

The Coronavirus pandemic in Greece

Disease	<u>COVID-19</u>
Virus strain	<u>SARS-CoV-2</u>
Location	Greece
First outbreak	<u>Wuhan, Hubei, China</u>
<u>Index case</u>	<u>Thessaloniki</u>
Arrival date	26 February 2020 (1 month, 4 weeks and 1 day)
Date	As of 23 April 2020
Confirmed cases	2463
Recovered	577
Deaths	129

Official website

covid19.gov.gr/covid19-live-analytics/



NATIONAL PUBLIC
HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Source: National Public Health Organization (EODY)

- The 2019–20 corona virus pandemic first appeared in Greece on **26 February 2020** when the first COVID-19 case.
- The first death from COVID-19 in Greece was a 66-year-old man, who died on **12 March**.
- As of 21 April 2020, there have been 2401 confirmed cases and 121 deaths.

Health and state authorities issued precautionary guidelines and recommendations, while measures up to early March were taken locally and included **the closure of schools and the suspension of cultural events in the affected areas**.

On 10 March, with 89 confirmed cases and no deaths in the country, the government decided to suspend the operation of educational institutions of all levels nationwide and then,

On 13 March, to close down all cafes, bars, museums, shopping centers, sports facilities and restaurants in the country.

On 16 March, all retail shops were also closed, two villages in Macedonia were quarantined, and all services in all areas of religious worship of any religion or dogma were suspended.

On 18 and 19 March, the government announced a series of measures of more than 10 billion Euros to support the economy, businesses and employees.

On 22 March, the Greek authorities announced restrictions on all non-essential movement throughout the country, starting from **6 am on 23 March**. Since that date, movement outside the house is permitted only for seven categories of reasons:

- i) moving to or from one's workplace during work hours,
- ii) going to the pharmacy or visiting a doctor
- iii) going to a food store
- iv) going to the bank for services not possible online, v) assisting a person in need of help
- v) going to a major ritual (funeral, marriage, baptism) or movement, for divorced parents, which is essential for contact with their children, and vii) moving outdoors, near one's home, for exercising or taking one's pet out, individually or in pairs.

Citizens leaving their home are required to carry their police ID or passport, as well as a signed attestation in which the purpose or category of travel is stated. The Hellenic Police, the Municipal Police, the Hellenic Coast Guard and the National Transparency Authority are empowered to enforce the restrictions and can issue fines for each offense.

On 4 April these restrictions were extended until 27 April firstly and later until the 4th of May.

Travel restrictions abroad

On 18 March, Greece and the other EU member states decided to close their external borders to all non-EU nationals. In Greece, the entry of citizens of countries from outside the European Union is only permitted for a condition that relates exclusively to an emergency or family matter. All private pleasure boats from abroad were also banned from entering the country.

Economic measures

On 18 March, the government announced a package of measures to support the economy, businesses and employees. The measures include:

1. The suspension, for four months, of tax and social security obligations of corporations that were ordered to close by the state decree, with the sole condition that they do not dismiss any workers. This measure covers about 220,000 businesses and 600,000 employees.
2. The measures also include an €800 stipend as well as a four-month suspension of payment of March taxes on employees of businesses the activity of which was suspended and on freelance professionals who work in sectors affected by the pandemic.
3. The reduction of VAT tax from 24% to 6% on pharmaceutical products such as gloves, masks and antiseptics was also announced.
4. Moreover, Greece has been included in emergency assets purchases' program worth 750 billion Euros launched by the ECB, and also stated the 3.5% primary surplus target for Greece is no longer in effect, according to a Eurogroup decision.
5. On 19 March, the State Budget allocated more than 10 billion Euros in support of the economy. The suspension of tax and social security obligations of corporations and the number of beneficiaries of the €800 stipend was extended to include all businesses harmed by the pandemic, all freelancers and self-employed workers and the majority of private sector workers. The state will also cover the cost of beneficiaries' insurance, pension, and health payments.
6. The Easter bonus would be paid in full to all employees and announced a special bonus for health and civil protection workers.

Suspension of businesses and workplaces

On 12 March, a two-week closure of all theatres, courthouses, cinemas, gyms, playgrounds and clubs was announced.

On 13 March, the nationwide closure of all shopping centers, cafes, restaurants, bars, museums and archaeological sites and food outlets, excluding supermarkets, pharmacies and food outlets that offer take-away and delivery only, was announced.

On 14 March, all organized beaches and ski resorts were closed.

On 19 March, the government announced the closure of all hotels across the country, from midnight on March 22 and until the end of April. Only hotels that accommodate personnel that guard the border will continue to operate, as well as three hotels in Athens and Thessaloniki and one hotel per regional unit will remain open. Moreover, all Greek citizens returning from abroad will be subjected to mandatory surveillance and isolation for at least 14 days.

On 22 March, all parks, recreation areas and marinas were also closed.

Closure of educational institutions

Starting on 28 February, with four confirmed cases in the country, the precautionary local closure of schools was decided when there was concern that members of these school communities may have come into contact with a coronavirus carrier. On the same day, all educational trips abroad programmed by schools were suspended and various municipalities around the country began disinfecting schools locally.

On 4 March, the closure of all public and private educational institutions of all levels in some infected areas and from 8 March all educational trips within the country were suspended.

On 10 March, the operation of all schools, universities, daycare centers and all other educational establishments were suspended nationwide for fourteen days.

A special purpose leave of 15 days was introduced for working parents.

Ten days later, on 20 March, this was extended such that all educational institutions would remain closed until 10 April.

On 10 April, the all educational institutions would remain closed until 10 May.

Suspension of religious services

Following the Synod's decision, the government decided to suspend services in all areas of religious worship of any religion or dogma from 16 March, till to the end of April.

Trade Unions

Dealing with a pandemic, such as that of the coronavirus, is an unprecedented situation, which has created extraordinary emergencies that particularly affect the labour market, and therefore the working conditions and conditions for workers.

EKA through a special page and a special form offers valid information to the employees and unions members, giving also the possibility to submit complaints, since phenomena of employer arbitrariness have already appeared.

EKA calls on all employees to be vigilant individually and collectively to manage the consequences of the state of emergency, with immediate information and involvement of primary unions, on employer arbitrariness and employment problems.

Frequent Questions addressed to Unions

BUSINESS CLOSING AND DECISION-MAKING

What about employee pay:

- a) When the employer decides to close the business
- b) When the state closes the business

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT MECHANISM

How will the employees of companies-employers whose operation has been temporarily banned due to the emergency measures against coronavirus be paid? What is the procedure for joining the employee support mechanism? Which employees are excluded from the support mechanism?

SPECIAL PURPOSE LEAVE

- Which parents are eligible for the special purpose leave
- How is a special purpose leave issued
- How does the special purpose leave relate to the annual normal leave
- Who pays the employee on special day leave

- On special days of leave, is the employee normally insured
- What about the special purpose leave in the public sector and the wider public sector

SPECIAL PROCEDURE FOR THOSE ENTITLED TO SPECIAL PURPOSE LEAVE IN THE SECTION OF ENERGY, WATER SUPPLY AND SUPPLY OF FUELS, MEDICINES AND PARAMEDICAL MATERIALS

How is a special purpose permit granted to companies / companies operating in the field of energy, water and fuel supply, medicines and paramedical materials?

OBLIGATIONS FOR INFORMING THE ON-LINE TOOL ERGANI

How are the changes / modifications of the working hours of the employees in the ERGANI¹ system registered during the implementation of the temporary measures? Are the provisions for daily and weekly rest valid?

POSSIBILITY OF TELEWORKING

Is it possible to work remotely? Who decides? Does the employee have the right to ask the employer to provide his work remotely?

PREVENTION MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY OF EMPLOYEES

What health and safety measures should the employer apply? What about workers who (themselves or their loved ones) have symptoms of the virus and pregnant workers? How are workers belonging to vulnerable groups are protected? The provisions for sick leave apply.

¹ **ERGANI** is a statistical tool of the Ministry of Labour for recording the size of the labour market on-line