

## Country Profile: Greece

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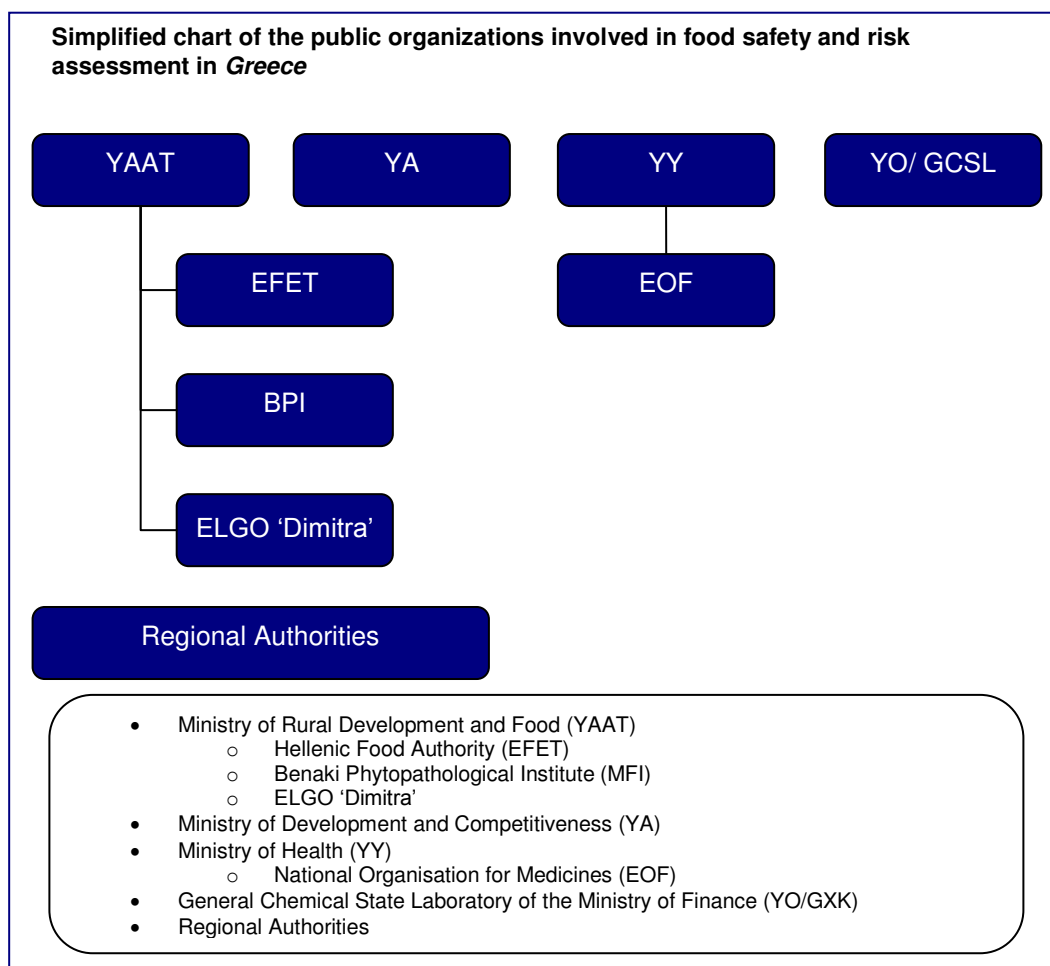
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# Country Profile: Greece<sup>i</sup>

## I – Key priorities for risk assessment

- Emerging risks
- International cooperation for risk assessment
- Tools for risk assessment

## II – Major public actors involved in food safety (including risk assessment, management and communication)



## Main public organisations involved in food safety and roles - Greece

Organisation	Main areas of remit (in term of risk assessment/ management/ communication)	Risk assessment	Risk management	Risk communication
<b>YAAT</b> – Ministry of Rural Development and Food	Plant health, animal health – incl. aquaculture, agricultural products, feed; overview of food issues	x	x	x
<b>YA</b> – Ministry of Development and Competitiveness	Function of the market, consumer policy		x	x
<b>YY</b> – Ministry of Health	Mineral and drinking water, health policy	x	x	x
<b>EFET</b> – Hellenic Food Authority	Food (excl. agricultural products), food contact materials	x	x	x
<b>BPI</b> – Benaki Phytopathological Institute	Plant health and plant protection agents	x		x
<b>ELGO</b> ‘Dimitra’	Agricultural production	x		
<b>EOF</b> – National Organisation for Medicines	Veterinary medicines, foodstuffs for particular nutritional uses, food supplements	x	x	x
<b>YO/GCSL</b> – General Chemical State Laboratory (Ministry of Finance)	Chemical analyses of foodstuffs	x	x	

Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 is the central legal foundation for food legislation in Greece. In the case of infringements of food law, the courts decide on measures under criminal law and, in cases of dispute, about consumers' damage claims *vis a vis* food businesses. Likewise, when it comes to the legality of state measures that are also frequently based on risk assessments, the courts are the ultimate decision-making body.

In Greece there is no institutional separation of risk assessment from risk management. Risk assessments are not, normally, published.

Greece participates in the EU policy making processes and in the relevant European Agencies and Bodies. Greece also participates in the work of Codex Alimentarius.

### ***Ministry of Rural Development and Food (YAAT)***

#### **Tasks of YAAT<sup>1</sup>:**

- Agricultural policy, food safety
- Risk assessment
- Risk communication
- Risk management

<sup>1</sup> Partial list including those tasks with relevance to food safety and risk assessment/ management/ communication

**Website:** [www.minagric.gr](http://www.minagric.gr)

YAAT deals with agricultural policy and, more particularly, with the food safety of **agricultural products** in Greece. In this area it implements horizontal and vertical legislation on food and feed and is responsible for the co-ordination of veterinary inspections. The basis for YAAT management measures are the risk assessments undertaken by YAAT itself and, in some cases, of bodies it supervises. Another focus of its work is transparent communication with the public at large.

The area of activity of YAAT includes, amongst other things, feed, residues of plant protection products and veterinary medicinal products, GMOs and zoonoses. In this context it monitors the carrying out of inspections by the local authorities. YAAT is the regulatory authority for plant protection products in Greece. By contrast, the National Organisation for Medicines is the regulatory authority for veterinary medicinal products.

15 National Reference Laboratories come under the remit of YAAT pursuant to Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004.

The area of work of YAAT extends beyond food safety to, for instance, plant health, plant protection, animal health, animal welfare and biocides.

### ***Ministry of Development and Competitiveness (YA)***

#### **Tasks of YA<sup>1</sup>:**

- Consumer policy
- Risk Management
- Risk Communication

**Website:** [www.mindev.gov.gr](http://www.mindev.gov.gr)

YA oversees, amongst others, the function of the market and the adherence of enterprises to the relevant law. The General Secretariat of Consumers is under YA and deals with consumer policy.

### ***Ministry of Health (YY)***

#### **Tasks of YY<sup>1</sup>:**

- Health policy, food safety
- Risk assessment
- Risk communication
- Risk management

**Website:** [www.moh.gov.gr](http://www.moh.gov.gr)

YY deals with health policy. It is responsible for risk assessment, risk communication and risk management in the field of mineral waters and drinking water.

### ***Hellenic Food Authority (EFET)***

#### **Tasks of EFET<sup>1</sup>:**

- Risk assessment
- Risk communication
- Risk management
- EFSA Focal Point
- RASFF Contact Point
- Codex Alimentarius Contact Point
- Training

**Website:** [www.efet.gr](http://www.efet.gr)

EFET is a public body under the supervision of YAAT. EFET deals with food supervision and food inspections in Greece, including food contact materials and bottled water but not including primary production facilities. Risk assessments undertaken by EFET itself are the basis for management measures and communication by EFET. EFET assesses food risks independently of any scientific, political or social interests. Another focus of its work is transparent communication with the public at large.

The area of activity of EFET includes, amongst others, novel foods, GMOs and residues of plant protection products. EFET has in-house laboratory facilities, however, in the framework of the needs of official control and risk assessment cooperates closely with other public bodies with relevant analytical capacity, including YO/GCSL, BPI, the Veterinary Services of YAAT, etc.

EFET is the national EFSA Focal Point, RASFF Contact Point and, also, Contact Point for Codex Alimentarius in Greece.

20 National Reference Laboratories are attached to EFET pursuant to Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004.

The area of work of EFET extends beyond food safety to, for instance, nutrition and labelling.

### ***Benaki Phytopathological Institute (BPI)***

#### **Tasks of BPI<sup>1</sup>:**

- Risk assessment for plant health/ plant protection products
- Risk communication
- Laboratory analyses
- Research
- Training

**Website:** [www.bpi.gr](http://www.bpi.gr)

BPI is a public body under the supervision of YAAT. When established, in 1929, it was the first Greek research institute to have a broad focus on plant health and plant protection. Amongst its other tasks and roles, BPI specialised in risk assessment and advice on the safe use of agricultural chemicals with regards to the protection of human health and of the environment. BPI has the infrastructure to perform all needed analyses and engage in relevant research projects.

### ***Hellenic Agricultural Organisation “Dimitra” (ELGO ‘Dimitra’)***

#### **Tasks of ELGO ‘Dimitra’<sup>1</sup>:**

- Agricultural research in support of risk assessment
- Certification of agricultural production systems and products
- Preparation and publication of optional sectoral standards and quality assurance specification for agricultural products
- Quality control of milk production
- Training

**Website:** [www.elgo.gr](http://www.elgo.gr)

ELGO ‘Dimitra’ is a public body under the supervision of YAAT. It includes units working on applied agricultural research, standards development and certification for agricultural processes and products, monitoring of milk production and training. While not directly aiming at risk assessment, ELGO ‘Dimitra’ can contribute to food safety via research, training and advice focused on the primary production sector.

### ***The National Organisation for Medicines (EOF)***

#### **Tasks of EOF<sup>1</sup>:**

- RASFF management

**Website:** [www.eof.gr](http://www.eof.gr)

EOF is responsible for medicinal products for veterinary use, foodstuffs intended for particular nutritional uses and food supplements.

### ***The General Chemical State Laboratory of the Ministry of Finance (MF/GCSL)***

#### **Tasks of MF/GCSL<sup>1</sup>:**

- Laboratory analyses
- Risk assessment

**Website:** [www.gcsf.gr](http://www.gcsf.gr)

GCSL, with its regional Services (Chemical Services), operates within the Ministry of Finance, is mainly responsible for the laboratory analysis of foodstuffs. At central level, GCSL co-ordinates and oversees the Chemical Services that carry out the official analysis. Further to that, GCSL has the capacity to undertake risk assessment or support risk assessment activities.

GCSL facilitates the operation of the Supreme Chemical Council, a body within the Ministry of Finance, which carries out legislative work and produces formal opinions on food product specifications and market requirements.

## **III – Food safety alerts management in Greece**

1. Does the competent authority (or authorities) for food safety have an established mechanism to evaluate and react to food safety crises (crises management mechanism)?	<b>Yes</b>
2. If the reply to Q1 is yes, does this mechanism include a committee or a body with pre-determined representatives?	<b>Yes</b> (however, ad hoc committees are also possible depending on the type of the incident)
3. If there is an established mechanism for crisis management (the reply to Q1 is Yes):	
3a. Do actors with risk assessment capacity participate directly in this mechanism?	<b>Yes</b> (however, there is also a separate body for risk assessment)
3b. Do actors with risk management capacity participate directly in this mechanism?	<b>Yes</b>
3c. Do actors with risk communication capacity participate directly in this mechanism?	<b>Yes</b>

## IV – Characteristics of the food sector in Greece

**Number of enterprises<sup>2</sup>:** 17000 (approximate), 95% of which correspond to very small enterprises (under 10 employees)

**% of the industrial sector:** 23% of the enterprises

**% of the industrial workforce:** 23%

**% of industrial turnover:** 26.2% corresponding to sales value of EUR 9.74 bn (2<sup>nd</sup> in rank)

**Top subsectors (in terms of number of enterprises):** Flour and bakery products; Production of fats and oils of plant or animal origin; Confectionary products, cocoa, spices.

**Top subsectors (in terms of turnover):** Dairy products; Drinks; Flour and bakery products.

## V – Civil Society Organisations

In Greece there are several CSOs with relevance to the food sector. Some focus on consumer rights and consumer protection (not necessarily foodstuff-specific), while others, within their mission objectives, act directly or indirectly towards food security (e.g., by offering food to vulnerable groups such as homeless people, etc.).

Amongst those, the consumer associations engage in the public dialogue for new legislation or market regulation regarding foodstuffs representing the interest of the consumers. Further to that, consumer associations often act as information multipliers towards consumers and also help strengthen consumer demand for quality food products.

Currently, there are 44 registered consumer associations, including associations with regional-only and nation-wide coverage.

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<sup>2</sup> Data referring to the characteristics of the secondary sector; Source: Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research (IOBE) 2011 (based on data of 2009).