



Greece

Greece's centre-right New Democracy party won the elections last July on a pro-business/tax reform agenda aimed at boosting growth. The Government's main priorities as regards economic recovery are to: implement reforms, change the fiscal policy mix and cut-down excessive taxation, reduce unemployment and attract Foreign Direct Investment. In terms of making Greece more business-friendly, privatisations and stalled FDI projects have been unblocked; and an investment bill containing sweeping interventions aimed at cutting red tape, outsourcing state services and fast-tracking licensing procedures has been passed. The economy is forecast to grow by 2.8% in 2020, up from 2.0% this year. Total trade in goods and services between Greece and the UK was £6.6bn in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2019, and increase of 3.1% or £200m yoy. Greece is the UK's 33rd largest trading partner, 38th largest export market and 32nd largest import market. As the economy recovers, there is growing interest from UK companies in FS, energy-including renewables, clean tech, maritime and tourism/real estate. UK services exceed trade figures in goods with particular areas of strength being education, shipping, financial, legal, insurance as well as tourism & infrastructure.

Eco and Natural Products

As Greece recovers from an unprecedented economic crisis, consumers are turning towards more eco-friendly products, provided their pricing is competitive. Some trends which are starting to develop :

- ✓ Consumers opt for natural toiletries and cosmetics. The market is fragmented, competition is fierce and pricing is key.
- ✓ Rising preference for biodegradable and/or plastic-free packaging;
- ✓ Consumers look out for organic baby food of higher quality and reduced sugar content.
- ✓ Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of the impact of fast fashion to the environment, so sustainable fashion is a new trend but with limited following as yet. However, all the international fast-fashion brands are dominant in the market.

Technology

Much as the majority of businesses are well aware of the need to adjust to the requirements of technology, Greece's transition to digital economy is taking place at a very slow pace. Greece ranks 26th among the EU 28 member states in digital transformation. Although it is a priority for the government, the country ranks among the member states with the lowest performance even in the domains of e-government and e-health. Greece's rate in digitalisation of public services amounts to 51% while the European average stands at 68%, according to the e-Government Benchmark 2019 Index.

The Greek market features 3 main players in telecoms, (Vodafone being one of them) and several medium sized -companies for other technology products and services.

Given the fact that Greece is lagging behind in technology adoption, it is within the government's priorities to invest in New Generation (NGA) Networks, which can support their policies as regards digital economy.

Main trends in the market are:

- Fintech technology and mobile commerce: there are several Greek entrepreneurs in these sectors, [who](#) have successfully expanded internationally and set up their HQ in London (Upstream, Viva, etc)
- The expansion of [the](#) 5G network
- AI technology is expected to penetrate more in businesses. DIT Greece aims to focus on AI and innovative technology and bring experts from the UK to give a masterclass to Greek entrepreneurs and start up.
- Clean tech is a must, especially in waste management and energy saving solutions. There are some incentives by the Greek government for the use of such technology.
- Digital health is a priority for the Ministry of Health.

Life Sciences

Government health spending in Greece fell by over 25% since 2010, after the country's bailout package capped such spending. Healthcare expenditure currently stands at 8.2% of GDP (OECD data).

The National Healthcare System (ESY), is funded by state budget and social security contributions and coexists with private healthcare services. As a result of the recession and the rigorous public expenses cuts that have been imposed to Greece by its creditors, the Ministry of Health had to cut back the number of beds and hospitals in the country and there are now 83 hospitals and 33,000 beds.

As the country's economy recovers, the government continues to implement reforms, aiming to streamline processes and adopt modern, cost-effective technologies which can help the NHS achieve their cost reduction targets, while providing efficient healthcare services to the public. Greece has a high rate of private health expenditure amounting to over 40% of total healthcare spending.

Current priorities for the Ministry are : provision of efficient primary healthcare services, public health prevention campaigns, chronic diseases management, policies for ageing population, diagnostics, disability/assisted-living technologies/equipment, advanced diagnostics, digital health, streamlining NHS procurement system.

Major British strengths lie in consultancy services related to public-private partnerships, hospital management, hospital auditing, as well as highly sophisticated niches in medical equipment such as diagnostics, bio-device interfaces, disability and rehabilitation equipment, digital health and laboratory technology.

Web and email addresses

Email: Trade.Athens@fco.gov.uk

<https://www.great.gov.uk/markets/greece>