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# **N**uclear Legislation in OECD Countries

**Regulatory and  
Institutional Framework  
for Nuclear Activities**

**Greece**



# Greece

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## I. General regulatory regime

### 1. Introduction

The peaceful use of nuclear energy dates from the establishment of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC) in 1954. However, a decision has been made not to implement a nuclear power programme to generate nuclear electricity. Thus, there are no nuclear power plants in Greece.

There is, however, one operational nuclear research reactor and one sub-critical assembly. The 5 MWe pool-type reactor is operated by the Institute of Nuclear Technology and Radiation Protection of the National Centre for Scientific Research (NCSR) "Demokritos". The sub-critical assembly is owned by the Aristotle University of Thessalonica and is operated by the Atomic and Nuclear Physics Laboratory.

Radioactive waste originating from medicine, research and industry is of low or intermediate level. Regarding nuclear medicine and research laboratories, since the waste concerned has short half lives, it is stored *in-situ* until it has decayed and can be released. On the campus of the NCSR "Demokritos", there is an interim storage facility and a waste treatment facility.

Although there is no framework act dealing comprehensively with the different aspects of nuclear energy, there are various laws, decrees and regulations of a more specific nature governing several aspects of nuclear activities. In particular, the Radiation Protection Regulations of 2001, in addition to laying down provisions for radiation protection, also deal with the conditions governing the granting of licences for activities involving the use of ionising radiation.

### 2. Mining regime

There is no legislation dealing specifically with the prospecting for and mining of radioactive ores in Greece. These activities are therefore governed by the civil and mining codes.

Under Act No. 451 of 18 June 1968, the Greek Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC) and its Demokritos Centre had authority to co-ordinate and direct the prospecting for, use and sale of radioactive ores. Act No. 1514 of 28 February 1985 on the Development of Scientific and Technological Research, which repealed the 1968 Act, transferred this competence to the Institute for Geological and Mining Research [Section 28(2) and (4)(a)].

### 3. Radioactive substances, nuclear fuel and equipment

Section 28 of Act No. 1733 of September 1987 on Technology Transfer, Inventions, Technological Innovations and Establishment of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission repealed the above-mentioned Act. No. 1514 of 1985 and re-established the Greek Atomic Energy Commission. According to this act, GAEC is an independent administrative body under the authority of the Minister of Development and is the competent authority responsible for matters concerning nuclear energy, nuclear technology and radiation protection from both ionising radiation and artificially-produced non-ionising radiation.

GAEC is responsible for licensing the production, possession, import, export, transport, and use of radioactive and fissile materials and for the possession and use of radioactive sources [Act No. 1733/1987, Section 28(h)].

The 2001 Radiation Protection Regulations lay down the licensing procedure for all activities involving radioactive substances and/or radiation producing machines, and the transport of radioactive materials. Licences are issued by the Ministry for Health and Social Solidarity for medical applications based on the certificate of compliance issued by GAEC. Licences for research and training applications are issued by decision of the Ministry of Development and the agreement of GAEC.

#### **4. Nuclear installations**

##### **a) Licensing and inspection, including nuclear safety**

Nuclear installations, defined as nuclear power plants, facilities which use or manufacture significant quantities of radioactive products or nuclear fuel, facilities for the processing or storage of radioactive waste, are governed by a licensing regime established by Decree Law No. 854 of 15 March 1971.

The Minister of Development is the competent authority for the licensing and control of nuclear installations.

In accordance with Decree-Law No. 854 [Section 2], the licensing procedure consists of four main stages:

- site licence;
- construction licence;
- licence for pre-operational testing; and
- operating licence.

The licences are granted in succession by the Minister, after obtaining the opinion of GAEC.

The general safety conditions of nuclear installations must be laid down by joint order of the Minister of Development and the Minister for Health and Social Solidarity [Section 3].

Inspections to ensure that the safety measures required of nuclear operators are being effectively implemented will be entrusted to a public body to be set up by the Minister of Development after obtaining the opinion of GAEC [Section 4].

Presidential Decree No. 610 of 23 August 1978, adopted pursuant to Decree-Law No. 854, lays down the conditions and procedures for the issue of site licences for nuclear installations. In fact, this decree only applies to the issue of site licences to the Public Power Corporation (PPC) – the national electricity company which had at that time a monopoly in this field.

Greece ratified the 1994 Convention on Nuclear Safety on 20 June 1997.

##### **b) Emergency response**

As regards nuclear accidents or radiological emergencies, the 2001 Radiation Protection Regulations provide for emergency plans [Part 1.8.3 under the provision entitled “Emergency intervention plans”]. The emergency plan in the event of widespread radioactive contamination or increased radiation levels constitutes a part of the General National Emergency Plan. The responsibility to react to natural disaster of all kinds lies with the Secretariat-General for Civil Protection. GAEC plays a major role in implementing the Part on radiological emergencies. Emergency measures include sheltering, restrictions on food consumption, distribution of stable iodine to the population and evacuation if radiation doses are expected to exceed permissible limits.

Greece is a Contracting Party to the 1986 Conventions on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency and on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, both of which were ratified on 6 June 1991, pursuant to Act No. 1937 and Act No. 1938 of 13 March 1991 respectively.

Ministerial Regulation No. 2739 of 15 March 1994 on Informing the Public About Health Protection Measures To Be Applied and Steps To Be Taken in the Event of a Radiological Emergency was made in accordance with Council Directive 89/618/Euratom. This regulation sets out the responsibilities and procedures for informing the general public prior to or in the event of a radiological emergency, and also for informing persons who might be involved in the organisation of emergency assistance in the event of a radiological emergency.

## **5. Trade in nuclear materials and equipment**

Trade in radioactive substances, namely radioisotopes and other radioactive sources, including fissile materials and radiation-emitting equipment is subject to licensing by GAEC. Radiation-emitting equipment for medical applications is subject to licensing by the Ministry for Health and Social Solidarity, and for all other applications by GAEC [Decree-Law No. 181/1974].

The import of nuclear substances, and particularly, radioisotopes for medical or industrial uses is carried out through a centralised system run by the Institute of Radiopharmaceuticals of the National Centre for Scientific Research (NCSR) "Demokritos" under the licence of GAEC. Application for import and export permits must be filed with GAEC. Greece is a Party to the Zangger Committee and to the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

## **6. Radiation protection**

The 2001 Radiation Protection Regulations, adopted by Ministerial Order No. 1014 lay down the principles for radiation protection of persons, property and the environment against the hazards arising from the use of ionising radiation and replace the Regulations of 17 July 1991, approved by Ministerial Order No. 14632 (FOR) 1416. They aim at implementing Council Directive 96/29/Euratom of 13 May 1996 laying down basic safety standards for the protection of the health of workers and the general public against the dangers arising from ionising radiation and Council Directive 97/43/Euratom of 30 June 1997 on Health Protection of Individuals Against the Dangers of Ionising Radiation in Relation to Medical Exposure. The regulations establish dose limits for workers exposed to radiation and the general public. They apply to the production, the use, import and export, processing, handling, trade, transport and disposal of natural and artificial radioactive substances, to ionising radiation-emitting equipment and to any other activity which involves a hazard from ionising radiation.

All the above activities require a licence in accordance with the Regulations and other relevant legislation [Part 1.1.2].

The first part of the regulations (Principles of Radiation Protection) contains the basic conditions and requirements for radiological protection from activities involving hazards from ionising radiation. The second part (Licences for Ionising Radiation Laboratories) refers to the conditions governing the licensing procedures for all activities involving ionising radiation. The subsequent parts [Parts 3 to 11] give a detailed description of the special conditions and requirements for radiological protection in connection with the particular activities to which they refer [Part 3. Radiodiagnostic Laboratories; Part 4. Radiodiagnostic Laboratories in Nuclear Medicine; Part 5. Radiotherapy Laboratories; Part 6. Management and Disposal of Radioactive Waste; Part 7. Radiological Laboratories for Research, Training and Other Applications; Part 8. Industrial Radiography Laboratories; Part 9. Sealed Sources Irradiation Installations; Part 10. Particle Accelerator Installations; Part 11. Transport of Radioactive Materials].

GAEC is the authority responsible for radiation protection matters; it ensures that the provisions of these regulations are complied with and introduces, where necessary, additional measures with a view to limiting individual and collective doses arising from exposure to radiation [Part 1.1.3].

The principles underlying the regulations are the following [Part 1.1.3]:

- justification; activities involving ionising radiation must be justified beforehand on the basis of the advantages they offer;
- optimisation: every exposure must remain as low as reasonably achievable, having regard to existing technology, the results of a cost/benefit analysis and any relevant socio-economic factors; dose constraints may be established and used for a given source, practice or activity in order to optimise protection at the design or planning stage;
- dose limits; the dose limits laid down in the Regulations must not be exceeded except in special cases as provided by the Regulations.

The protection of radiation workers is based on the classification of workplaces, the classification of workers and on implementation of control measures and monitoring [Part 1.5]. Radiation monitoring of workers and record keeping is carried out by GAEC.

Protection of the population against radiation is based on an assessment of doses received by the population in normal and in accident conditions. This supervision is carried out on the basis of the population as a whole and by reference groups [Part 1.8].

Greece has, as a Member of the ILO, by Act No. 1181 of 24 July 1981, ratified Convention No. 115 Concerning the Protection of Workers Against Ionising Radiation. This convention applies to all activities involving exposure of workers to ionising radiation in the course of their work. By Ministerial Decision No. 9087 (FOR) 1004 of 13 September 1996, Greece implemented Council Directive 90/641/Euratom of 4 December 1990 Concerning the Operational Protection of Outside Workers Exposed to the Risk of Ionising Radiation During Their Activities in Controlled Areas.

Act No. 1568 of 11 October 1985 on Health Care and Safety of Workers provides a framework for the hygiene and safety of workers in the workplace. The act provides for the establishment of a committee for hygiene and safety in every workplace and identifies the responsibilities of safety engineers and medical practitioners entrusted with the supervision of workers.

## **7. Radioactive waste management**

Facilities for the processing and storage of radioactive waste are considered to be nuclear installations within the meaning of Decree-Law No. 854/1974 [Section 1] and, as such, require a licence from the Minister of Development after obtaining the opinion of GAEC.

Part 6 of the 2001 Radiation Protection Regulations deals with the management and disposal of radioactive waste. Radioactive waste is considered as radioactive substances for which no further use is envisaged [Part 6.1.2].

These regulations apply, under normal operating conditions, to laboratories where radioactive substances are used [Part 6.1.4]; they specify the areas where liquid and solid waste may be dumped provided such waste does not exceed certain radioactive concentrations as specified in the regulations [Part 6.2 to 6.6].

Special conditions for disposing and handling the waste, which are not specified in the regulations, may be implemented only with the approval of GAEC. Such approval will determine the method of disposal and handling, the type of waste, the radioactivity limits and the concentration [Part 6.9].

Laboratory licensees must maintain records of the types and quantities of radionuclides in the waste disposed of, stored or shipped to the radioactive waste management installations which have the necessary permit [Part 6.10].

Presidential Decree No. 22 of 26 February 1997 implemented Council Directive 92/3/Euratom of 3 February 1992 on the Supervision and Control of Shipments of Radioactive Waste Between Member States and Into and Out of the Community.

There is also a more general text which covers nuclear activities, Act No. 1650 on the Protection of the Environment of 18 October 1986. This act covers, *inter alia*, the protection of the soil, the surface waters (rivers and lakes) and underground waters, the atmosphere, the sea, seashores and the seabed and to the protection of the ecosystem from all activities or installations which could generate pollutants or wastes, including radioactive wastes. The act provides a legal framework for the control of these activities by collaboration between responsible ministers.

At the international level, Greece ratified the 1972 London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter on 10 August 1981 and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management in 2001.

## 8. Nuclear security

Greece is a Party to the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) which it ratified on 11 March 1970 pursuant to Decree-Law No. 437. It furthermore concluded a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in this context in 1972 and ratified

the additional Protocol to the agreement in 2000 and is subject to Euratom's Safeguards. Greece also ratified the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty on 21 April 1999.

Greece is also a Party to the 1979 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, which was ratified on 6 September 1991 pursuant to Law No. 1636 of 1986.

## 9. Transport

The transport of radioactive materials in Greece is governed by the 2001 Regulations on Radiological Protection. The regulations lay down the basic guidelines and conditions for the safe preparation, packaging and transport of radioactive materials [Part 11.1.1].

The relevant provisions of the Regulations are based on the 1996 Edition of the IAEA Regulations on the Safe Transport of Radioactive Materials and also take into account the international regulations for the different modes of transport:

- the International regulations concerning the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID);
- the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR);
- the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Dangerous Goods Code;
- the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Technical Instructions.

The transport of radioactive materials requires a licence from GAEC [Part 11.4.1]. There are three categories of licence: a general licence for carriers who transport radioactive materials on a regular basis, an individual licence for occasional transport and a special licence for the transport of a single shipment of radioactive materials, depending on their level of radioactivity, type, etc.

Applications for transport licences must, in particular, include information on the type of transport, the destination, the characteristics of the radioactive substances, the packaging, the protective measures, the qualifications of persons responsible for physical protection and the proposed insurance cover for any claims arising out of incidents or accidents involving radioactive materials [Part 11.4].

## 10. Nuclear third party liability

Greece is a Contracting Party to the 1960 Paris Convention on Third Party Liability in the Field of Nuclear Energy which, together with the Additional Protocol of 28 January 1964, were ratified on 12 May 1970 pursuant to Decree-Law No. 336/1969. The Protocol of 1982 was ratified on 30 May 1988 pursuant to Act No. 1758 of 8 March 1988.

## II. Institutional framework

Originally, the peaceful use of nuclear energy came under the responsibility of the Prime Minister and the Greek Atomic Energy Commission was placed under his direct authority. This responsibility was then assigned to various ministers. At present, the Minister of Development is the competent authority in the field.

### 1. Regulatory and supervisory authorities

#### a) Minister of Development<sup>1</sup>

The Minister of Development, through its General Secretariat of Research and Technology, is the supervisory Authority of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC) and of the "Demokritos" National Centre for Scientific Research. He is responsible for the licensing and control of nuclear installations [Decree-Law No. 854 of 15 March 1971] and jointly responsible with the competent Minister for the Licensing of Laboratories for Non-medical Applications [Part 2.1.2(b) of the 2001 Radiation Protection Regulations].

#### b) Minister for Health and Social Solidarity<sup>2</sup>

The Minister for Health and Social Solidarity is responsible for the health of the general population. In particular, he is the licensing authority for laboratories for medical applications of ionising radiation and approves medical practitioners for medical surveillance of radiation workers [2001 Radiation Protection Regulations, Parts 1.1.7.1.3 and 2.1.2(a)].

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1. Internet website of the Minister of Development: [www.ypan.gr/index\\_uk.htm](http://www.ypan.gr/index_uk.htm).

2. Internet website of the Minister for Health and Social Solidarity: [www.mohaw.gr](http://www.mohaw.gr).

## 2. Advisory Bodies

### *National Energy Strategy Council*

The National Strategy Energy Council, established by the Law 3438/2006, is an advisory body to the Greek Government and particularly to the Minister of Development on matters related to the long term energy planning. It is consulted on the drafting of regulations governing nuclear activities.

## 3. Public and Semi-Public Agencies

### *a) Greek Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC)<sup>3</sup>*

The Greek Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC) is responsible for regulating the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and in particular for the protection of the public and workers from ionising and non-ionising radiation. It was set up by Act No. 2750 of 20 February 1954 and has been placed under the authority of various Ministries and had its status modified several times. The Act No. 1733 of 19 July 1987 on Technology Transfer, Inventions, Technological Innovations and Establishment of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission, replacing the relevant part of Act No. 1514 of 8 February 1985 concerning GAEC, reorganised the Greek Atomic Energy Commission.

#### *i) Legal Status*

The Commission is a decentralised administrative body supervised by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT) under the authority of the Ministry of Development [Act No. 1733/1987, Section 28(1)].

#### *ii) Responsibilities*

The Commission is the competent authority for matters relating to nuclear energy, nuclear technology and radiation protection, and it is responsible for introducing the necessary safety measures, for drafting regulations and for inspecting, monitoring and promoting scientific and technological research in the following fields:

- the protection of the public and the environment from ionising radiation;
- the peaceful applications of nuclear technology and nuclear science in industry, agriculture, health, biology and other areas;
- the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

GAEC, in carrying out the above tasks, is the competent authority to carry out, *inter alia*, the following:

- Plan, co-ordinate, perform and evaluate environmental radioactivity measurements.
- Propose to the Minister of Development and to any other minister concerned with GAEC, emergency plans to cope with situations arising from increased radioactivity levels.

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3. Internet website of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission: [www.gaec.gr](http://www.gaec.gr).

- Issue safety instructions and draft regulations for the safe operation of installations and equipment emitting ionising radiation. These instructions and regulations are approved and implemented by the Minister of Development, and by joint decision of other ministers concerned. GAEC monitors the implementation of these regulations and technical instructions. It also drafts radiation protection regulations.
- Perform measurements and issue certificates.
- Provide for further training in the fields of radiation protection, nuclear science and nuclear technology.
- Give opinions on the issuance, modification or repeal of licences for the construction and operation of any nuclear reactor and for any type of nuclear installation.
- Issue licences for the import, possession, production, transport, use and disposal of radioactive and fissile material.
- Represent Greece in international organisations in respect of matters falling within its competence.
- Issue safety instructions for the safe storage, transport and disposal of radioactive substances.

GAEC also maintains a national radiation protection database which gathers information on facilities using or manufacturing radiation sources (devices used, shielding, inspections results, type of licence), an inventory of radiation sources used in Greece and the national dose registry containing information relating to occupationally exposed workers.

### *iii) Structure*

The Commission is managed by a seven-member Board of Directors composed of prominent university professors and researchers in the fields of nuclear science and nuclear technology, appointed by the Minister of Development [Act No. 1733/1987, Section 28(6)].

### *iv) Financing*

GAEC's financial resources come from the public budget as well as licensing fees and radiation protection services.

## **b) National Centre for Scientific Research "Demokritos"<sup>4</sup>**

This Centre was originally entitled the Demokritos Nuclear Research Centre and was under the authority of GAEC. However, Act No. 1514 of 1985 on the Development of Scientific and Technological Research made Demokritos independent from GAEC and renamed it as the National Centre for Scientific Research "Demokritos", extending its functions to cover other fields as well. The uranium geological research activities were transferred to the Institute for Geological Mining and Research [Sections 28(2) and (4)(a)].

### *i) Legal Status*

The Centre is an independent legal entity, under the supervision of the General Secretariat of Research and Technology of the Ministry of Development [Section 28(1)].

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4. Internet website of the National Centre for Scientific Research "Demokritos": [www.demokritos.gr/index\\_muk.asp](http://www.demokritos.gr/index_muk.asp).

*ii) Responsibilities*

The Centre is responsible for carrying out research work in the fields of physics, chemistry, biological sciences, material sciences, electronics, nuclear technology and computer sciences [Section 28(1)].

*iii) Structure*

The Centre is headed by a Director and is managed by the Administrative Council and the Applied Technologies directorate, as well as the Special Account Department for external financing.

The scientific Board of the Centre is made up of a chairperson and six members, while the administrative Board is chaired by the Director of the Centre and has, as members, the directors of the institutes of the Centre, one representative from the scientific staff and one from the administrative staff.

The Centre has eight institutes, three of which deal with nuclear applications, namely the Institute of nuclear physics, the Institute of nuclear technology and radiation protection and the Institute of radioisotopes and radiodiagnostic products.

**c) *Institute for Geological and Mining Research***

This Institute is a semi-autonomous agency under the authority of the Minister of Development. The work of GAEC in the field of mining and exploration of radioactive ores was reassigned to the Institute by the 1985 Act on the Development of Scientific and Technological Research [Sections 28(2) and 4(a)].

## ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The OECD is a unique forum where the governments of 30 democracies work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

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## NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY

The OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) was established on 1st February 1958 under the name of the OEEC European Nuclear Energy Agency. It received its present designation on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1972, when Japan became its first non-European full member. NEA membership today consists of 28 OECD member countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Commission of the European Communities also takes part in the work of the Agency.

The mission of the NEA is:

- to assist its member countries in maintaining and further developing, through international co-operation, the scientific, technological and legal bases required for a safe, environmentally friendly and economical use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, as well as
- to provide authoritative assessments and to forge common understandings on key issues, as input to government decisions on nuclear energy policy and to broader OECD policy analyses in areas such as energy and sustainable development.

Specific areas of competence of the NEA include safety and regulation of nuclear activities, radioactive waste management, radiological protection, nuclear science, economic and technical analyses of the nuclear fuel cycle, nuclear law and liability, and public information.

The NEA Data Bank provides nuclear data and computer program services for participating countries. In these and related tasks, the NEA works in close collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, with which it has a Co-operation Agreement, as well as with other international organisations in the nuclear field.

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