek authorities to deliver tangible results, the Greek government and administration do not display a managerialist approach. There are some sectors of the administration, such as some instances of administration-citizen relations, where there has been penetration of e-government. In general, the Greek public sector is relatively unfamiliar with and distant from business ideas and there is considerable red tape.

The table in this section shows Greek scores on Hofstede's scale of culture dimensions. (These dimensions must be used with caution, as they do not capture the complexity and many different layers of meaning, permeating norms and behaviour in the Greek administration.) The '*Power Distance*' high score (60) indicates that Greece is a very hierarchical society and that hierarchy is a major dimension of organisational structures. Indeed, team work is rare in ministries and state agencies, as staff members are used to obeying orders (or trying to circumvent them by using political channels of communication with superiors, e.g. political appointees, standing above those senior civil servants who give orders to lower ranking civil servants). On the other hand, in civil service unions there is cohesion and solidarity among union members who often openly defy authority at all levels.

¹ Interpretation: Power Distance (high value = higher acceptance of hierarchy and unequal distribution of power); Individualism (high value = stronger individualist culture); Masculinity (high value = higher masculinity of society); Long-term Orientation (high value = stronger long-term orientation); Indulgence (high value = indulgence). The methodology and concepts used by Hofstede do not quite reflect the variation and complicated nature of aspects of Greek administrative culture.

The score (35) in the 'Individualist/Collectivist' scale shows that Greeks understand social relations and behave mostly in individualist rather than collectivist terms. Despite outbursts of solidarity in the wake of the economic crisis, in the work environment Greeks are individualistic. On the other hand, one has to remember that family, work-based, village or neighbourhood relations can be quite strong in Greece, as it is a country retaining aspects of traditional rather modern-day antagonistic mentality.

The score (57) on the dimension of 'Masculinity/Femininity' probably serves to reinforce the idea that in work environments in Greece achievements are the result of competition rather than consensus. Subordinates are rarely consulted and managers do not systematically reach out to find out their opinions. During periods of reform, however, managers are almost obliged to hear the opinions of subordinates, as it is often the case that the latter are organised in quite strong unions within each ministry or state-owned enterprise.

Greece scores extremely highly (100) in 'Uncertainty avoidance'. Seeking job security through recruitment in the public sector was and probably still is a major survival strategy, particularly in periods of high unemployment rates.

Greece's score for 'Long-term Orientation' (45) is rather low, while for 'Indulgence' it is relatively high (50). These two scores probably reflect a predominant lifestyle in which planning and programming are not common and a protestant-inspired deferment of gratification is quite rare. Nevertheless, one has to consider that Greeks often hold two jobs to make ends meet, and that in sociological terms this means that their social status is multi-faceted ('polyvalent'; Tsoukalas 1985). Unavoidably, then, many Greeks work long hours, albeit not necessarily in one and the same work environment.

The accumulation of an extremely high level of public debt at various points during the 1980s and the 2000s, which has brought the Greek economy to its knees in conjunction with the post-2008 adverse global financial environment, may to an extent be associated with the aforementioned cultural values. Indeed, Greece's future developments were never a priority concern for either the government or the administration, if by the term 'future developments' we mean long-term planning and programming.

Administrative culture <i>Rechtsstaat</i> (state based on justice and integrity), public Interest	Welfare state (liberal, conservative, social-democratic)	Public sector openness (open, medium, closed)
<i>Rechtsstaat</i>	Social democratic but very fragmented and very uneven in social transfers, channelled occupational lines	Closed

Key PA Values	Managerial vs Procedural (Managerial, Mixed, Procedural)	Red tape (regulatory density) (very high to very low)	Discretion/autonomy (high, low, medium)
Legality, impartiality, equality	Procedural	High	Very low

5 GOVERNMENT CAPACITY AND PERFORMANCE

5.1 Transparency and accountability

Access to government information has been upgraded, owing to a new system called 'Clarity' (*Diavgeia*), established by the Pasok government in 2010, and also owing to pressures from the 'Troika' and to technical assistance from the EC's Task Force, an Athens-based commission of experts sent to Greece to assist with reforms of fiscal management. (Since the change of government in early 2015, this commission has become rather a Brussels-based group of commission officials assisting Greece with structural reforms).

The 'Clarity' system is actually an electronic platform through which all public authorities have to upload each and every administrative act, including appointment decisions, awards of grants, transfers of personnel, decisions on state subsidies to citizens; in brief, all acts regardless of their great or small significance. Importantly, the law says that no act is deemed to be valid, unless it is first uploaded and shown on the 'Clarity' platform to which all people, not only those employed by the state, have access.

There is adequate legislation on Freedom of Information and there are two independent authorities, the Ombudsman and the Financial Intelligence Unit, which are active in matters of accessing information and the obligation of political and administrative officials to file asset declaration.

Of course, despite the good score of Greece in the table shown in this section, there are remaining issues. These refer to inadequate elaboration and management of data on assets of officials; problems with the quality and sufficiency of information which control mechanisms can use when they inspect public services; and some issues of delays and less-than-full disclosure regarding public information. These issues are reflected in the very low score of Greece, as far as transparency of government, accountability and control of corruption are concerned.

In the future, Greek prosecuting authorities will need further political backing and more resources to control corruption. Naturally, as the economic crisis unfolded, political parties of the opposition, social media and mass media became very vigilant of government activities. However, more often than not information on and analysis of corruption became another field in which fierce political party competition took place. Parties preferred to trade insults rather than setting the record on corruption straight, while government interference with prosecuting authorities has not been uncommon. The government is still legally allowed to influence the agenda of prosecuting authorities, if not the criminal justice system as a whole, as every few years higher-ranking judges and prosecutors are essentially selected by the government from among candidates with high credentials and long professional experience.

Indicator	Value 2014	EU28 rank	Value 2016	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Access to government information (1-10)	9.00	5	9.00	3	0.00	+2
	Value 2013	EU28 rank	Value 2015	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Transparency of government (0-100)	22.86	26	33.29	25	+10.43	+1
	Value 2010	EU28 rank	Value 2015	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Voice and accountability (-2.5,+2.5)	0.88	24	0.59	24	-0.29	0
Control of corruption (-2.5,+2.5)	-0.16	26	-0.13	27	+0.03	-1
TI perception of corruption (0-100)	35.00	28	46.00	25	+11.00	+3
	Value 2010	EU28 rank	Value 2014	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Gallup perception of corruption (%)	89.00	23	85.00	23	-4.00	0

Sources: Bertelsmann Stiftung, European Commission, World Bank Group, Transparency International, Gallup World Poll. Note: The ranking of the Gallup perception of corruption is based on 27 countries, and on the 2009 values for Estonia and Latvia.

On the other hand, the perception of corruption, which has remained high over time, probably does not reflect some of the successes achieved in anti-corruption. Important new institutions, such as the Economic Prosecutors and the Anti-Corruption Prosecutors, have started functioning and, with the help of the EC, Greece has devised a detailed anti-corruption plan. After 2010, a few major politicians, such as a former Deputy Prime Minister of Pasok governments and a former ND-supported Mayor of Thessaloniki, were condemned on major charges of corruption and have served prison sentences. Other politicians have paid fines on lesser charges, while long-delayed disciplinary measures and court proceedings against civil servants charged with corruption have come to end and involved employees have been dismissed.

Street-level corruption is also extensive in the following public services: customs, town planning, national health system and taxation services (Bratu, Sotiropoulos and Stoyanova 2017). Many corruption cases, however, still remain under investigation. After the change of government of 2015, the passage of legislation effectively establishing a more lenient treatment of criminal offenders and other law violators among civil servants has not been very helpful in combating corruption in public administration. Overall, one cannot be satisfied with the progress Greece has made on anti-corruption. On the other hand, there are reasons to believe that corruption has not grown: because of the grave economic crisis, the increased sensitivity of citizens towards the behaviour of politicians and administrators, the continual cuts in government expenditure, and the overall lack of personal and public funds, chances are that the scale of illegal funds circulated through corrupt networks probably is not as large as it used to be before the onset of the crisis.

5.2 Civil service system and HRM

Indicator	Value 2012	EU28 rank	Value 2015	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Impartiality (1-7)	4.37	27	3.96	24	-0.41	+3
	Value 2012	EU26 rank	Value 2015	EU26 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Professionalism (1-7)	3.56	23	3.92	17	+0.36	+6
Closedness (1-7)	5.83	5	5.66	8	-0.17	-3

Sources: Quality of Government Institute Gothenburg.

The capacity of Greek public administration to deliver results in order to serve citizens and businesses is quite problematic and in fact cannot be assessed in a reliable manner (Rammata 2011). After all, Greece's administration has not really made the leap from traditional bureaucracy to modern-day public management (Michalopoulos 2003).

While total public employment has been reduced, this has not necessarily boosted efficiency, as skilled and experienced civil servants and public employees have rushed to seek retirement. Just after 2010, realising that the economic crisis would bring about the slashing of their income, experienced civil servants benefited from early retirement schemes, before new pension laws, prolonging the retirement age, were put in place.

The workforce in the public sector, after being subjected to many cuts, is not necessarily large (in absolute numbers, public employment is in the order of 600 000 in a population of approximately 11 million). The problem for Greece is not really the scale of its public

employment but rather a combination of inadequate skills of employees (e.g. inadequate knowledge of computers, foreign languages and modern management methods) and the inefficient distribution of employees within and between ministries. For instance, there is no assessment on HR capacity which could evaluate the competence or motivation of civil servants. At the same time, the Greek state, pressed to cut expenditure, has almost stopped the hiring of new personnel. As a result, the phenomenon of the aging of the civil service workforce arose, which is briefly discussed below.

Greek public services are filled with men and women belonging to the middle-age and old-age groups. There is an almost equal representation of the two sexes: men constitute 53 per cent of all civil servants of the central, regional and local government, while women constitute the remaining 47 per cent. There is however a problem with the ageing of the Greece civil service. Official data shows that in December 2015 53 per cent of all civil servants of the central, regional and local government were 45 years or older (http://www.minadmin.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/20160318_analisi_metabolon_taktikou_prosopikou2015.pdf). Such ageing is probably owed to the economic crisis, as the Greek state almost froze hiring civil service personnel after the crisis broke out.

The lack of assessment of competencies and performance is related to the absence of relevant tools and skills and to the staunch resistance of civil servants to any such assessment or appraisal exercise.

Training of human resources at all levels of government exists but is often *ad hoc* and is not necessarily corresponding to the needs of public organisations to which civil servants return, after completing their in-service training.

As the table in this section indicates, professionalism and impartiality diverge from the European average. In Greece, the level of clientelism is still very high. This did not change after the change of government of 2015, when the traditionally clientelist parties (New Democracy, Pasok) ceded power to radical left Syriza and the far-right Anel parties. Today, as in the past, the government seizes every opportunity either to staff ministries and state agencies with political appointees or – after the hiring of tenured personnel was drastically curbed by the 'Troika' – to offer temporary employment in the public sector to unemployed persons.

The professionalism of a small group, namely the graduates of the National School of Public Administration (a major part of the aforementioned EKDD centre), who are trained in modern management and foreign languages, cannot balance out the widespread lack of professionalism of the vast majority of civil servants. Overall, however, central government employees are probably more skilled and more experienced than local government employees, as clientelism in local government has been rampant for decades and continues to be so today.

5.3 Service delivery and digitalisation

Indicator	Value 2013	EU28 rank	Value 2015	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
E-government users (%)	19.74	16	25.21	16	+5.47	0
Pre-filled forms (%)	4.25	27	8.14	27	+3.89	0
Online service completion (%)	45.71	26	53.86	27	+8.15	-1
	Value 2010	EU28 rank	Value 2016	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Online services (0-1)	0.36	26	0.58	23	+0.22	+3
	Value 2013	EU27 rank				
Barriers to public sector innovation (%)	34.02	7				
			Value 2015	EU28 rank		
Services to businesses (%)			19.00	27		
	Value 2011	EU28 rank	Value 2016	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Ease of Doing business (0-100)	60.66	28	68.67	27	+8.01	+1

Sources: European Commission Digital Economy and Society Index UN e-government Index, EU Scoreboard Public innovation, Eurobarometer no. 417, World Bank Group ease of doing business index.

After the eruption of the economic crisis, reforms were launched in a much more intensive manner than before the crisis. The new trend was to expand on e-government. The main idea was to have civil servants and citizens adapt to pressure to avoid personal contacts amongst them, which can offer opportunities for corruption and under-the-table exchanges. There has been a large-scale yet incomplete effort to require public authorities to offer digital services to citizens. Simultaneously, citizens are required to shift from hand-written, personally delivered petitions to the electronic filing of petitions and tax declarations. (There are notable exceptions to this new pattern in many ministries and municipalities.)

There have been many different government initiatives in e-governance which have been implemented and are functioning successfully. Among these initiatives, three stand out: first, the 'Taxis system' which allows individual citizens and businesses to communicate with tax authorities and manage the filing of their tax declaration and payment of tax instalments; second, the 'Clarity system', explained above (Section 5.1); and third, the 'Apografi system' (census system) through which public employees are required to provide data and information on their employment.

However, as the table in this section shows, online service completion leaves a lot to be desired. Greece has an ageing population which cannot easily handle new, ICT-based modes of accessing public services. Moreover, Greece still has a relatively large agricultural labour force, living in rural areas, where the spread of information, digital services and new mentalities encounters barriers.

Finally, a tradition of individualism, a propensity of Greeks to work independently as self-employed persons or owners of small and very small businesses and a prevailing anti-business climate, fuelled by the anti-capitalist and anti-European ideas which have brought the Left and the nationalist Right jointly to government, clearly also contribute to the low or very low scores which Greece obtains with regard to 'services to businesses' and 'ease of doing business'.

These low scores are due to large administrative hurdles, including an excessive and often contradictory regulatory framework governing sectors such as industrial development, Foreign Direct Investment and taxation (Sotiropoulos and Christopoulos 2016); an old-fashioned civil service, inspired by a procedure-based rather than a

results-based mentality; an uneven distribution of resources, such as skilled personnel and management information systems, on the basis of personal and mainly political connections; and a concomitant lack of understanding and practicing modern management methods in many quarters of the state administration other than a few central services of ministries.

5.4 Organisation and management of government

Indicator	Value 2014	EU28 rank	Value 2016	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Strategic planning capacity (1-10)	5.00	15	3.00	24	-2.00	-9
Interministerial coordination (1-10)	6.00	18	5.00	24	-1.00	-6
SGI Implementation capacity (1-10)	4.57	25	4.00	26	-0.57	-1
	Value 2012	EU26 rank	Value 2015	EU27 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
QOG Implementation capacity (1-7)	3.86	26	4.67	24	+0.81	+2

Sources: Bertelsmann Stiftung, Quality of Government Institute (Gothenburg).

In a comparative perspective, Greece is not doing as badly with regard to 'strategic planning capacity' as it does with the other indicators of organisation and management of government. The upgrading of the PMO in the wake of the crisis may be a cause for Greece's decent score on strategic planning capacity, shown in the table of this section. Since 2010, under Pasok and then under the following Pasok and ND coalition governments, the PMO has been constantly staffed by governing party cadres, but also by government-friendly experts and policy advisors. Also in the incumbent Syriza-Anel government, the deputy prime minister for economic affairs is in charge of overseeing long term planning. Strategic planning has also been a concern of the 'Troika' which has monitored the performance of Greek economy since 2010.

On the other hand, the score for 'interministerial coordination' shows that Greece is not yet up to the standards of a modern EU government. Power is concentrated at the peak of the government, in the hands of the PM. There is very little that ministers could attain, even if coordination among them as persons and coordination among the services of their ministries were to be improved. Almost all decisions, including decisions on minute issues, are still often taken by the Prime Minister and a small entourage around him. The Prime Minister's network of advisers does not have adequate resources for the job of coordinating ministries. There is also a tradition of mistrust among ministers who often come from different factions of the same governing party or different coalition partners. The civil service also follows a silo-like structure of communication, avoiding contacts among services of ministries. Coordination failure therefore often occurs.

It is probable, in view of the above, that implementation is also rare and incomplete. The rarity, if not complete absence, of ex-post evaluation of domestic policies (excluding evaluations done in the context of EU policies and organised by the EU) of course impedes a precise assessment of Greece's glaring policy implementation gap. With regard to 'implementation capacity' Greece has received a very low score from both the Bertelsmann Stiftung and Gothenburg's Quality of Government Institute. The most relevant hurdle to effective implementation is politicisation, ample evidence for which has been given in this and preceding sections.

5.5 Policy-making, coordination and regulation

Indicator	Value 2014	EU28 rank	Value 2016	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Societal consultation (1-10)	2.00	27	3.00	27	+1.00	0
Use of evidence based instruments (1-10)	1.33	27	1.33	27	0.00	0
	Value 2010	EU28 rank	Value 2015	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Regulatory quality (-2.5,+2.5)	0.63	27	0.40	27	-0.23	+0
Rule of law (-2.5,+2.5)	0.61	23	0.24	25	-0.37	-2

Sources: Bertelsmann Stiftung, World Bank Group.

Given the preceding analysis, included in sections 5.1 to 5.4, it is not surprising that Greece receives such low scores for ‘societal consultation’ and ‘use of evidence-based instruments’. There is rarely an obvious connection between policy-making and scientific expertise, except of course for the instances where the ‘Troika’ or the EC’s Task Force for Greece have assisted Greek governments in policy-making.

With regard to the policy-making capacity of the Greek government, even though there is legislation requiring ‘better regulation’ (Law 4048/2012), in practice there is a perennial problem of excessive regulation (Sotiropoulos and Christopoulos 2016). The problem is of course related to the complete lack of any Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) which, although formally required at the stage of drafting a bill of law since 2006, in practice never take place. Successive laws and amendments to laws are passed, based on shifts in attitudes or interests of government ministers and demands from strong interest groups. There is a tradition of frequent re-shuffling of government to suit the leadership strategy of the usually powerful Prime Minister. Additionally, as already noted, government ministers often draft legislation in a vacuum of professional expertise, as the higher echelons of the civil service are staffed by political supporters of the governing party rather than experienced managers and/or experienced civil servants.

In summary, regulatory quality and rule of law (which, among other things, is linked to the quality of legislation) probably suffer from excessive regulation and non-meritocratic or heavily politicised regulation. There is a long-term legacy of passing a plethora of laws. Some of the laws are unnecessary, while others fit only specific interest groups and are tailored to their needs, and yet others contradict earlier legislation, as they serve conflicting interests of political patrons trying to accommodate their diverging political clienteles.

5.6. Overall government performance

Particularly since the eruption of the economic crisis in Greece (2010), trust in political and administrative institutions has plummeted. For example, as the table below shows, trust in government declined dramatically between 2010 and 2016. Meanwhile, public administration has not really improved, despite technical assistance offered by the European Commission’s Task Force and teams of German, French and other experts who have assisted Greek ministers in reform planning.

With a few exceptions, such as a) the continuing popularity among citizens of Centres of Citizens Service (the *KEP*, a series of street-level bureaucracies established in the early 2000s and accessible to citizens in many neighbourhoods of cities and villages), b) increased transparency of administrative acts (the ‘Clarity’ electronic platform), and c) increased digitalisation of services of the Ministry of Finance (the ‘Taxis’ system), citizens do not rate the rest of public services highly. Of course, there are particular service

providers, for example some state schools and public hospitals, which are rated more highly than others. This assessment is not based on reliable evidence, as civil servants and public employees have fought hard to prevent any sort of evaluation of personnel, structures and processes in the public sector. Evaluation is therefore based on hearsay evidence. For example, with regard to state high schools, citizens make positive judgements in favour of this or that high school on the basis of anecdotal but persistent evidence about the success of pupils in university entrance examinations. The same holds for choosing between public hospitals for the treatment of patients.

Indicator	Value 2010	EU28 rank	Value 2016	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Trust in government (%)	25.00	18	11.00	28	-14.00	-10
	Value 2011	EU27 rank				
Improvement of PA over last 5 years (%)	4.00	23				
	Value 2010	EU28 rank	Value 2015	EU28 rank	Δ Value	Δ Rank
Public sector performance (1-7)	3.73	21	3.55	23	-0.18	-2
Government effectiveness (-2.5,+2.5)	0.55	25	0.25	26	-0.30	-1

Sources: Eurobarometer 85, Eurobarometer 370, World Bank Group, World Economic Forum.

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