GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

Country's political system

Hellas (or Greece), (Ελλάδα, Ellada), officially the Hellenic Republic (Ελληνική Δημοκρατία, Elliniki Dimokratia) is a Parliamentary Republic.

The President of the Republic, is elected by Parliament every 5 years, is Head of State.

General elections are normally held every 4 years unless the Parliament is dissolved earlier. The electorate consists of all Greek citizens who are 17 years of age.

The Prime Minister is Head of Government.

The Ministerial Council, consisting of the Prime Minister, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Ministers without portfolio, is the collective decision-making body that constitutes the Government of Greece.

Legislative power is exercised by Parliament and the President of the Republic.

Executive power is exercised by the President of the Republic and the Government.

Judicial power is vested in the courts of law, whose decisions are executed in the name of the people.

Although the President of the Republic has limited political power, as most power lies with the government, his/her duties include formally appointing the Prime Minister, on whose recommendation he/she also appoints or dismisses other members of government, he/she represents the State in its relations to other States, proclaims referendums etc.

Constitution

The State is structured by the Constitution (Σύνταγμα *Sýntagma*).

The Constitution of Hellas is the fundamental Charter of the State. It includes the main rules concerning the structure of the State, the exercise of its powers by the authorities as well as a list of human rights.

The current Constitution of Greece was created by the Fifth Revisional Parliament and entered into force in 1975. It has been revised three times since, most significantly in 1986, and also in 2001 and in 2008. The Constitutional history of Greece goes back to the Greek War of Independence (1821–1832), during which the first three revolutionary Greek constitutions were adopted.

State's symbols – emblems - national anthem

The Flag



- Symbols of the Republic
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- Orders and Decorations
  - Order of the Redeemer
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THE NATIONAL FLAG

OF GREECE

The national flag of Greece consists of nine horizontal stripes of equal width, five blue and four white, alternately, the first and last stripes being blue. The upper left corner contains a blue square, along the five stripes with a white cross inside it. The flag is hung on a white flagstaff at the top of which there is a white cross.



HISTORY

The land flag used to be square in shape, and used to have a white cross on a blue background. The marine flags resembled the current national flag. The only difference in the flag of the merchant marine was the reversal of colors in the corner where the cross was (a blue cross on a white background). The flag of the merchant ships was ranked with that of the navy in 1828, when it was recognized that merchant ships had taken part in the war of independence as war-ships.

The national flag has been modified several times since then, mainly as a result of regime changes, without being radically altered. In 1833 the Bavarian coat of arms was added to the flags of the army and the navy and remained until the overthrow of King Otto in October of 1862. With the arrival of King George I in 1863 the crown was introduced into the flags of the above forces and remained there until the regime change in 1924.

From 1864 onwards the flag of the infantry regiments was made of silk with a gold fringe all round and had a picture of their patron saint, Saint George, in the centre of the white cross.

THE FLAG TODAY

The war flags currently are: for the navy, the national flag and, for the army and the air force, a rectangular flag consisting of a white cross on a blue background, the cross dividing the flag into four equal parts. In the centre of the cross, the flag of the army bears a picture of Saint George, while the flag of the air force bears a picture of the Archangel Michael.

The National Emblem



The national emblem of Greece consists of a blue escutcheon with a white cross totally surrounded by two laurel branches.

The emblem is painted or woven, mainly on the hats, uniforms and buttons of the military, the security forces etc.

The Greek national emblem was provided for by the Constitution of Epidauros of 1 January 1822 and established by decree on 15 March of the same year. It was blue and white and circular in shape.

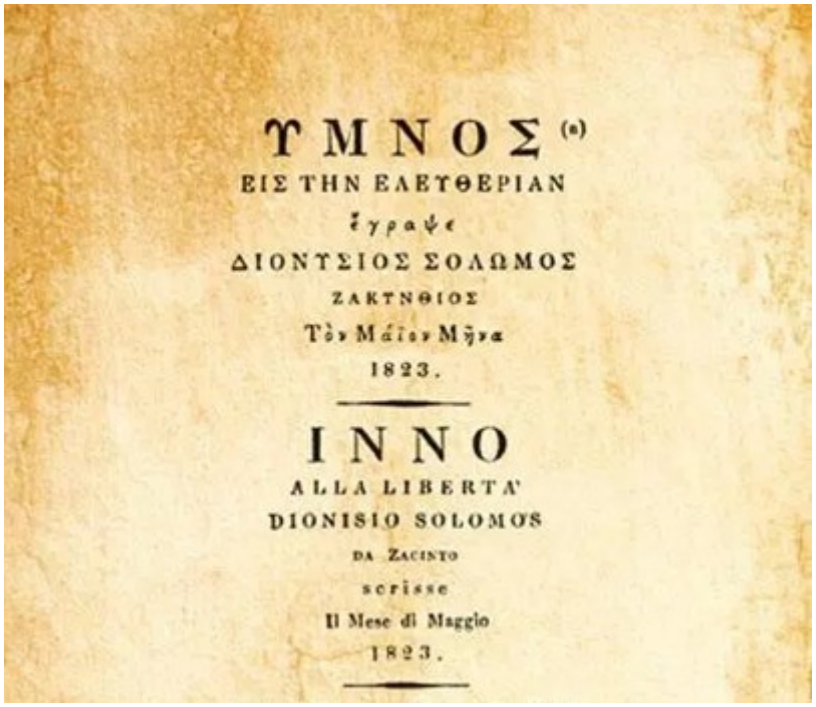
HISTORY

Since it was first established, the emblem has undergone many changes in shape and design, mainly due to changes of regime.

The original Greek national emblem depicted the goddess Athena and the owl. At the time of Capodistrias, the first Prime Minister of modern Greece, the phoenix, the symbol of rebirth, was added. During the reign of King Otto, the royal crest, with two crowned lions holding the coat of arms with the royal crown, became the national emblem of the country. With the arrival of King George I, the Bavarian emblem was replaced by the Danish one. After Greece became a republic in 1924 the national emblem used to consist of a simple white cross on a blue background. The Danish emblem returned with the restoration of Monarchy until 1967.

The National Anthem

The National Anthem of Greece consists of the first two verses of the poem *"Hymn to Freedom"*, written in May 1823 in Zakynthos by the poet Dionysios Solomos. A year later it was published in Mesolonghi and the same year Fauriel included it in a collection of Greek folk songs. In 1828 Nicholas Mantzaros, a Corfiot musician and friend of Solomos' set the poem to music, based on a folk theme, intended for a four-voice male choir rather than preserving it's character of march. After that the *"Hymn to Freedom"* was regularly heard on national holidays.



ΥΜΝΟΣ (a)
ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑΝ
Ἔγραψε
ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΣ ΣΟΛΩΜΟΣ
ΖΑΚΥΝΘΙΟΣ
Τὸν Μάϊον Μῆνα
1823.

INNO
ALLA LIBERTA'
DIONISIO SOLOMOS
DA ZACINTO
scrisse
Il Mese di Maggio
1823.

HISTORY

In 1844 the poem was once again set to music by Mantzaros and submitted to King Otto in the hope that he would accept it as the national anthem. In spite of N. Mantzaros being awarded the Silver Cross of the Order of the Redeemer and D. Solomos' being awarded the Gold Cross of the same Order, the work was not ratified as the national anthem but became popular as a battle song.

In 1861 the Minister for the Military asked Mantzaros to compose a march based on the "Hymn to Freedom". The musician altered the rhythm of Solomos' hymn, giving it the rhythm of a march and in 1864, after the union of the Ionian Islands with Greece, the "Hymn to Freedom" was established as the national anthem. The national anthem, along with its music, was printed for the first time (27 copies) in London in 1873.

We knew thee of old,
Oh, divinely restored,
By the lights of thine eyes,
And the light of thy Sword,

From the graves of our slain,
Shall thy valour prevail.
As we greet thee again-
Hail, Liberty! Hail!

(The Hellenic National Anthem. A translation in English by Rudyard Kipling, 1918)

The poem "Hymn to Freedom" consists of 158 four-line verses of which the first 24 were established as the National Anthem in 1865. The first two of them are the ones usually played

and accompanying the raising and the lowering of the flag, being sung on official occasions. During the playing of the national anthem one stands to attention.

Government

The President of the Republic http://www.presidency.gr/en/homepage/

The President is elected by the Parliament for a 5-year term, with a maximum of two terms. Upon expiration of the presidential term, the Parliament votes to elect a new President.

The President of the Republic has the power to declare war, to grand pardon and to conclude agreements of peace, alliance, and participation in international organizations. Upon the request of the Government, a simple parliamentary majority is required to validate such actions or agreements. In special cases an absolute majority or a 3/5 majority may be required (e.g. the entry into the EU required a 3/5 majority). The President also has at his disposal some emergency powers, which must be signed by the relevant Minister.

The revision of the Constitution in 1986 restricted the powers of the President. Therefore, the President can no longer dissolve the Parliament, dismiss the Government, suspend articles of the Constitution or declare a state of siege, without the corresponding signature of the Prime Minister or the respective minister. To call a referendum he needs the approval of Parliament.

Executive power https://government.gov.gr/ & https://primeminister.gr/en/home

The Cabinet, which consists of members of the Government, includes the **Prime Minister** and all the **Ministers** which are appointed by the President of the Republic on the proposal of the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister is usually the leader of the party that controls the absolute majority of Parliament Members. If no party has the absolute majority of the Parliament, the President gives the leader of the party with a relative majority an exploratory mandate, i.e. gives him a mandate to examine the possibility of forming a government in cooperation with other parties that can secure a parliamentary vote of confidence. Under the Constitution, the Prime Minister shall safeguard the unity of the government and direct the activities thereof. He is the strongest person in the Greek political system and proposes the appointment or dismissal of Ministers and Deputy Ministers to the President of the Republic.

The Greek parliamentary democracy is based on the principle of the declared confidence of the Parliament to the Government. Thus the President must appoint a Prime Minister that may receive the vote of confidence by the Members of the Parliament (i.e. 151 votes). The Government may at any time request a vote of confidence from the Parliament: conversely, a number of Members of the Parliament may request a "vote of reproach". These two processes rarely occur in practice.

Legislative power https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/en/

The members of the Greek Parliament are elected by universal suffrage of all citizens over the age of 17. It has 300 members, elected for a 4-year term by a system of reinforced proportional representation in 48 multi-seat constituencies, 8 single-seat constituencies and a single nationwide list. 288 of the 300 Members of the Parliament are elected directly by the

people, as citizens can declare their preference by marking their name on the ballot. The remaining 12 seats are elected by nationwide party lists on a top-down basis and based on the proportion of the total vote received by each party in the election.

This electoral law establishes a complex system of reinforced proportional representation which does not favour the creation of small parties and makes parliamentary majority possible even if the leading party has not received an absolute majority of the popular vote. Each party must receive at least 3% of the vote in order to elect Members of the Parliament. The leading party can achieve a parliamentary majority (151 Members of the Parliament), provided it receives at least 41% of the popular vote. The electoral law can be changed by simple parliamentary majority but the new law does not apply to the next elections but to the ones after that, unless it has been voted by a majority of ⅔ of the total number of Members of the Parliament.

Judiciary power

The judiciary power in Greece is distinguished into administrative, civil (municipal) and penal courts.

In Greek justice there are three supreme courts:

- the Council of State
- the Court of Cassation
- the Chamber of Accounts

These courts consist of judges who have graduated from the National School of Judges. The presidents and vice-presidents of the three supreme courts are chosen by the Cabinet among the serving members of each Supreme Court.