

Indicators Assessment – Unitary States

Greece

Dr. Eda GEMI

May 2020

This Indicators Assessment report offers a country assessment of 4 composite indicators: (1) state-religious institutions relations, (2) status of religious minority groups, (3) religious radicalisation level, and (4) radicalisation prevention measures. It is part of a series covering 23 countries (listed below) on four continents. This assessment report was produced by GREASE, an EU-funded research project investigating religious diversity, secularism and religiously inspired radicalisation.

Countries covered in this series:

Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Morocco, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

<https://www.grease.eu.eu>



The GREASE project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 770640

The EU-Funded GREASE project looks to Asia for insights on governing religious diversity and preventing radicalisation.

Involving researchers from Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania, GREASE is investigating how religious diversity is governed in over 20 countries. Our work focuses on comparing norms, laws and practices that may (or may not) prove useful in preventing religious radicalisation. Our research also sheds light on how different societies cope with the challenge of integrating religious minorities and migrants. The aim is to deepen our understanding of how religious diversity can be governed successfully, with an emphasis on countering radicalisation trends.

While exploring religious governance models in other parts of the world, GREASE also attempts to unravel the European paradox of religious radicalisation despite growing secularisation. We consider the claim that migrant integration in Europe has failed because second generation youth have become marginalised and radicalised, with some turning to jihadist terrorism networks. The researchers aim to deliver innovative academic thinking on secularisation and radicalisation while offering insights for governance of religious diversity.

The project is being coordinated by Professor Anna Triandafyllidou from The European University Institute (EUI) in Italy. Other consortium members include Professor Tariq Modood from The University of Bristol (UK); Dr. H. A. Hellyer from the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) (UK); Dr. Mila Mancheva from The Centre for the Study of Democracy (Bulgaria); Dr. Egdunas Raciunas from Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania); Mr. Terry Martin from the research communications agency SPIA (Germany); Professor Mehdi Lahlou from Mohammed V University of Rabat (Morocco); Professor Haldun Gulalp of The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (Turkey); Professor Pradana Boy of Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (Indonesia); Professor Zawawi Ibrahim of The Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (Malaysia); Professor Gurpreet Mahajan of Jawaharlal Nehru University (India); and Professor Michele Grossman of Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia). GREASE is scheduled for completion in 2022.

For further information about the GREASE project please contact: Professor Anna Triandafyllidou, anna.triandafyllidou@eui.eu

<http://grease.eui.eu/>

GREASE - Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion: Bringing Together European and Asian Perspectives

Country Assessment Report

Name of Country Assessed: Greece

I. Composite Indicator 1: State-Religious Institutions Relations

Overall Assessment:

In the [Constitution of Greece](#) there is no explicit reference to the terms “secular”. The Article 3 §1 states that “*The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ.*” In this sense, the state by law is getting involved in Church affairs while the Church undertakes certain state roles and functions. In fact, the relevant legislation allows for the formal participation of the Orthodox Church in political decision-making on religious affairs issues, while the role of the other religious groups is limited to formal consultations on religious issues of their concern.

According to the Article 29 § 1 of the Constitution “*Greek citizens possessing the right to vote may freely found and join political parties, the organization and activity of which must serve the free functioning of democratic government*”. Even though there are no purely religiously based political parties, some (radical right-wing and far right nationalist) political parties such as the Golden Dawn, Popular Orthodox Alarm (LAOS) and the Greek Solution are clearly identified with the Orthodoxy and the Church of Greece.

The legal status of religious communities is regulated with the [Law 4301/2014](#) “*Organization of the Legal Form of Religious Communities and their organizations in Greece*” which provides the legal opportunity for religious groups to become recognized as “religious legal entities” under civil law. Presently, Greek Orthodox priests and government-appointed muftis and imams in Thrace receive their salaries from the government. In addition, property used solely for religious purposes remains exempt from taxation, as well as municipal fees, for groups classified as religious legal entities or “known religions.” However, given the high costs and the intricacies of the system in force, very few religious groups have applied to courts seeking recognition as a religious legal entity.

According to Article 9 of [Law 4301/2014](#) “*the religious legal entities are entitled to establish, among others, private schools, colleges, radio stations ...to develop their offer and promote related activities.*” In practice, there are private schools run by religious-ethnic communities such as by Catholic Church of Greece, Jewish Community, Armenian Community, Polish and Philippine communities. However, they are not considered religious schools *per se* and their curricula are subject to some restrictions imposed by the Ministry of Education.

According to the article 14 & 1 and 2 “*every person may express and propagate his thoughts orally, in writing and through the press in compliance with the laws of the State*” and that “*The press is free. Censorship and all other preventive measures are prohibited.*”

Although the religious media's activity is allowed, the Orthodox Church of Greece possess the majority of online and offline media outlets. On the other hand, the Hellenic Public Broadcasting Authority (ERT) is obliged to dedicate time and technical support to broadcast the Orthodox Church's activities, while there is no coverage of other religious communities.

The overall legal framework towards the religious minorities has been substantially reformed on the basis of liberal principles and human rights standards, recognising as such the equality of individuals before the law regardless of their religious and ethnic affiliation. However, the meaning of tolerance towards religious and cultural diversity is still perceived as minimal liberal tolerance. In terms of governance of religious diversity, despite the recent reforms, the central state policy appears fragmented. While the legal context has been modernized, the mentality and public attitude has not been modernized in the same way.

1. State autonomy from religion.	Score	Year (Most recent)
(1a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law defines the state as secular.	Medium	2020
(1b) Practical Dimension: Actual level of state political autonomy/independence from religion.	Low	2020

2. Participation of religious institutions and religious groups in political decision-making and policy-making.	Score	Year (Most recent)
(2a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation forbids formal participation of religious institutions and religious groups in formal political decision-making.	Medium	2020
(2b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious institutions and religious groups lack formal participation in political decision-making.	Medium	2020

3. Religiously-based political parties in political life.	Score	Year (Most recent)
(3a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation forbids participation of religiously-based political parties in political life.	Low	2020
(3b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religiously-based political parties lack participation in political life.	Very High	2020

4. State non-interference in the regulation of religious matters of religious institutions and religious communities (including regulation of religious courts, councils, religious family laws, etc.).	Score	Year (Most recent)
(4a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation enforces state non-interference in the regulation of religious matters (e.g., family law, religious councils) of religious institutions and religious communities.	Low	2020
(4b) Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of religious affairs (e.g., religious laws, etc.) of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2020

5. State non-interference in the regulation of the administrative matters of religious institutions and religious communities (including personnel and funds).	Score	Year (Most recent)
(5a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation enforces state non-interference in the regulation (e.g., personnel, financial matters) of the administrative matters of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2020
(5b) Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of the administrative affairs (e.g., personnel, financial, etc.) of religious institutions and religious communities.	Medium	2020

6. State recognition of freedom of religion.	Score	Year (Most recent)
(6a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation allows freedom of religion.	High	2020
(6b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious groups/communities enjoy freedom of religion.	High	2020

7. Freedom for religious groups/communities to set up and manage educational institutions.	Score	Year (Most recent)
(7a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation allows religious groups/communities to set up and manage educational institutions.	High	2020
(7b) Practical Dimension: Religious groups/communities set up and manage educational institutions.	High	2020

8. Autonomy of religious media.	Score	Year (Most recent)
(8a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation recognizes and allows religious media.	High	2020
(8b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious media practice their activity.	High	2020

II. Composite Indicator 2: Status of Religious Minority Groups

Overall Assessment:

According to the Article 13 & 2 of the [Greek Constitution](#) "*All known religions shall be free and their rites of worship shall be performed unhindered and under the protection of the law. The practice of rites of worship is not allowed to offend public order or the good usages.*" The majority of religious communities acquired the status of religious legal entities under the [Law 4301/2014](#) which allows for them to administer houses of prayer and worship, private schools, charitable institutions, and other non-profit entities (Article 7), following the relevant administrative authorization issued by the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs.

Among religious entities the Greek Orthodox Church, the Jewish community, and the Muslim minority of Thrace have the status of official religious legal entities as "Legal Body under State Law" under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Religion Affairs. In addition, the Greek Orthodox Church, Muslim minority of Thrace, Jewish communities, and Roman Catholic Church receive government benefits and social security rights that are not available to other religious communities. In fact, the new social security system has established the Single Unified Social Security Fund (EFKA) started operating from 1 January 2017. In accordance with Articles 7 and 8 of [Law 4387/2016](#) the main old-age, invalidity and survivors' pensions consist of a national part and a contributory part. The national part of the pension is not funded by insurance contributions, but directly from the state budget. In fact, it is paid in full if the person concerned has at least 20 years of contributions and 40 years of residence in Greece. The latter is characterized a discriminatory provision targeting migrants which given the time span of their migration to Greece (started in 1990s) are excluded from the above provision. In July 2019 the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs revoked the relevant [circulars](#) on the assignment of AMKA (Social Security Number) to beneficiaries of international protection and asylum seekers. The suspension of the assignment of AMKA practically meant that all asylum seekers and those who arrive afterwards had restricted access to various public services, including, among others, the access the Greek healthcare system, to start legal employment or to enroll one's children in a local school.

The right of access to public spaces is generally unrestricted for most residents. Contentious issues with regard to constructing a public place of prayer for Muslims have been addressed by [Law 3512/2006](#) and the Article 29 of Law [4014/2011](#). The first explicitly states that a piece of land of 850 square meters in the Botanikos area is granted by the state for the construction of a mosque and other facilities, while the ownership of the mosque belongs to the Greek State.

Religious minority groups have generally access to public spaces. But incidents have taken place as for example with police reported the arrest and detention of two Jehovah's Witnesses after an Orthodox priest accused them of religious insult for distributing their materials in front of his church, or militants of Golden Dawn assaulting Muslim migrants in public places.

1. Legal status of religious minority groups.	Score	Year (most recent)
(1a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation recognises religious minority groups.	High	2020
(1b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups enjoy legal registration status recognised by the government.	High	2020
2. Religious minority group participation in political life.	Score	Year (most recent)
(2a) Legal Dimension: Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to participate in the political life of the state.	High	2020
(2b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups participate in political life.	Medium	2020
3. Special social security status of religious minority groups.	Score	Year (most recent)
(3a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to special social security benefits.	Low	2020
(3b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups have special access to social security benefits.	Low	2020
4. Access of religious minority groups to public spaces.	Score	Year (most recent)
(4a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups right of access to public spaces.	Very high	2020
(4b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups enjoy access to public spaces.	High	2020
5. Access to public funds for initiatives/activities of religious minority groups.	Score	Year (most recent)
(5a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups right of access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.	Low	2020
(5b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups have access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.	Low	2020
6. Public accommodation of cultural practices specific to religious minority groups.	Score	Year (most recent)
(6a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation allows public accommodation of cultural practices specific to religious minority groups.	High	2020
(6b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups express their cultural practices publicly.	High	2020
7. Ownership of houses of worship.	Score	Year (most recent)
(7a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to own their houses of worship.	High	2020
(7b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups own houses of worship.	Medium	2020

III. Composite Indicator 3: Religious Radicalisation Level

Overall Assessment:

Structural Factors: At the level of freedom the country score has slightly improved from 2017 to 2019. Those changes are likely due to the inauguration of the official mosque in Athens which took place in the summer of 2019, as well as the diminished threat of racist violence following the prosecution of the far-right Golden Dawn party. On the other hand, the level state of legitimacy has constantly changed towards lowest level since 2010 which is likely due to the economic and political crisis that has undermined the effectiveness of the political system. Similarly, the downward variations of wealth disparity reflect the heightened levels of income inequalities because of the economic crisis and the austerity measures taken to cope with the impact of the latest recession.

Perception-based indicators: There has been a noticeable trend for improvement of the level of trust in both national parliament and national government in 2019 which is probably related to the end (August 2018) of Greece's economic tutelage by the IMF and the EU. However, the high percentage of those who rate the national economy as 'bad' denotes the level of concern and the lack of trust in the national system. In terms of discrimination, the share of those believing that discrimination is fairly widespread is apparently lower compared to 2015. Indeed, since 2014, the characteristics of racist violence in Greece gradually started to change for the better, a development which is of course related to the prosecution of the Golden Dawn's MPs and leadership, its defeat in 2019 national elections and the closure of its offices in Athens and Piraeus by the authorities. Especially worrisome are attitudes in Greece against diversity with the majority (67%) of respondents feeling discomfort to work or live alongside 'a Muslim person'.

Incidence-based indicators: The [2018 Annual Report of The Racist Violence Recording Network](#) in Greece shows lower number of victims of racist violence in Greece (117) compared to the 2015 corresponding report (300 victims). However, the share of victims profile remains the same with 74% them becoming target of violence because of their migration/ethnic/racial background, followed by sexual orientation (27%) and religion (10%). In terms of religion groups, the Jewish community has become a target of violence especially after 2009, when the financial crisis started to be more acute. The perpetrators were never arrested, but they were usually associated with extreme right-wing organizations. Attacks on Pakistanis and vandalism against their properties have intensified since 2004, when the numbers of arrivals of migrants from Pakistan to Greece increased rapidly. In 2018, 100 attacks against Pakistani immigrants from Golden Dawn militants had been recorded, with 4 death attacks and many serious damages to properties and shops.

1. Structural factors/ environment	Score/Level/ Percentage	Year (most recent)
(1a)Level of freedom (civil liberties)	Free (Freedom Rating 51/60)	2019
(1b)Level of adherence for the rule of law	Overall rank 40 (out of 128); overall score: 0.61	2020
(1c)Level of religious-related government restrictions	Score: 2.4 Level: Moderate	2017
(1d)Level of state legitimacy	Score: 6.1 Level: Moderate	2019
(1e)Level of protection of human rights	Score: 3.3 Level: Moderate	2019
(1f)Level of Group Grievances	Score: 4.8 Level: Moderate	2019
(1g)Uneven Economic Development	Score: 2.9 Level: Low	2019
(1h)Wealth disparity	37.30%	2017

2. Perception-based indicators	Score/Level/ Percentage	Year (most recent)
(2a)Distrust in national institutions	National Parliament/Government: 73%	2019
(2b)Political discontent	Dissatisfaction with country direction: 77%	2018
	Situation in country is bad/very bad: 90%	2018
	Dissatisfaction with democracy: 65%	2019
(2c)Economic discontent	Dissatisfaction own financial situation: 61%	2018
	Dissatisfaction national economy: 94%	2018
(2d) Discrimination	Religious/Ethnic discrimination is widespread: 23%	2016
	Oppose diversity in own country: 62%	2019
	Discomfort with minorities: 62%	2019
	Experienced discrimination: 37%	2015
(2e) View on violent extremism	Extremism/terrorism are serious problem: 69%	2018

3. Incidence-based indicators	Score/Level/ Percentage	Year (most recent)
(3a)State-based armed conflict	No	2020
(3b)Level of social hostilities involving religion	Moderate level	2016
(3c)Incidence and impact of terrorism (GTI)	GTI score: 4.167 No. of incidents: 27	2019
(3d)Violent extremist incidents	117	2018
(3e)Significant violent extremist actors/networks	Low Presence	2019

IV. **Composite Indicator 4: Radicalisation Prevention Measures**

Overall Assessment:

Comprehensive strategic approach: In general terms, radicalisation and extremism manifest themselves primarily on the discursive level (hate speech) and to a lesser extent it takes forms of physical violence. There are three main domains that have played a crucial role in the seeming trends of radicalisation and reproduction of Islamophobia Greece. First, the political domain (i.e. political parties of the right and the far right); second, the religious domain (i.e. Orthodox Church high-ranking clerics); and third, the media (i.e., the Internet and social media).

In terms of radicalization prevention measures, a series of legal initiatives have taken place recently, aiming, first, to align domestic legislation with EU rules pertaining to hate speech and denial of genocide ([Law 4285/2014](#)). Second, to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime and its Additional Protocol on the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through Computer Systems ([Law 4411/2016](#)). Third, to prevent and suppress of the legalization of proceeds of crime and terrorist financing ([Law 4557/2018](#)).

With regard to the national action plan to prevent violent extremism, the respective strategy and the national plan under the lead of the Ministry of Public Order is specifically focused on eradicating ideological and revolutionary violent extremism. On the other end, the National Commission for Human Rights and the Racist Violence Recording Network monitor the relevant developments, while paying central attention to human rights protection. In addition, the [National Integration Strategy](#) (2018) has set a frame of horizontal institutions aimed at coordinating and overseeing the implementation of action plans that ensure social cohesion, combat xenophobia and racism. It also provides for the establishment of the National Mechanism Monitoring and Evaluation of Social Integration and Social Policies.

The National Council against Racism and Intolerance is a dedicated body tasked with the strategy to prevent and combat racism and intolerance, to supervise the implementation of relevant legislation and to strengthen cooperation with civil society on these issues. In addition, since 2011, the Department for Religious Freedoms and Interfaith Relations of the Greek Ministry of Education ran an interfaith platform for dialogue with religious groups and their leaders. Yet, since 2017, the Observatory to Prevent Extremist Violence monitors the drivers and impacts of all forms of violent extremism. Last, the Golden Dawn Watch initiative run by the Greek Human League for Human Rights provides continuous and reliable information about everything related to Golden Dawn's trial and offers analysis from specialists, lawyers and the monitoring team of GDW.

1. Comprehensive strategic approach.	Score	Year (most recent)
(1a) Legislative foundation for adoption of P/CVE action plan	Yes	2018
(1b) Existence of P/CVE strategy and a national action plan	Insufficient information	2020
(1c) Presence of comprehensive monitoring mechanisms of strategy / action plan implementation	Insufficient information	2020
(1d) Presence of dedicated body tasked with P/CVE strategy development and coordination	Yes	2015
(1e) Compliance of P/CVE strategy and action plan with human rights standards and the principles of rule of law	Yes	2015
(1f) Participation of a wide range of government actors in development and implementation of PVE strategy and action plan	Yes	2020
(1g) Participation of non-government actors in development and implementation of PVE strategy and action plan	High participation	2019
(1h) Reference to FTFs and related measures in PVE strategy/action plan	Not applicable	2020
(1i) Reference to terrorism financing and related measures in PVE strategy and action plan	Yes	2018
(1j) Reference to communication counter- or alternative narrative campaigns in PVE strategy/action plan	Insufficient Information	2020

2. Comprehensiveness of measures - areas of action, actors and projects.	Score	Year (most recent)
(2a) Development and implementation of programmes for support of victims of terrorism and violent extremism.	Insufficient information	
(2b) Training for frontline practitioners.	Yes	2020
(2c) Initiatives to improve the preparedness, awareness and capabilities of security forces, law enforcement and justice institutions to deal with radicalisation issues.	Yes	2020
(2d) Development and implementation of CVE-specific education initiatives and projects involving youth.	Insufficient information	
(2e) Development and implementation of education initiatives and projects directed at women.	Insufficient information	
(2f) Platforms for intra and interfaith dialogue between the state and religious leaders.	Yes	2020
(2g) Networks for civil society, religious leaders, youth and women's organisations – dialogue, cooperation and best practices focused on violent radicalisation and violent extremism.	Yes	2020
(2h) Grassroots initiatives initiated and run entirely by civil society actors focussed on prevention of religiously-inspired violent radicalisation and/or violent extremism.	Moderate Level	2020
(2i) Counter- and alternative- narrative campaigns aimed at preventing religiously-inspired radicalisation and violent extremism.	Insufficient information	
(2j) Multi-agency cooperation and/or referral mechanisms at local level identifying and supporting at-risk persons	Insufficient information	
(2k) State-commissioned research on religiously-inspired radicalisation and violent extremism.	Yes	2020

(21) Existence of programs and measures to prevent radicalisation into violent extremism in prison and probation settings.	Yes	2020
--	-----	------

Project name: Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion: Bringing Together European and Asian Perspectives

Project Acronym: GREASE

Project Coordinator: Professor Anna Triandafyllidou

Contact: anna.triandafyllidou@eui.eu

March 2020

Document series reference: D3.2Indicators Assessment



This document can be downloaded from the publications section of the GREASE website at <https://www.grease.eui.eu/>

The sole responsibility of this publication lies with the authors. The European Union is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.



The GREASE project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 770640