



Integrated Country Strategy

Greece

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Greece, an EU member state and NATO ally, is a pillar of stability in a complicated region. Its position in the Eastern Mediterranean in close proximity to the Balkans, the Black Sea region, North Africa, and the Middle East elevates Greece's importance in addressing U.S. national security and energy priorities. The public and private support the United States provided Greece throughout its nine year economic crisis and more recent migration crisis spurred a reversal of decades of anti-Americanism and an openness to engage on major initiatives. Embassy Athens will capitalize on this opportunity to expand the breadth and depth of our bilateral relationship, particularly in security, investment, trade, and people-to-people engagements, including through the establishment of a U.S. Greece High Level Strategic Dialogue. The Mission will ask Greece to continue expanding its security and defense role in the region and will seek new U.S. investment and trade opportunities. By encouraging Greece to grow its role in the European energy sector and pushing education reform, Embassy Athens will combat global adversaries' attempts to exploit Greece's geopolitical importance and structural vulnerabilities to destabilize the region and incite anti-Western sentiment.

Encourage Greece's active participation in strengthening regional and global security to protect the American homeland and its interests.

Our excellent bilateral defense and security relationship is vital to our ability to leverage Greek support in military activities and law enforcement concerns. Greece is a committed partner in advancing U.S. interests in and beyond Greece via the U.S. Naval Support Activity at Souda Bay, Crete. With U.S.-Greek relations at a high point, the Mission will push to expand bilateral and NATO cooperation in support of regional peace and stability. The Greek government supports deepening military cooperation, and the Ministry of Defense offered additional locations beyond Souda Bay to support U.S. military operations in the region and permitted the entry and departure of U.S. forces en route to NATO exercises through additional ports. Planning is underway for a joint, interagency counterterrorism exercise, and the government approved our request to deploy unmanned aerial vehicles and a new detachment of special forces craft and personnel in Greece.

While Greece continues to be one of eight NATO countries to spend at least two percent of GDP on defense, economic austerity measures significantly reduced its defense capabilities. The Greek government sought U.S. financial assistance to balance past defense procurement debts, while sustaining and modernizing its current systems and platforms. Despite challenging budgetary issues, Greece committed to invest in F-16 aircraft upgrades and to continue to support and host NATO exercises, spending over \$2 billion since 2015. New programs for EPA Kiowa helicopters will expand Greek capabilities and open prospects for Greece to become a regional center for NATO helicopter capacity. Similarly, 333 funding for the Hellenic Coast Guard Special Forces has enhanced counter terrorism and maritime security interoperability.

The Greek government is a strong, reliable partner on law enforcement issues, particularly counterterrorism and border security collaboration. In 2017, Greece became the first EU country to implement Department of Homeland Security's Secure Real Time Platform (SRTP), allowing Greek authorities to screen migrants and refugees against U.S. security databases. In addition, Greek authorities use the FBI's and Terrorist Screening Center's information-sharing tools to enhance their screening capabilities. Building on the strength of this information-sharing, Embassy Athens will seek to expand Greek law enforcement capabilities and develop long-lasting cooperation to conduct joint investigations and collaborate on enforcement to together confront domestic and global terrorism and transnational crime. Encouraging Greece to ratify and adopt international tools, particularly with regard to judicial measures, and enhance border security screening in the longer term will help advance Greece's ability to detect and disrupt criminal and terrorist activity.

The Mission will continue to encourage Greece to support and take a leadership role in the integration of western Balkan countries into the EU and NATO and for peaceful resolution of regional disputes and conflicts. Greece's relations with Turkey deteriorated following the 2016 Turkish coup d'état attempt and remain strained over continued migration flows and persistent airspace and maritime disputes. We will reinforce ongoing Greek engagement with Turkey in order to improve the bilateral relationship and to avert accidental military confrontation. Embassy Athens will urge Greece to implement the Macedonian name issue agreement and will encourage continued joint engagement on the Cyprus issue.

Support Greece's long-term economic stability within the Eurozone and increase trade and investment opportunities for U.S. companies, while enhancing Greece's role in advancing European energy security.

Greece represents an untapped market as it emerges from a decade-long economic crisis and eight years of under investment. A pivot toward entrepreneurship rather than a state-led economic model is underway, particularly among youth, who represent a major target for increased U.S. exports and an opportunity to promote a private sector business model. Embassy Athens organized multiple events bringing together entrepreneurs, parliamentarians, and government officials over recent years, many of whom participated in U.S.-sponsored exchange programs. Embassy Athens will leverage relations within the Greek government, diaspora groups, and the U.S. technology sector to promote synergies with a large venture capital infusion (potentially €1 billion over ten years) from the European Investment Bank and to catalyze changing attitudes among many Greeks regarding the role of the public sector.

Greece's geographic location makes it a key player in U.S.-EU efforts to advance European energy security by diversifying the sources of natural gas in countries to the north, which rely predominantly on Russian gas. The Greek government supports projects that bring non-Russian gas to Europe and is eager to develop its own hydrocarbon fields given reserves discovered in other areas of the Eastern Mediterranean. The Mission will seek investment opportunities for

U.S. companies that will reduce the region's reliance on Russia for its energy needs and leverage U.S. expertise in renewables.

Embassy Athens will continue to advocate for greater transparency, reduced bureaucracy, equitable taxation administration, and a level playing field for U.S. companies to further attract investment. With upcoming legislative elections, the Mission will encourage the government to remain market friendly and open to U.S. engagement by highlighting investment opportunities and promoting the resiliency of Greece's technology field.

Strengthen and develop civil society, educational, and cultural institutions by promoting common values to reduce foreign influence in cultural and religious spheres, counter disinformation, and foster a new generation of leaders with favorable views towards the United States and its values.

Mission Greece will continue to strengthen the bilateral relationship in terms of energy, military, law enforcement, and counterterrorism cooperation, while focusing on two major diplomacy goals to foster growth and competitiveness in Greece - reform and modernization of the education sector, and countering malign Russian and Chinese influence. Education is the key to Greece's future prosperity. The current system restricts students' access to cooperative programs with international institutions and higher level degrees abroad. The Mission will encourage improved governance and management, divorced from politics, and facilitate Greece's development of a modern and efficient education system.

To combat attempts to destabilize the region, Mission Greece will support democratic institutions, transparency in governance, and initiatives which reduce foreign influence in religious and cultural spheres. The Mission will continue to foster strong U.S.-Greek relations through people to people engagements. Mission Greece's educational and cultural programs target youth, girls, and the next generation of leaders in business and civil society to promote a positive view of U.S.-Greek relations and to foster greater civic understanding. Embassy Athens will focus on public diplomacy programs that attract investments in science and technology and promote entrepreneurship to help Greece continue on its path to economic recovery, firmly rooted in transatlantic institutions and playing a stabilizing role in the region

Mission Greece will leverage momentum from the 2018 Thessaloniki International Fair (in which the United States is the honored country) to promote American economic and cultural engagement in Greece's northern region, which has become increasingly susceptible to Russian malign influence and Chinese economic encroachment. The Mission will seek to reinstate a position at Consulate General Thessaloniki (currently staffed with only one direct-hire American) to support economic developments and to counter the influence of global adversaries by increasing our presence and engagement.

Provide services to ensure the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens

According to Greek tourism officials, more than 900,000 U.S. citizen tourists visit Greece annually to enjoy its ancient treasures and stunning islands. U.S. tourism should eclipse one million visitors in the next few years. Consular registration numbers indicate approximately 106,000 U.S. citizens, primarily Greek-Americans, reside in Greece. We will support and protect our citizens by providing a range of Federal Benefits, Citizenship and Immigration, and consular services. We will expand our use of technology to provide access to U.S information and resources to broaden communication with citizens, particularly for emergency messaging, and will build on our relationships with Greek authorities and local service providers that provide routine and crisis support to citizens.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Encourage Greece's active participation in strengthening regional and global security to protect the American homeland and its interests.

Mission Objective 1.1: Greece has increased capacity to support U.S. military and counterterrorism operations in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Mission Objective 1.2: Greece improves border and aviation security, law enforcement capacity, and effectiveness in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting irregular migration, smuggling, domestic and global terrorism, and transnational crime.

Mission Objective 1.3: Greece enhances its regional role as a stable democracy in a difficult neighborhood, including full implementation of the Macedonia name deal and continued support for the integration of the Western Balkans into the EU and NATO.

Mission Goal 2: Support Greece's long-term economic stability within the Eurozone and trade and investment opportunities for U.S. companies while enhancing Greece's role in advancing European energy security.

Mission Objective 2.1: Greece implements needed administrative and economic reforms and transparent business practices that will safeguard the country's economic recovery, including support for entrepreneurship and the protection of intellectual property rights.

Mission Objective 2.2: Support U.S. investments in strategic sectors and promote energy projects that further regional energy diversification and security.

Mission Goal 3: Strengthen and develop civil society, educational, and cultural institutions by promoting common values to reduce foreign influence in cultural and religious spheres, counter disinformation, and foster a new generation of leaders with favorable views towards the United States and its values.

Mission Objective 3.1: Greece's civil society is better equipped to manage humanitarian efforts, promote rule of law and social stability, advocate on behalf of marginalized populations and increase their public participation, and strengthen the U.S.-Greece partnership.

Mission Objective 3.2: Greece's educational institutions strengthen connections with American partners and modernize structures to incorporate U.S. best-practices to produce graduates capable of immediately entering the workforce and contributing to economic growth.

Mission Objective 3.3: Greek citizens understand U.S. priorities in the region and support U.S. security cooperation, economic ties, and political engagement. Greek NGOs and media are capable of countering state-sponsored disinformation.

Mission Goal 4: Provide services to ensure the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens

Mission Objective 4.1: U.S. citizens residing or temporarily visiting Greece are protected and supported through the delivery of consular and related federal services in a vigilant, efficient, and timely manner.

Mission Objective 4.2: The Mission has greater cooperation with host nation authorities, service providers, and other embassies in Athens to ensure the welfare of U.S. citizens.

Management Objective 1: ICASS services and management oversight are delivered effectively throughout the 5-year Athens Chancery major rehabilitation project.

Management Objective 2: The Mission maintains a safe, productive and respectful work environment that empowers employees to best support American policy goals.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: Encourage Greece's active participation in strengthening regional and global security to protect the American homeland and its interests.

Description and Linkages: This goal reflects Pillars 1 and 3 of the 2017 National Security Strategy. It also supports the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan, Goal 1, Objectives 1.3 and 1.4 and Goals 1 and 3 of the EUR Joint Regional Strategy. Consistent with the National Security Strategy and the EUR Joint Regional Strategy, the Mission will enhance Greece's capacity to operate as a strong ally on security and defense. We will strengthen Greece's capabilities to defend its own borders, and enhance its ability to support U.S. military activities in the wider region.

Mission Objective 1.1: Greece has increased capacity to support U.S. military and counterterrorism operations in the Eastern Mediterranean

Justification: Greece is a capable NATO ally and EU partner, particularly given its position in the Eastern Mediterranean in close proximity to the Balkans, Black Sea, North Africa, and the Middle East, and the unique capabilities of U.S. Naval Support Activity at Souda Bay, Crete provided to the U.S. military. The defense relationship is increasingly important as U.S. operational requirements in the region expand and help to service the requirements of four Combatant Commands: EUCOM, CENTCOM, AFRICOM, and SOCOM.

Mission Objective 1.2: Greece improves border and aviation security, law enforcement capacity, and effectiveness in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting irregular migration, smuggling and drug trafficking, domestic and global terrorism, and transnational crime.

Justification: With Greece's location at the crossroads between Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, and over one million migrants and refugees arriving on its shores since 2015, Greek authorities face an immense challenge ensuring the gateway into Europe is secure.

Mission Objective 1.3: Greece enhances its regional role as a stable democracy in a difficult neighborhood, including full implementation of the Macedonia name deal and continued support for the integration of the Western Balkans into the EU and NATO.

Justification: Improved relations between Greece and its neighbors will improve stability, increase economic activity, and decrease the vulnerability to Russian malign influence.

Mission Goal 2: Support Greece's long-term economic stability within the Eurozone and increase trade and investment opportunities for U.S. companies while enhancing Greece's role in advancing European energy security.

Description and Linkages: This goal reflects Pillars I, III and IV of the 2017 National Security Strategy and the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan, Goal 1, Objective 1.4 and Goal 2, Objectives 2.2 and 2.3. This goal also supports the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs Strategic Goals 1 through 4 and EUR Joint Regional Strategy Goal 2. The Mission will advocate for market-oriented economic and governance reforms and promote regional energy diversification to reduce vulnerability to economic coercion from malign influences while opening investment opportunities for U.S. companies.

Mission Objective 2.1: Greece implements needed administrative and economic reforms and transparent practices that will safeguard the country's economic recovery, including support for entrepreneurship and the protection of intellectual property rights.

Justification: As Greece exits a nearly decade-long economic crisis and years of underinvestment, it is a burgeoning market in the early stages of a shift to a private sector model. Building on the United States' status as the honored country at the 2018 Thessaloniki International Fair and the conclusion of Greece's international bailout programs, the Mission will advocate for legislation to open markets and the infusion of capital so that Greece may sustain itself financially and take on a broader geo-political role in the Mediterranean.

Mission Objective 2.2: Support U.S. investments in strategic sectors and promote energy projects that further regional energy diversification and security.

Justification: Greece plays a prominent role in the European energy sector because of its geography. The Mission will seek investment opportunities for U.S. companies that will increase energy security while reducing the region's reliance on natural gas from countries to the northeast. After years of underinvestment, the U.S. government will push Greece to develop other markets, such as technology, to lay a foundation for a future leadership role in the region.

Mission Goal 3: Strengthen and develop civil society, educational, and cultural institutions by promoting common values to reduce foreign influence in cultural and religious spheres, counter disinformation, and foster a new generation of leaders with favorable views towards the United States and its values.

Description and Linkages: This goal reflects Pillars 3 and 4 of the 2017 National Security Strategy. It also supports the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan, Goals 2 and 3, Objectives 2.2 and 3.3 and Goals 3 and 4 of the EUR Joint Regional Strategy. Consistent with the National Security Strategy, the Joint Strategic Plan, and the EUR Joint Regional Strategy, the Mission will strengthen respect for individual liberty, the rule of law, separation of powers, democratic institutions, independent media and civil society and promote education modernization to drive inclusive and sustainable development. The Mission will also strengthen the ability of Greek civil society to resist malign influence and counter disinformation.

Mission Objective 3.1: Greece's civil society is better equipped to manage humanitarian efforts, promote rule of law and social stability, advocate on behalf of marginalized populations and increase their public participation, and strengthen the U.S.-Greece bilateral relationship.

Justification: Many of Greece's civil society actors have suffered from allegations of financial mismanagement and operational gaps due to inconsistent funding. These civil society organizations often have the expertise to be successful on the ground, but lack the management skills necessary to serve as reliable partners.

Mission Objective 3.2: Greece's educational institutions strengthen connections with American partners and modernize structures to incorporate U.S. best-practices to produce graduates capable of immediately entering the workforce and contributing to economic growth.

Justification: Bureaucratic hurdles complicate educational cooperation and make it difficult for higher education institutions to establish long-term connections. An antiquated approach to education produces graduates who are well-versed in theory, but not prepared to meet the demands of the modern economy.

Mission Objective 3.3 Greek citizens understand U.S. priorities in the region and support U.S. security cooperation, economic ties, and political engagement. Greek NGOs and media are capable of countering state-sponsored disinformation.

Justification: Some parts of Greek society have historically been skeptical of USG cooperation in defense, the economy, and political issues. State-sponsored misinformation nourishes anti-Americanism.

Mission Goal 4: Provide services to ensure the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens

Description and Linkages: This goal reflects Pillar 1 of the 2017 National Security Strategy and the State-USAID 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan, Goal 1, Objective 1.5 and Goal 4, Objective 4. This goal also supports the Consular Affairs Functional Bureau Strategy, Strategic Goals 1-3. The Mission will provide the full range of agency services to U.S. citizens residing in or visiting Greece, both routine and emergency, and continue to expand and enhance our relationships with the host nation and other embassies to ensure the welfare of U.S. citizens.

Mission Objective 4.1 U.S. citizens residing or temporarily visiting Greece are protected and supported through the delivery of consular and related federal services in a vigilant, efficient, and timely manner.

Justification: Serving and protecting U.S. citizens abroad is a core responsibility of the Department of State. According to Greek tourism officials, more than 800,000 U.S. citizen tourists visit Greece annually, with that number expected to eclipse one million visitors in the next few years. Consular registration numbers indicate approximately 106,000 U.S. citizens, primarily Greek-Americans, reside in Greece. We will support and protect our citizens by providing a range of Federal Benefits, Citizenship and Immigration, and consular services in the event of death, destitution, disaster or medical emergency.

Mission Objective 4.2: The Mission has greater cooperation with host nation authorities, service providers, and other embassies in Athens to ensure the welfare of U.S. citizens.

Justification: The consular section must continue to expand its' governmental and non-governmental organization contacts, recruit American Liaisons, and build relationships with other embassies in Athens to ensure the welfare of U.S. citizens in routine and emergency circumstances. Governmental authorities, including the police, are shifted regularly between offices, making the task of developing contacts a continual one. Funding pressures caused by an economic crisis caused some NGOs that helped U.S. citizens previously to close. Greece's island geography challenges the consular section to develop contacts in the areas most frequented by U.S. citizens. The consular section will focus on developing and maintaining relationships and on emergency preparedness.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: Adjust operations to ensure effective ICASS services and management oversight throughout the 5-year Athens Chancery major rehabilitation project.

Justification: Embassy Athens and OBO initiated a major renovation and construction project that required external swing space to house some of the Mission's employees. The need for swing space is expected to last for several years, and while located close to the Chancery, will pose significant challenges to Management's ability to deliver services to its customers. Post consolidated most Management functions in the swing space to most effectively deliver service to ICASS customers and balances the need to provide services, such as cashiering and mail, in two locations to bolster morale through the extended period of physical separation.

Management Objective 2: Maintain a safe, productive and respectful work environment that empowers employees to best support American policy goals.

Justification: Management must provide the necessary infrastructure to enable Mission employees to execute U.S. policy goals. Post will focus on safety on the compound and in USDH residences, noting that the safety threats increase with construction, and train Embassy personnel on evacuation procedures and emergency preparedness. Additionally, management will implement multiple technology upgrades across the Mission to protect our data and our people as threats, such as cybersecurity, increase while developing a method to measure our effectiveness.