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SDG PROGRESS REPORT GREECE 2024 - SUSTAINABILITY AT A GLANCE

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Author:
Dr. Stella Apostolaki
Executive Director of
Center of Excellence
in Sustainability

Sustainability at glance – Progress in 2023-2024

The sustainability performance and related developments in the country are depicted to a big extent in the scoring of the progress made in relation to the [UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). Since 2016, when the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN 17 SDGs were adopted, the annual global edition of the Sustainable Development Report (SDR) has provided the most up-to-date data to track and rank the performance of all UN member states on the SDGs, including Greece.

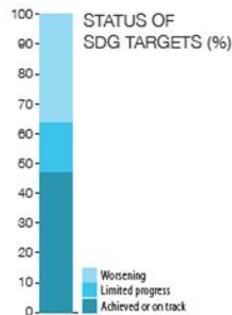
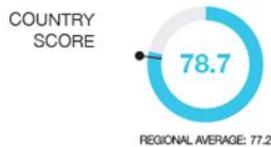
The latest, [Sustainable Development Report 2024](#), on the performance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 193 UN countries, issued in June 2024, is characterized by stagnation since 2020 at a global scale with SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) particularly off track. On average, only 16% of the SDG targets are on track to be met globally by 2030, and limited progress is demonstrated for the remaining 84%. On the contrary, targets under 5 SDGs show a reversal of progress since 2015: SDG2 (obesity rate & sustainable nitrogen management); SDG16 (freedom of press); SDG15 (the Red List Index); SDG3 (life expectancy at birth affected by the COVID-19 pandemic); SDG9 (access to infrastructure and services). European countries – notably the Nordic countries – top the 2024 SDG Index. In the same report, Greece scores 78.7 out of 100, is above the regional average (77.2 for OECD countries) and is placed 29th globally. However, Greece scores below most of the other EU member states with the exceptions of just 6 EU member state countries.

Overall, the rating for Greece in the 2024 SDR, indicates limited progress with remaining or significant challenges for most SDGs, stagnation with significant challenges for 5 SDGs and deteriorating conditions for SDG12. Despite the fact that Greece demonstrates improvement in the overall rating, from 32nd place in the 2022 global SDR in the 29th position in the SDR 2024, the [Sustainable Development Report of 2022](#) had identified 5 SDGs on track, while no SDGs are rated as achieved or on track in the latest SDR 2024.

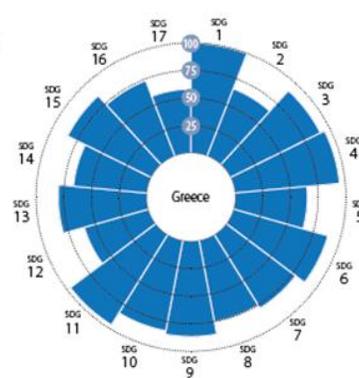
GREECE

OECD Countries

OVERALL PERFORMANCE



AVERAGE PERFORMANCE BY SDG



SDG DASHBOARDS AND TRENDS



The [Sustainable Development Report 2024](#), introduces a new group of indicators, the 16 spillover indicators, related to how one countries' efforts to achieve SDG targets jeopardize other countries' ability to do so. The new index addresses the countries' support to UN-based multilateralism and indicates the negative international spillovers. This is based on the fact that the United Nation states are still at the center of the multilateral system and should be held accountable for UN-based multilateralism and implementing SDG17 *Partnerships for the Goals*. In this new index, Greece ranks 165th out of 193 countries ranking 57.2 out of 100. This score can be attributed to the deteriorating performance of SDG12 *Responsible Consumption and Production*, and SDG11 *Sustainable Cities and Communities* – Improving with significant challenges. Particularly important are the indicators of a. air pollution associated with imports (DALYs per 1,000 population); b. Average CO₂ emissions per km from new passenger cars (in gr); c. nitrogen emissions associated with imports (kg/capita); and d. non-recycled municipal solid waste (kg/capita/day), that can be attributed to poor performance on municipal waste and sewage management, low rates of recycling, increased imports of goods, carbon and nitrogen emissions from transportation and industry.

SDGs with significantly lower scoring in comparison to the OECD countries include:

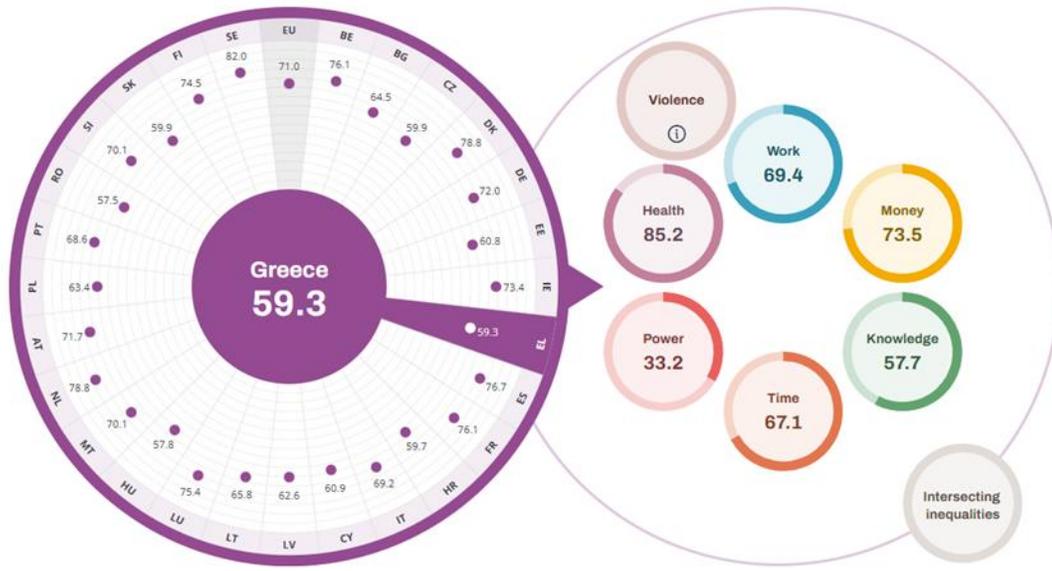
- SDG1 *No Poverty* – Improving with remaining challenges: Although moderate progress is reported, the proportion (%) of population living below the national poverty line remains at 18.9% that is

significantly high in comparison to the EU and the OECD average. Greece has demonstrated increase in this percentage after 2020, and has retained very similar percentages in the past 3 years. According to the [ELSTAT SDG 2030 Indicators and Statistics](#), the [ELSTAT Monitoring Report on SDGs in Greece 2024](#) people at risk of poverty or social exclusion are 26.1%, while risk of energy poverty is also high with population unable to keep home adequately warm reaching 19.2%. Housing cost overburden rate remains the highest in Europe affecting 31% of the population in cities and 24.7% in rural areas in Greece.

- SDG11 *Sustainable Cities and Communities* – Improving with significant challenges, with the highest rates of road traffic deaths in the EU; premature deaths due to exposure to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) that is about 100 per 100 000 people; 20% of people living in households severely affected by noise; low rate of recycling rate of municipal waste (below 20% of total municipal waste).

Stagnating conditions with significant challenges are identified in the SDGs:

- SDG2 *No Hunger*: The food security related stress cause by the war in Ukraine and the climate change impacts on agricultural production, in combination with the impacts of years of recession in the country contribute to the bad performance of SDG2. Furthermore, agricultural production in Greece heavily depends on non-sustainable agricultural practices, with the land cover of organic farming accounting for just 10.2% of the overall farmland. As a result, the impacts of climate change are more intense and affect food production, especially of native crops. The performance of SDG2 is further affecting the performance of SDG1 and vice versa.
- SDG4 *Quality Education*: No significant improvement is noticed in the sector of education. However, the newly introduced law allowing for the establishment of non-public non-profit universities in the country is expected to positively affect the performance of this goal. In addition, there are significant efforts on digitization of education at all levels.
- SDG5 *Gender Equality*: In 2024, Greece scored 59.3 out of 100 and dropped to 3rd place from the end among the European countries based on the [EU Gender Equality Index](#), with the European average being 71 out of 100. The result is attributed amongst other indicators to low percentage of women in managerial and leading positions (30.6%), to the gender employment gap, that is the difference between the employment rates of men and women aged 20 to 64 (19.8%) and the gender pay gap, but also to potential lack of efficient mapping of the indicators in all sectors.



The impact of the new law on Equality in civil marriage that allows for marriages between people of the same-gender is a positive effort towards gender equality, however, the impact of the law in the performance of SDG5 is not yet assessed.

- **SDG15 *Life on Land*:** Greece is a hotspot of biodiversity, hosting a big number of endemic species and a wide variety of habitats, the conservation of which is challenging. Although the habitat conservation status has improved (almost 40% of the land is protected), challenges remain and include the protection of species, risk of severe soil erosion by drought and water, the climate change impacts on natural ecosystems, fire risk and deforestation as well as the implementation of conservation measures in the protected forest- and grassland areas. The existing management plans in protected areas are limited. In addition, there is need to better mainstream biodiversity into economic sectors, such as supporting agri-forest initiatives and integration of biodiversity concerns into spatial planning.
- **SDG16 *Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*:** the existing challenges relate to public trust to administration and judicial issues. Additionally, the indicator ‘population reporting occurrence of crime, violence or vandalism in their area’ was close to 20% in 2023. Greece scores 49/100 and ranked 59/180 countries according to Transparency International’s [Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\)](#). As a result, Greece is placed amongst the 4 most corrupted countries in the EU.

WESTERN EUROPE / EUROPEAN UNION

GREECE

Score

49/100 [What does the CPI score mean?](#)

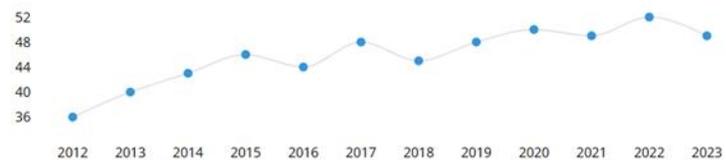
Rank

59/180

Score change

↓ -3 since 2022

Score changes 2012 - 2023



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Although Greece has improved its position in the [World Press Freedom Index](#) issued by the Reporters Sin Frontiers, from place 107 in 2023 to 88 in 2024, remains last among the EU countries for the 3rd consecutive year. The reasons include among others: political attempts to undermine the independence of the investigation into the surveillance scandal, the so-called Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), and media concentration by large privately owned media groups resulting in weak pluralism. In March 2024, the EU adopted a new Anti-SLAPP law for the protection of journalists and human rights defenders, the results of which are not yet assessed for any of the EU member states.

SDGs demonstrating progress with major challenges are:

- **SDG13 *Climate Action*:** The Mediterranean region and Greece is a hotspot of climate change, thus significantly affected by climate change impacts. Therefore, climate action is prioritised and includes mitigation, adaptation and resilience building options. On mitigation, net greenhouse gas emissions (in tonnes per capita) and the Net carbon removals from the land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector (in million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent) have dropped in 2024, while the Average CO₂ emissions per km from new passenger cars (in gr CO₂ per km) are demonstrating reducing trends. Following the EU Climate Law, Greece has adopted the [National Climate Law 4936/2022](#) on Transition to climate neutrality and adaptation to climate change, emergency provisions to address the energy crisis and protect the environment. The main aim is the improvement of the level of adaptation and resilience to climate change in the country, ultimately targeting to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Intermediate climate goals for the years 2030 and 2040 are defined as follows: Reduction of net anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% and by 80%, respectively. The revised National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) constitutes a Strategic Plan for Climate and Energy and presents a detailed road map for the achievement of comparable Energy and Climate Goals towards the goal of climate neutrality in 2050 and the initial milestone in 2030. In addition, Plans on Adaptation to Climate Change are conducted in all 13 regions of the country and are followed by relevant Strategic Implementation Plans. Activities related to the implementation of Climate Legislation are ongoing and on track on national level.
- **SDG14 *Life below water*:** Globally the mean surface seawater acidity continues to drop reaching a historical pH low of 8.047, while eutrophication of marine waters is increasing. In Greece in 2023, 0.6% of marine waters are affected by eutrophication (% of exclusive economic zone). The vast majority, close to 100% of bathing sites, coastal and inland, are characterized by excellent water quality. In addition, 2024 saw important developments in relation to protection of the sea ecosystems and biodiversity. Greece hosted the 9th World Our Ocean Conference during which the establishment of 2 new marine national parks, one in the Ionian and one in the Aegean, was announced by the Greek Prime Minister, increasing the size of marine protected areas by 80% and achieving the 30 by 30 biodiversity goal for the protection of the oceans (protecting 30% of the ocean area and biodiversity by 2030). In addition, Greece has become the first country in the EU to announce a ban on bottom trawling in all of its national marine parks by 2026 and in all marine protected areas by 2030. The country has also announced funding of €780m for the protection of its “diverse and unique marine ecosystems”.

SDGs demonstrating improvements with remaining and significant challenges are:

- **SDG3 *Good Health and Well-being*:** reduced rates of under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births), suicide mortality rate (per 100,000 population), while the self-perceived health by level of

perception (%) in 2023 is reported very high. However, existing challenges include the smoking prevalence (% of population aged 15 or over) and the self-reported unmet need for medical care (% of population aged 16 and over), which are amongst the highest in the EU.

- **SDG6 *Clean Water and Sanitation*:** The SDG is at very good status in Greece. In 2024, people living in households with basic sanitary facilities (such as bath, shower, indoor flushing toilet) is close to 100%, while more than 90% of the population is connected to at least secondary waste water treatment. Challenges include the Water exploitation index (WEI+), that measures total water consumption as a percentage of the renewable freshwater resources available for a given territory and period and is the 3rd highest in the EU, close to 15%, following Malta and Cyprus fact that can attributed to natural water scarcity in all 3 countries. Increased urban flash flooding due to climate change weather extremes, introduce additional stresses and challenges for the freshwater resources and the clean water and sanitation distribution systems.
- **SDG7 *Affordable and clean energy*:** The Ministry of Environment and Energy has announced incentives of €434 million for residential energy upgrade interventions in 2025 in order to improve energy efficiency in buildings. At the same time, the share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption has reached 23% in 2024 and is following an increasing trend, while the Energy import dependency (% of imports in gross available energy) is as high as 80%. The primary energy consumption, is relatively low amongst EU countries (about 2 tonnes of oil equivalent per capita). However, existing challenges relate to the average domestic income that prevent 19.2% of the population from keeping their home adequately warm.
- **SDG8 *Decent work and economic growth*:** In 2023, the Annual growth rate (%) of real GDP per capita has seen an increase of +2.5, while unemployment rates range between 7.3% - 24.4% in males and 8.3% - 29.4% in females for age groups of 65-74 to 15-24 respectively. The overall long term unemployment rate in Greece (% of population in the labour force aged 15 to 74) in 2023 was about 6% and young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) (% of population aged 15 to 29) was 19%.
- **SDG9 *Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure*:** Mobilising industry for a clean and circular economy is one of the key priorities of the European Green Deal, which seeks to support and accelerate the EU's industry transition to a sustainable model of inclusive growth. Towards this goal the EU has spent an overall of 2.24 % while Greece has spent 1.5% of GDP on R&D in 2022. At the end of 2022 Greece had just 1.5% of R&D personnel as % of population in the labour force. Based on the above, Greece needs to invest in the sector of research and development, both financially and on human resource.
- **SDG10 *Reduced Inequalities*:** Although progress is made in relation to SDG10, significant challenges and stressors remain. The European Commission's New Pact on Migration and Asylum aims to create faster migration processes and stronger governance of migration and border policies. The Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021–2027) supports migrants' inclusion in education and employment, access to health services and affordable housing. In Greece, the first-time asylum applications in 2023, reached 5900 (per million inhabitants), fact that stresses the need for relevant action. Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40% of the population and the total population (%), are noticed in Greece in the current year and reached 20.7% in 2023, while the Relative median at-risk-of-poverty gap was 22.5%.

To enhance economic growth of Greece and address the existing sustainability challenges in the business sector the ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) framework is adopted. ESG is related to all the non-financial risks and opportunities inherent to a company's day to day activities. Expanding from the ESG framework, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) entered into force in January

2023, aiming to modernise and strengthen the rules concerning the social and environmental information that companies have to report upon. The new rules will ensure that investors and other stakeholders have access to the information they need to assess the impact of companies on people and the environment and the financial risks and opportunities arising from climate change and other sustainability issues. The International ESG Monitor Survey 2024 conducted by the SEC Newgate, identified that 83% of Greeks believe that companies should act to the interest of all stakeholders. In addition, almost two-thirds of respondents (65%) stated that businesses should play a more active role in society. Finally, it worth mentioning that the top five challenges for sustainable businesses and economic activities in Greece as highlighted by respondents in the SEC Newgate survey, include: a. the rising cost of living; b. ensuring quality, affordable health care; c. strengthening the economy; d. reduction of crime and violence; e. improvement of wages and working conditions of employees. Environmental and social concerns were rated as top priority for sustainable living in the country.

Sources

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