

The demographic issue in Greece: Challenges and policy proposals



June 2022

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• Demographic changes and projections

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- Main impacts and challenges
- Conclusions

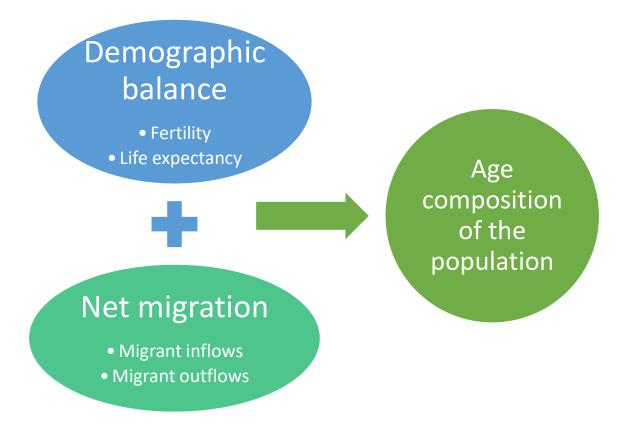
Purpose of the study

| Description | • Presentation of the main demographic trends and prospects in Greece |
|---------------------------|---|
| Analysis | Impacts and challenges of ageing for key sectors of the economy |
| Policy recommendations | Adaptation of society and the economy and society Facing the challenges in the short and medium term Reversing the ageing of the population |



"Demographic problem" and population ageing

- "Demographic problem": the change in the age composition of a country's population due to the ageing of its population
- Depends on:
 - demographic balance (the difference between births and deaths)
 - net migration (the difference between migrant inflows and outflows)



It is one of the main challenges that developed nations, including Greece, face.



Causes of population ageing

Reduced fertility rates

- Social factors
 - Changes in individual preferences and/or religious norms regarding starting a family
 - Participation of women in education and the labor market
 - Other social factors
- Economic Factors
 - Unemployment
 - Insufficient income
 - Lack of affordable housing
 - Cost or lack of pre-school education and care
 - Other economic factors

Increased life expectancy

- Advances in medicine
- Technological progress
- Improved standards of living



Demographic ageing creates many challenges

Reduction of the working age population

• Increase of the dependency ratio

Increased demand for social services

- Healthcare
- Long-term care
- Pensions

Reduction of public revenue

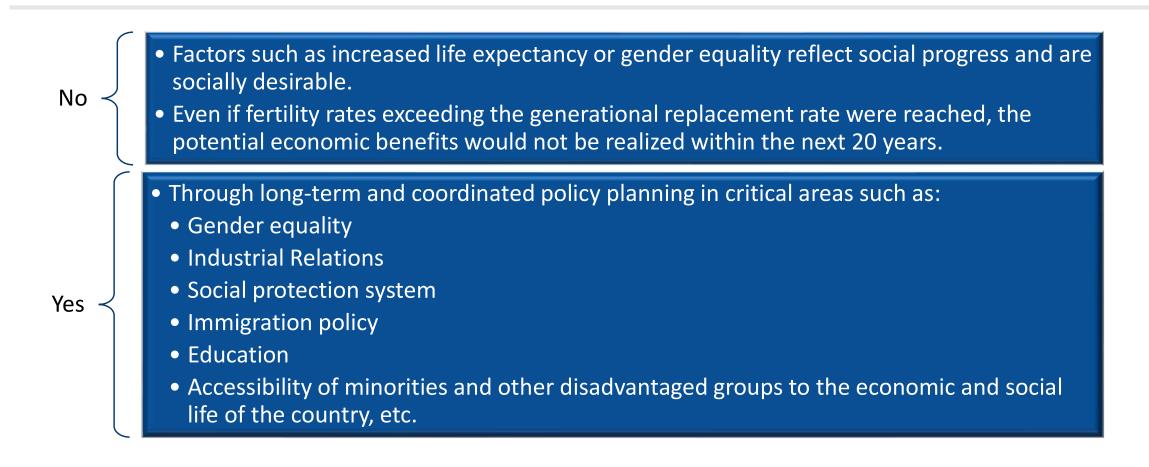
- Social security contributions
- Tax revenue

Individual and societal challenges

- New family and household structures
- Epidemiological changes
- Increased need for care
- Other challenges



Can ageing be reversed or halted?



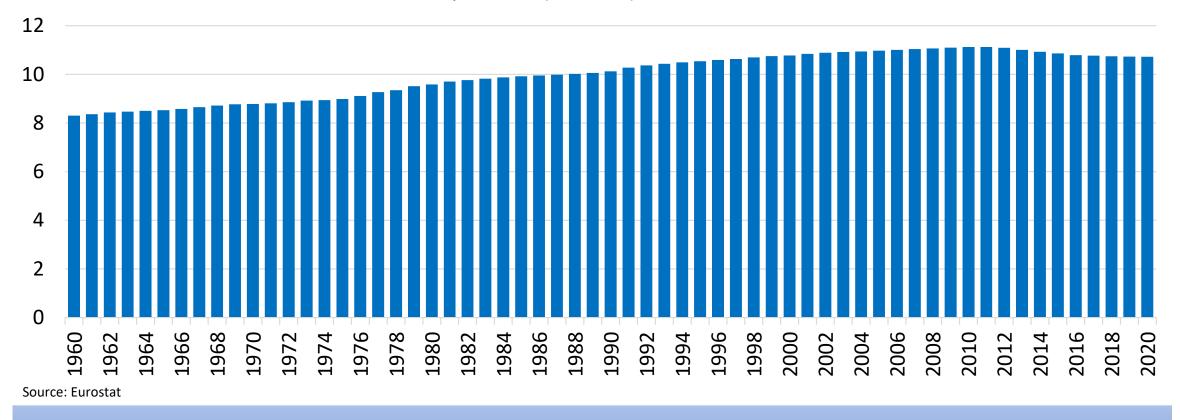
At the same time, critical aspects of the social protection system (healthcare, long-term care, pension system, etc.) need to be adjusted to meet the oncoming challenges.



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The population of Greece has been declining since 2011

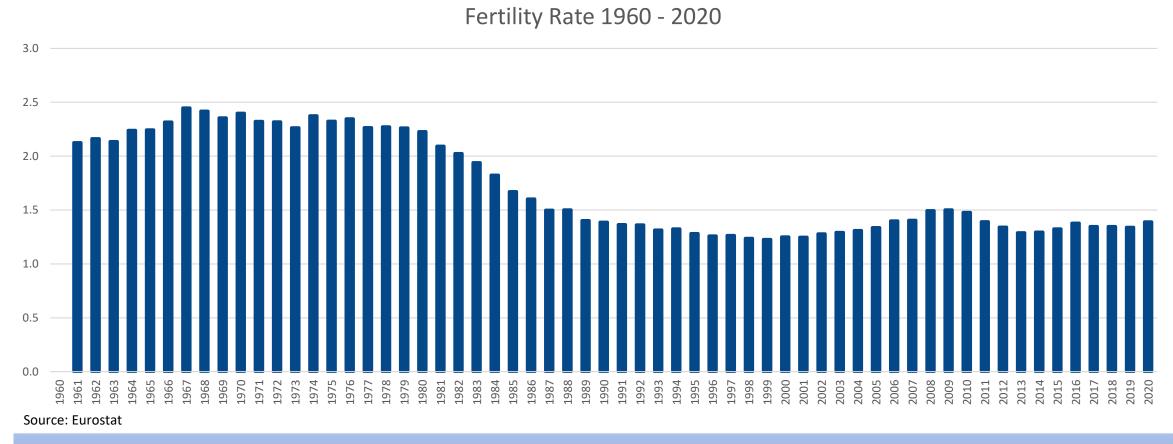


Population (millions), 1960-2020

4% reduction during 2011-2020 (-441 thousand people)



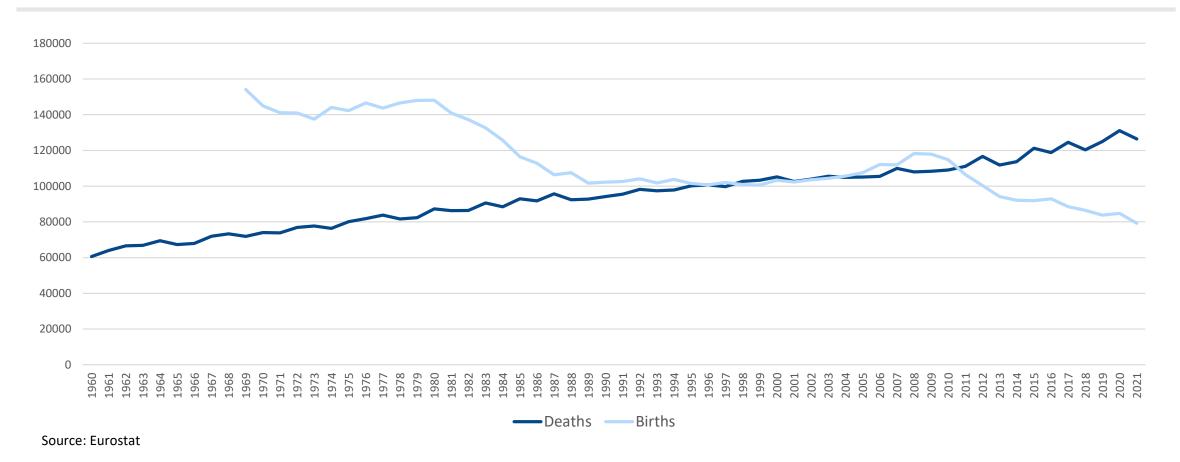
But the fertility rate started declining in the 1980s



The annual fertility rate fell from 2.23 children per woman in 1980 to 1.39 in 1990 and has since been fluctuating in the 1.2-1.5 range.



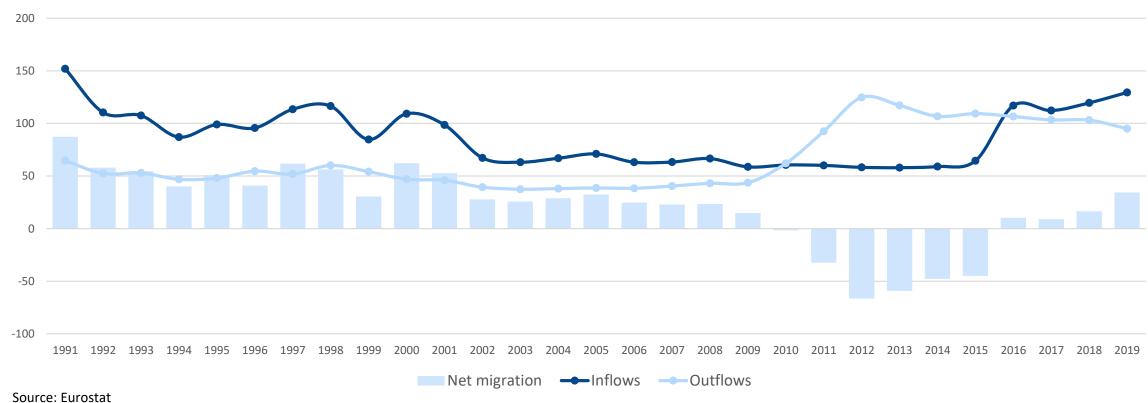
Particularly worrying is the course of births from 2008 onward - they started from 118 thousand in 2008 and dropped to less than 85 thousand in 2020



Conversely, the number of deaths has been increasing at a constant rate over time and it surpassed 130 thousand in 2020



The financial crisis triggered an exit wave from Greece making the net migration balance (inflows – outflows) negative

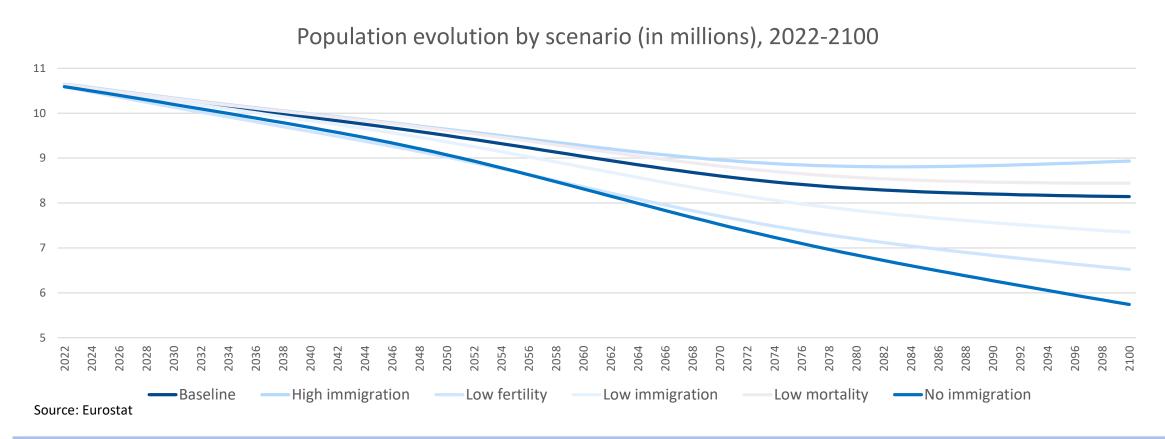


Net migration and migration flows (in thousands)

457 thousand people left the country during 2012-2015. Migration inflows increased significantly during 2016-2019 in the aftermath of the refugee crisis.



The population decline of recent years is expected to continue; there is little sensitivity to projection assumptions until 2050

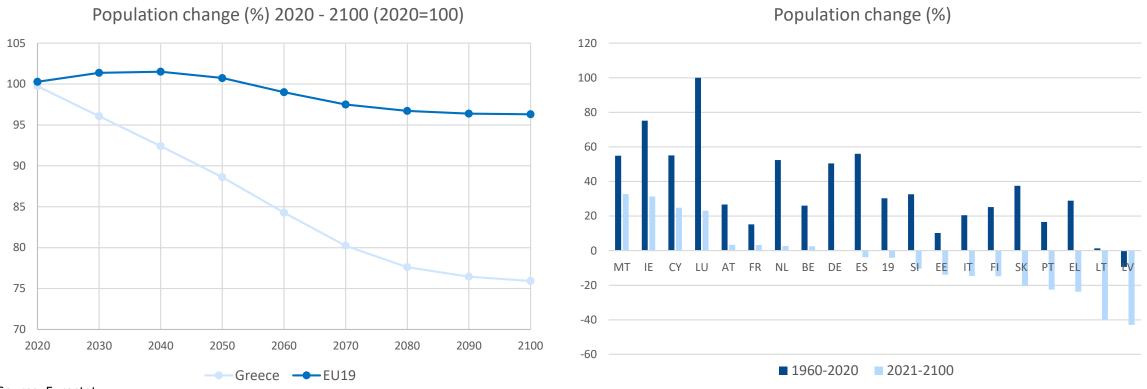


However, different assumptions about migration, fertility, and mortality lead to very large discrepancies in the period after 2050.

For example, there is a 3.2 million people difference between the high and zero migration scenarios by 2100.



Greece is expected to have a larger percentage population decline in the next 100 years compared to the Eurozone

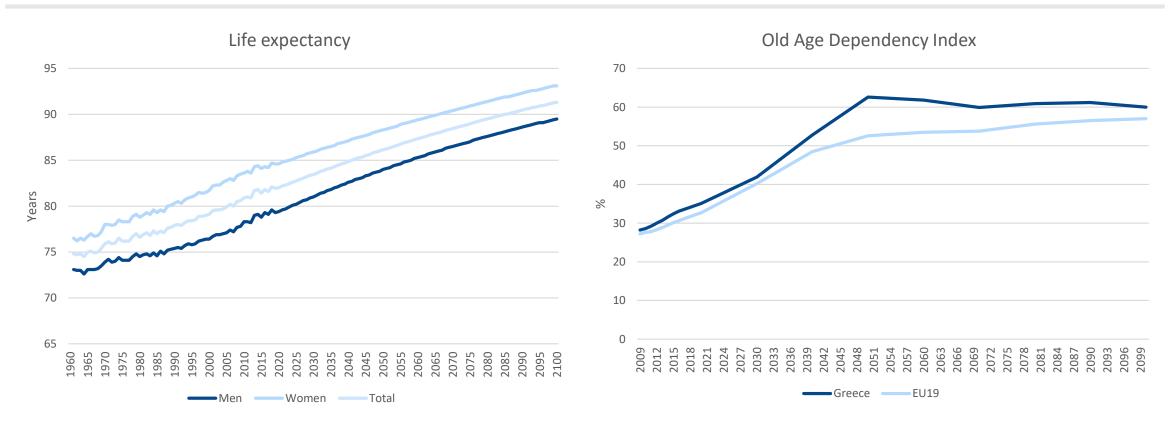


Source: Eurostat

In the baseline projection scenario, Greece will suffer a 24% population decline by 2100, compared to 5% in the Eurozone, third largest drop among Eurozone member countries.



Life expectancy is expected to increase by 9 years until 2100



Source: Eurostat. Note: The old-age dependency ratio is defined as the ratio of the number of persons aged 65 and over to the number of persons aged 15-64.

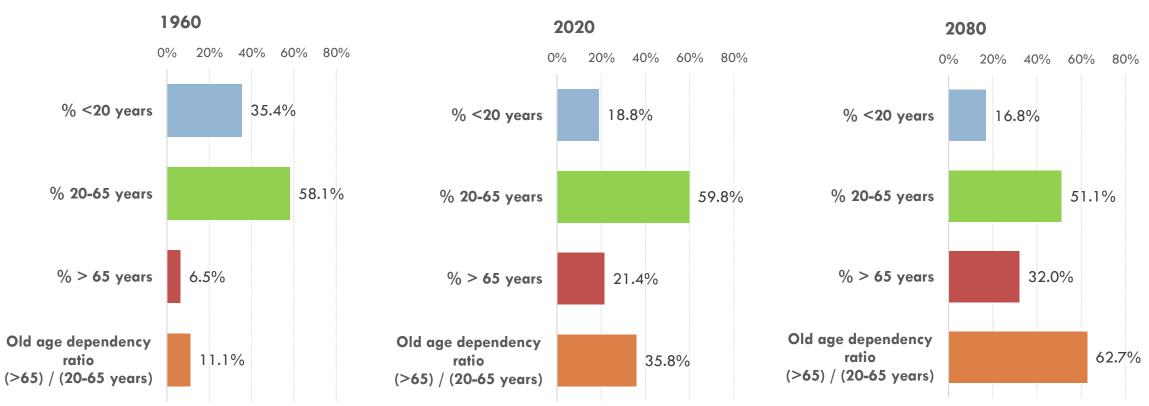
The increase in life expectancy, combined with low fertility rates, will increase old age dependency (faster than in the EU-19), creating challenges and risks for the health system, the pension system, and the labor market.



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The rising old-age dependency rates threaten the viability of a purely pay-as-you-go pension system



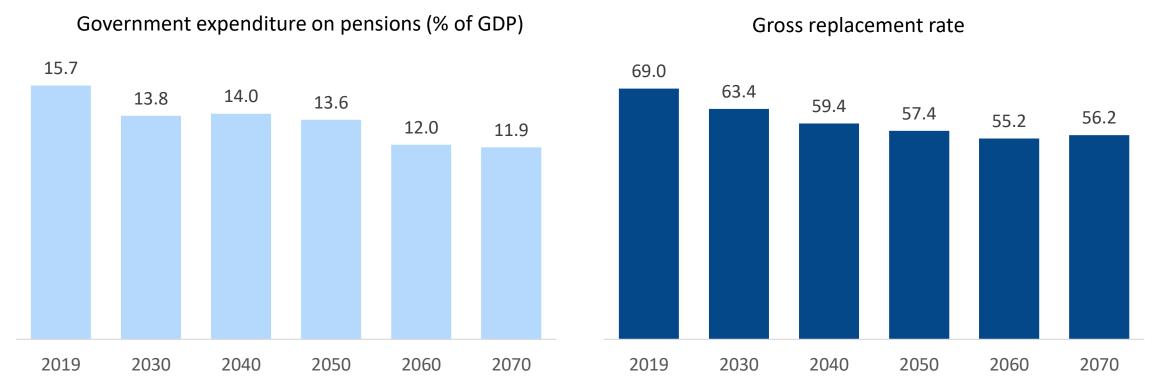
Distribution of the population by age and evolution of the old-age dependency ratio in Greece, 1960-2080

Source: Eurostat, historical data and baseline scenario projections, 2021

According to long-term demographic trends, each person over the age of 65 corresponds to about nine, three, and only one and a half productive people aged 20-65 in 1960, 2020, and 2080, respectively.



In a no-action scenario, the adequacy of pensions from the public insurance pillar is expected to decrease further...



Source: European Commission, historical data and baseline scenario projections of the Ageing Working Group Report 2021

...as shown by the declining replacement rates, while public spending on pensions will continue to absorb significant public financial resources, staying in double-digits, as a percentage GDP, until 2070.



The policy recommendations for the pension system are mainly concerned with the adaptation of the economy (and society) to the demographic trends...

Adaptation of the pension system to the effects of a declining and ageing population

- Measures to boost voluntary pension savings
- Reduction of disincentives for the extension of the official working life
- Measures to enhance the transnational mobility of social security rights with an aim to increase labor market mobility

...guided by the principles of sustainability and adequacy of pensions



Interventions are proposed in five areas of the pension system

| 1. Enhancement of the fully funded pillar | 2. Improvements in the pay-as-you- go pillar | Institutional protection of reforms | 4. Transnational portability of pension rights | 5. Compatibility with an extended working life |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Complementary to the mandatory, pay-as-you-go pillar: Seamless implementation of a new auxiliary pension reform Enhancement of occupational insurance Enhancement of private insurance | Reduction of the amount of mandatory contributions Adjustment of retirement age thresholds over time Reduction of the minimum working years required for the pay-as-you-go part of the main | Establishment of a national, cross- party Expert Committee to monitor trends in the pension system and evaluate the relevant measures Long-term national pension strategy | The goal is to sign new transnational agreements and improve upon existing ones Reduction of the bureaucratic burden of implementing portability agreements Facilitation of multi-employer | Flexibility regarding employment of retirees Application of the golden rule for determining fair and sufficient replacement rates Set restrictions on early retirement exemptions |

occupational

funds and the

PEPP

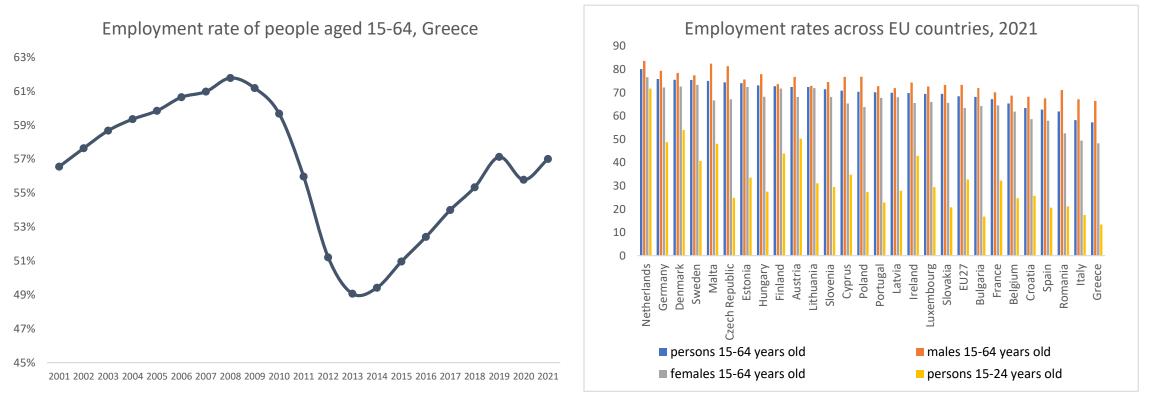
 Promotion of financial literacy pension

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Following a strong recovery, Greece's employment rate is now at the same level it was two decades ago...



Source: ELSTAT, Labour force surveys in the second quarter of each year

Source: EUROSTAT.

Greece has the lowest employment rates in the EU, especially among women and young people.



The age distribution of employed persons is shifting to the right

Employed women Employed men % % 15-19 20-24 25-29 30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 55-59 60-64 65-69 70-74 75-79 80+ 15-19 20-24 25-29 30-34 35-39 40-44 45-49 50-54 55-59 60-64 65-69 70-74 75-79 80+ _____2001 _____2020 _____2001 _____2020

Age distribution of employed Greek nationals



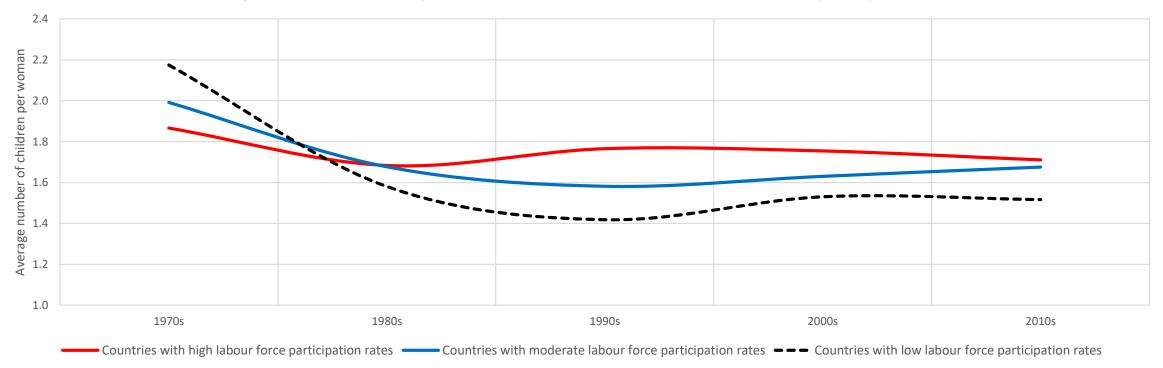
Impact of ageing on the labor market

| Impact | Determinants of impact/mechanisms |
|--|---|
| Reduction of the number of employed persons* | Participation rates of individual age groups |
| Increase in the labor cost of businesses | Wage link with prior experience (+), effects of ageing on productivity (-), effects of ageing on employee mobility |
| Decreased mobility across jobs and geographical areas | Remuneration systems that link remuneration with prior experience in the same company, successive insurance systems |
| Reduction in productivity | Older people are less inclined to innovate, increased health problems among older people |
| Indirect impact due to the need to increase contributions for the social security system | Social security contributions have a negative effect on both labor demand in the formal labor market and labor supply |

*Assuming that in the medium term the labor force participation rates and the unemployment rates will remain at current levels, while after 2050 the number of employed persons will decrease even if these rates increase to the levels currently observed in the Nordic countries.



Fertility is now higher in countries with high female labor market participation rates



Average number of children per woman in countries with different labor force participation rates

Source: OECD

...therefore, it is nowadays possible for women to work and to have a family



Labor market - Policies

Three goals

- Higher labor force participation rate
- Higher employment rate
- Higher productivity

Indicative measures

- Subsidize the labor cost of employees who are covering for people on leave
- Provide incentives for research, innovation, and investment in order to increase business productivity and extroversion
- Provide financial incentives for training and lifelong learning programs
- Reduce the cost of childcare and the cost of raising a child
 - Establish incentives for the creation, operation, and management of quality childcare centers
 - Subsidize the cost of raising children for working parents
 - Improve the quality of childcare provided by public and private centers
 - Facilitate teleworking; this will lead to a reduction in commuting costs

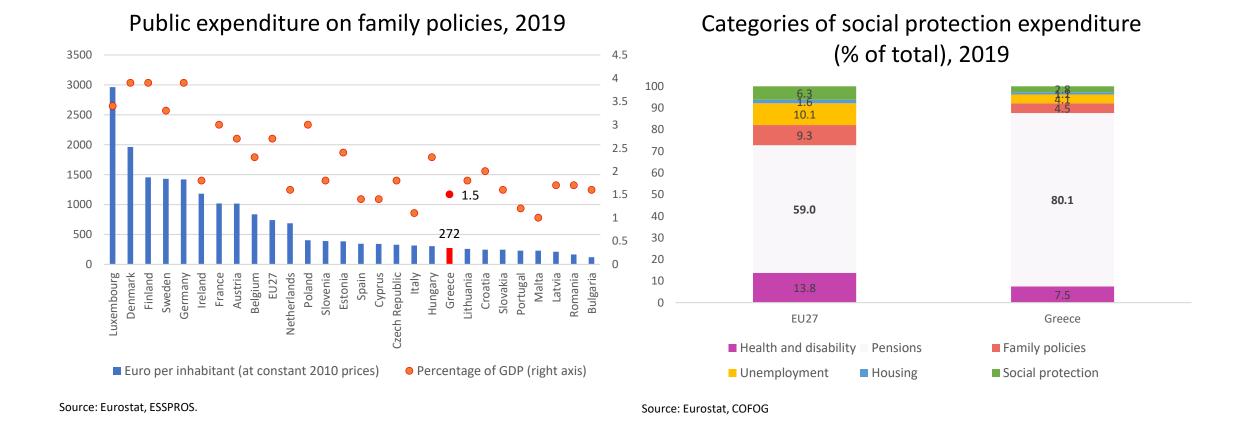


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Expenditure on family policies is relatively low in Greece

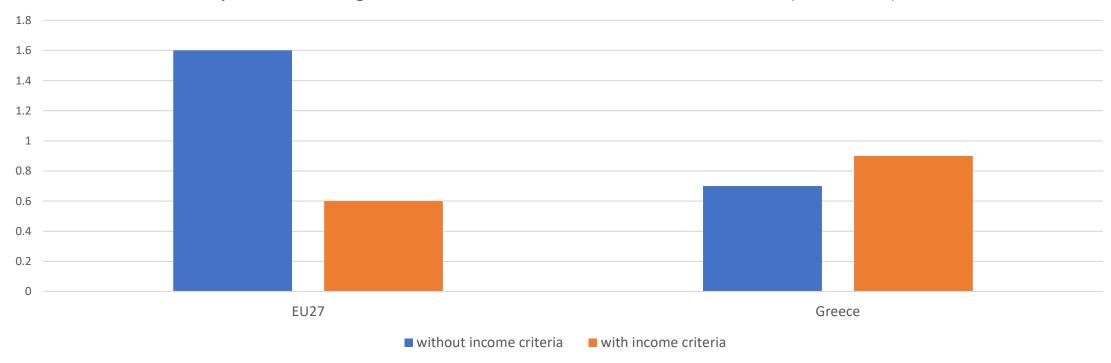


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Public spending on housing policies and benefits is particularly low.



In contrast with the EU average, family benefits in Greece are (mainly) granted based on income criteria



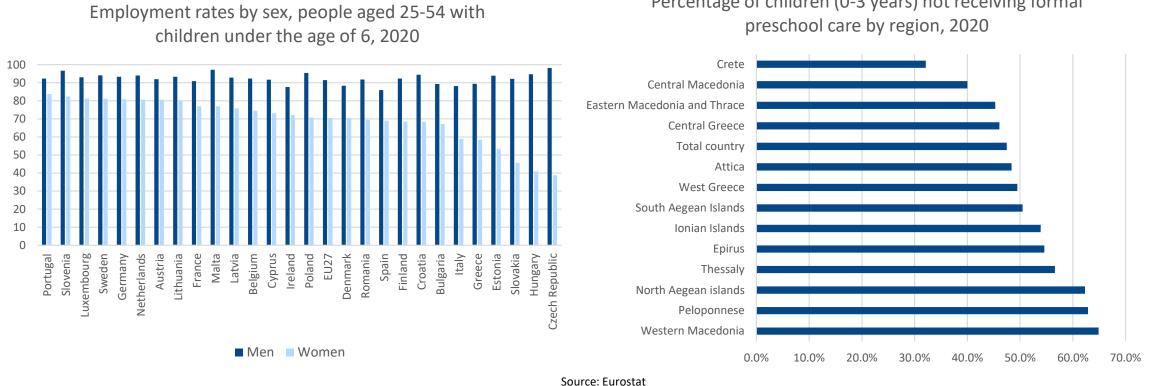
Family allowances granted based on/without income criteria (% of GDP), 2019

Source: Eurostat, ESSPROS.

Per capita spending on in-kind benefits is much lower than for the EU average, while in-cash benefits spending is lower for regular installments (e.g., child benefit) and higher for lump-sum benefits (e.g., childbirth allowance).



Women with young children have a lower labor market participation rate in Greece compared to other EU countries

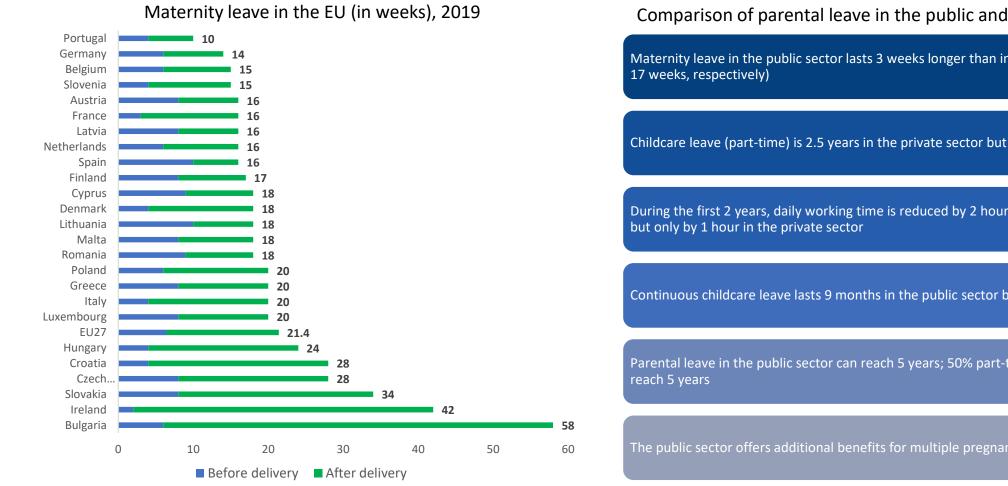


Percentage of children (0-3 years) not receiving formal

...while about half of children under the age of 3 are not in kindergarten - with large variations by region.



Parental leave is relatively generous but there are important differences between the public and the private sector



Comparison of parental leave in the public and the private sector

Maternity leave in the public sector lasts 3 weeks longer than in the private sector (20 and

Childcare leave (part-time) is 2.5 years in the private sector but 3.5 years in the public sector

During the first 2 years, daily working time is reduced by 2 hours/day in the public sector,

Continuous childcare leave lasts 9 months in the public sector but only 4 in the private sector

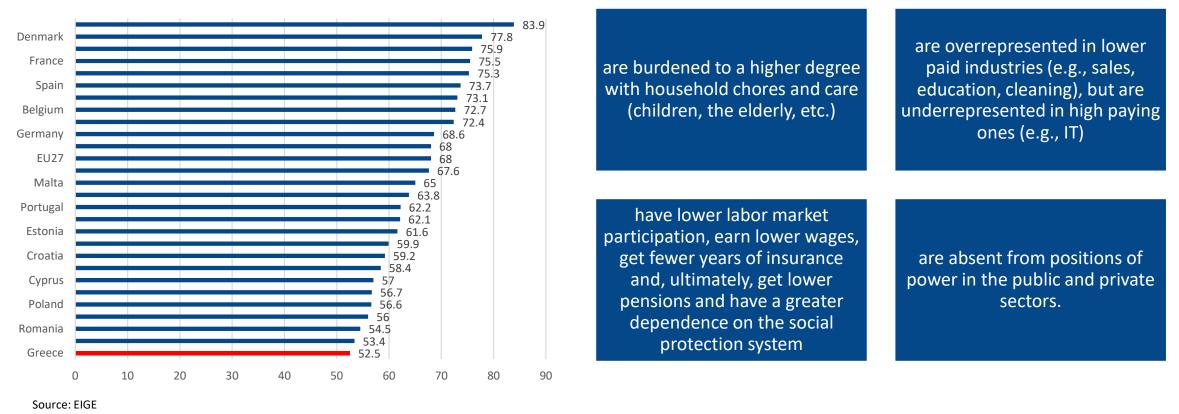
Parental leave in the public sector can reach 5 years; 50% part-time (unpaid) work can also

The public sector offers additional benefits for multiple pregnancies, multiple children etc.

Source: European Parliamentary Research Service



Greece is ranked last in the EU's Gender Equality Index



Women in Greece (according to statistical data):

Gender Equality Index (score out of 100), 2021

By most indicators, inequality is much higher in Greece than for the EU average.



Family policy recommendations (1/2)

Alignment of parental leave rules and rights

- Alignment of parental leave frameworks, starting with maternity leave and childcare leave that have the greatest disparities in the treatment of workers (e.g., between the private and public sectors).
- Introduction of simple, transparent, and fair rules (duration, income replacement, etc.)

Introduction of non-transferable paternity leave with a high percentage of income replacement

• It can help with (a) not excluding mothers from the labor market, (b) increasing men's participation in child-rearing activities and household responsibilities

Relieve employers from covering part of the wage cost during employee parental leave

Redesign and enhancement of preschool education and care

- Increase kindergarten hours to match standard working hours in the private and public sector (short term)
- Align eligibility criteria (short term)
- Ensure that there are enough facilities for all children (medium term)



Family policy recommendations (2/2)

Enhance educational actions and offer incentives for a good work-family balance

• Expand the use of flexible working arrangements in the private sector, offer breastfeeding support, provide incentives for early childhood care structures in the workplace, offer training programs to support new parents, etc.

Redesign the social benefits system in order to boost fertility at younger ages, factoring in changes in household structure

- Increase the child benefit starting from the first child.
- Enact and implement an effective national housing strategy.

Apply affirmative action policies and quotas to universities and the public sector (including the parliament)

Targeted actions in education and healthcare

• Improve day schools, enhance the quality of school programs (foreign languages, remedial teaching), redesign the school meal program, improve access to health services for all children, offer vocational guidance programs at school for young girls

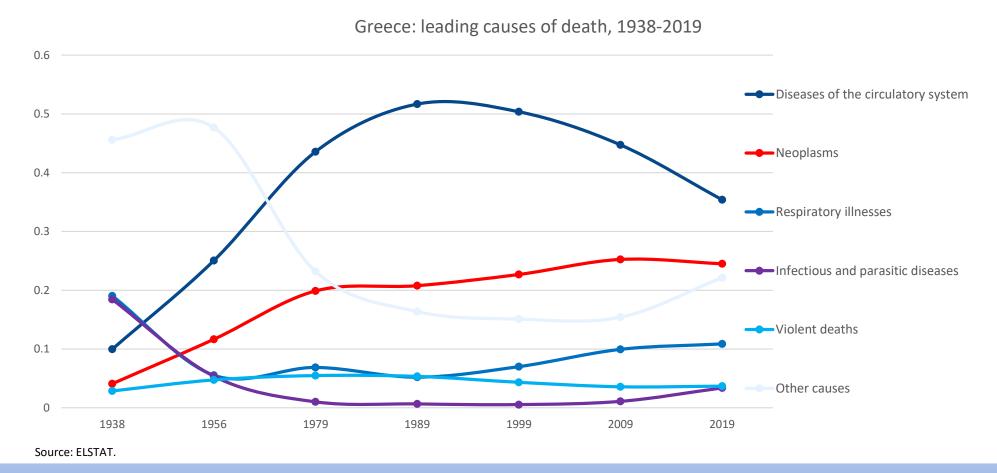


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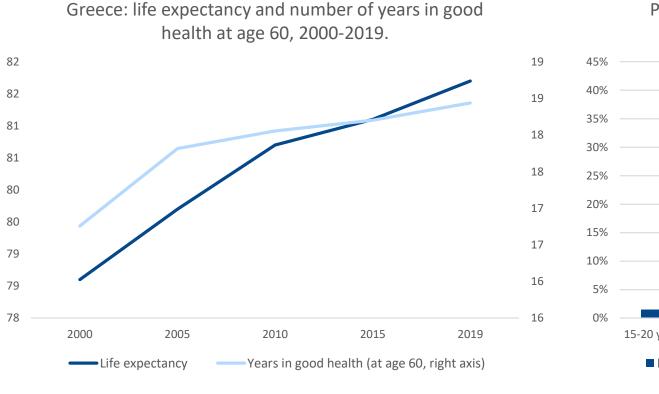
Ageing is accompanied by significant epidemiological changes

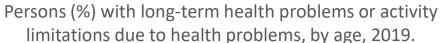


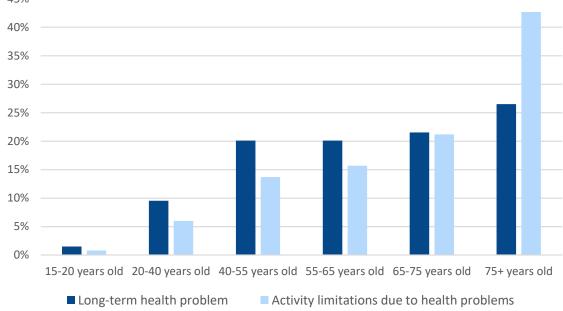
In Greece, the percentage of deaths from diseases of the circulatory system increased from 10% in 1938 to 35% in 2019, while the percentage of deaths from neoplastic diseases increased from 4% to 25% during the same period.



Life expectancy in good health increases at a slower rate than total life expectancy







Source: WHO

Source: ELSTAT, weighted analysis of 2019 National Health Survey microdata.

...this means that people live longer, but the time they live in "poor" health also increases.



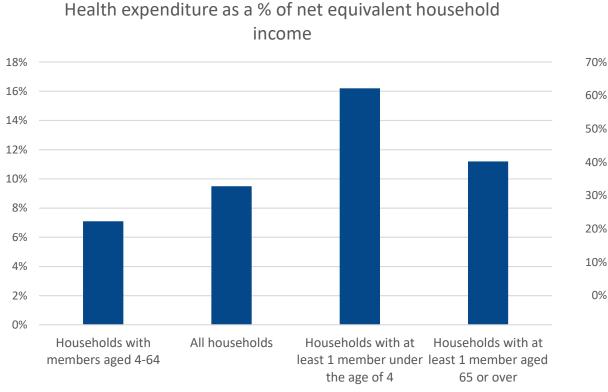
Ageing puts financial pressure on the healthcare system

- The prevalence of chronic and degenerative diseases as well as the increase in life expectancy while staying in "poor" health implies an increase in the demand for health services
- Demand for **long-term care** (as well as related services e.g., physical therapy, rehabilitation care) is also increasing.
- **Prevention** and **primary health care** must play a key role, given the epidemiological changes.

At the same time, public funding of the health system shrinks as the labor force declines.



Households record high health costs and have many unmet needs arising from their age structure



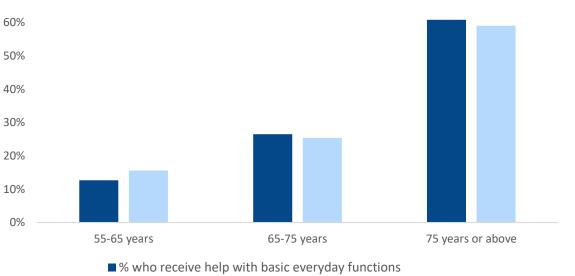
Notes: Calculations are based on the OECD modified equivalence scale, weighted analysis.

Sources: ELSTAT, microdata analysis of the Family Budget Survey (FBS) and the National Health Survey.

In old age, the percentage of unmet needs regarding basic functions (eating, bathing/showering, etc.) reaches 60%.

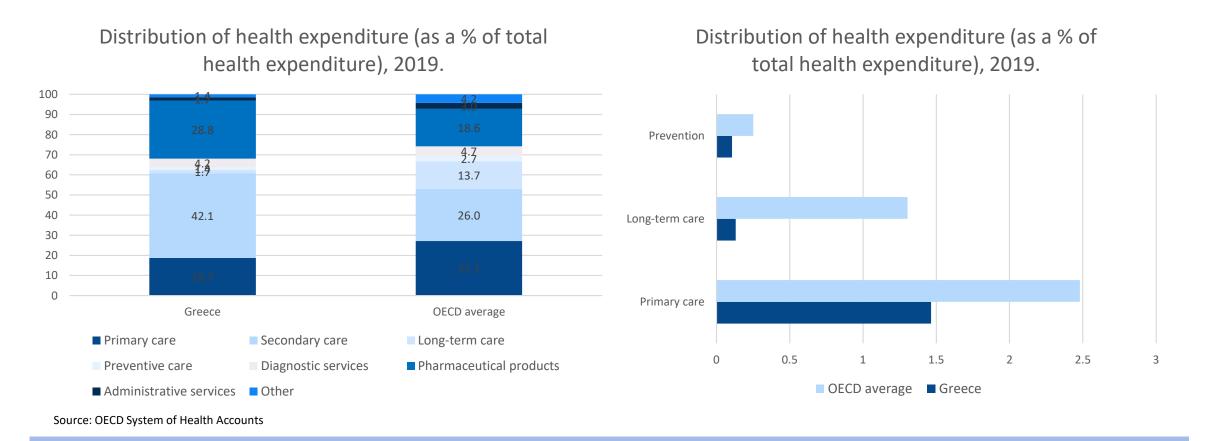


Persons (%) who receive or need help/ more help with basic, everyday functions, 2019.



% who need help or more helo with basic everyday functions

In Greece, spending on primary care, long-term care, and prevention is very low



...while spending on secondary care and pharmaceutical spending constitute a significant proportion of total health expenditure.



Main policy recommendations for the healthcare system

Redistribution of healthcare funding

- Conserve resources through structural reforms (e.g., in procurement systems, address induced demand and overpricing/overconsumption of services or goods) with a focus on:
- Enhance primary healthcare
- Ensure accessibility to primary health care: the first line of defense against modern epidemiological challenges; it also has a lower cost than secondary health care
- Enhance preventive care
- Timely prevention in order to relieve the healthcare system from the advance of chronic diseases (promotion of healthy habits, timely information of the public, timely access to preventive examinations, prevention of falls, vaccinations of the elderly, etc.)
- Enhance long-term care
- Ensure that there enough facilities providing quality care for the growing population that have dementia or other long-term care illnesses
- Support home care (including informal care)

Turn to patient-centered care

Enhance geriatric education of medical and nursing staff

Supportive environments and services for the elderly

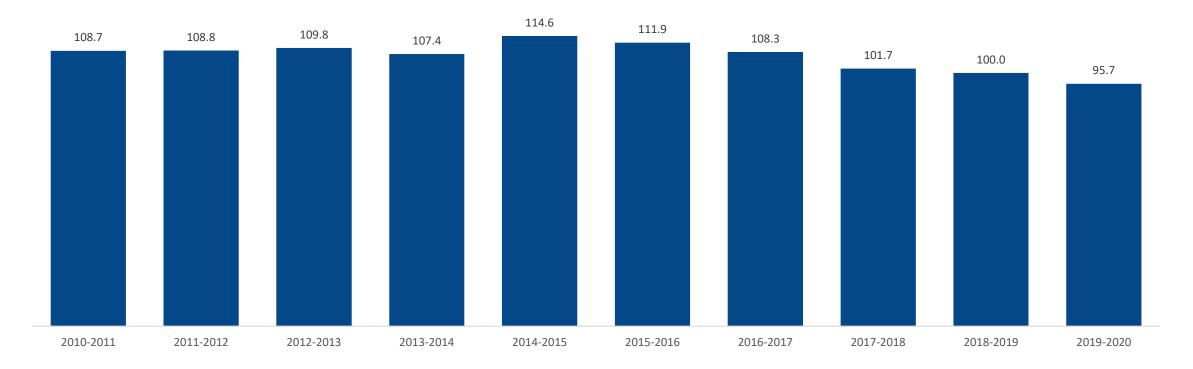


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The decrease in births has already affected the number of students in elementary school

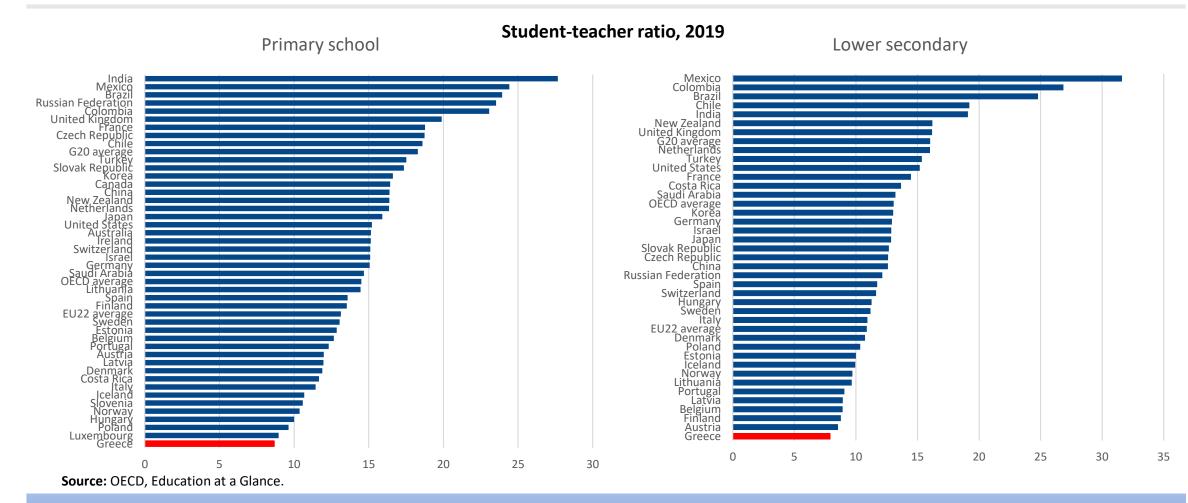


First grade students, in thousands

The number of children who went to elementary school in 2019-2020 (95.7 thousand) was 16.5% lower than in 2014-2015 (114.6 thousand).



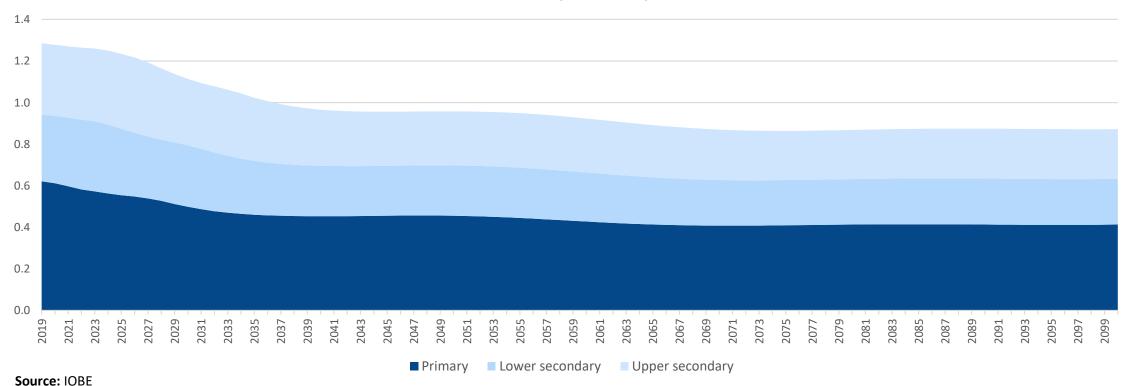
Greece already has the lowest number of students per teacher in the group of countries monitored by the OECD...



...apart from senior high school, where Greece occupies the 6th lowest position



The total number of primary and secondary school students is projected to (significantly) decrease by 2070 and to remain stable thereafter

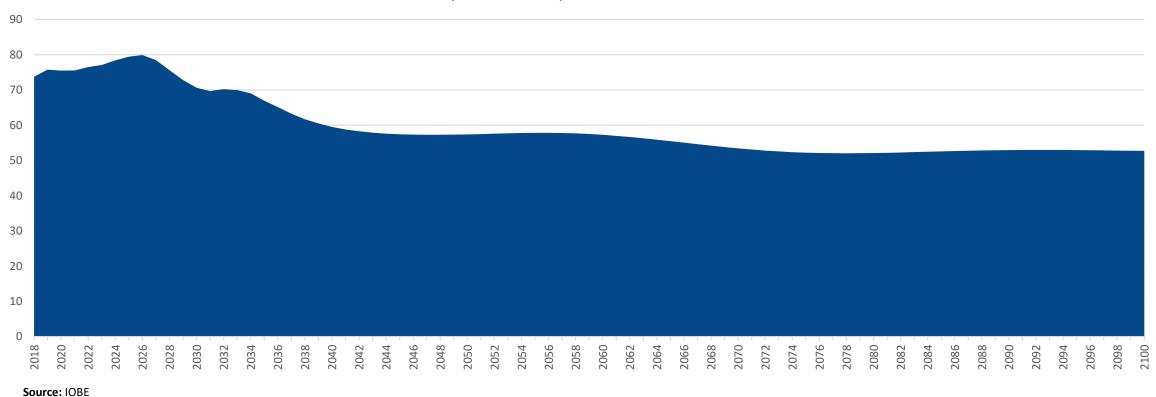


Number of students (in millions), 2019-2100

A 32.1% reduction (413 thousand fewer students) is projected by 2100. Most of the reduction (77.3% of the reduction or 320 thousand students) is projected to take place by 2040.



Following an initial increase until 2026, demand for higher education is expected to decline significantly over the next two decades.

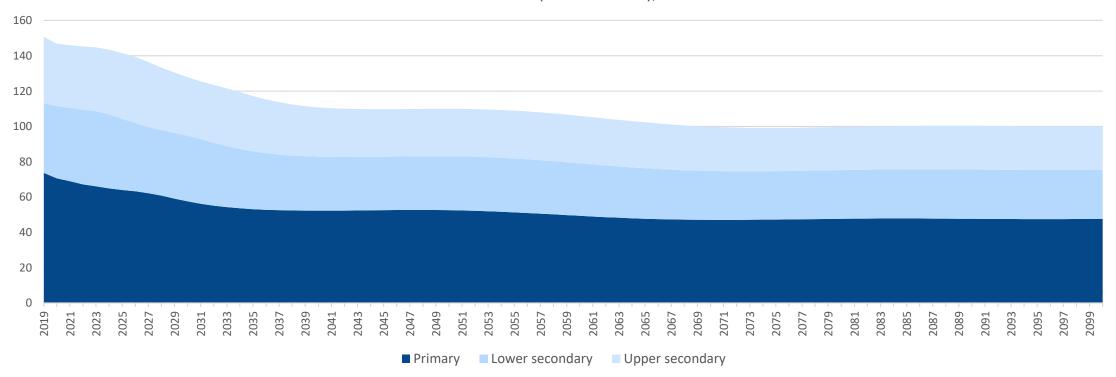


First-year university students, in thousands

High school graduates seeking admission to Higher Education are projected to fall to 52.7 thousand in 2100, down from 73.8 thousand in 2019 (30.4% decline)



Adjusting the number of teachers in order to maintain the current student-teacher ratios leads to a 33.6% reduction by 2100 (-50.6 thousand)



Number of teachers (in thousands), 2019-2100

Source: IOBE. Note: Assuming student-teacher ratios stay at current levels.

The financial resources that are available and can be used for various educational purposes (e.g., extending school hours, providing remedial education to students with learning disabilities or students who belong to vulnerable social groups) are estimated to be north of €765 million per year.



The shrinkage of school classes due to demographic change creates the need for changes in the education system

Primary and secondary education

- Set a minimum number of students per department, with targeted exceptions based on specific social and/or geographical conditions
- Set a minimum number of students and classes per school, especially in urban and semi-urban areas
- Decentralize system management
- Provide autonomy and flexibility to schools to adapt part of the curriculum school to local conditions
- Restructure public expenditure

Tertiary education

- Redesign of the curricula of pedagogical departments
- Reorientation of university programs in order to attract foreign students
- Adjustment of the number of university students, based on demographic changes

The formation of a long-term national strategy for education is required in order to effectively deal with the upcoming shrinking of the education system; broad participation is essential (local government, social partners, and civil society)

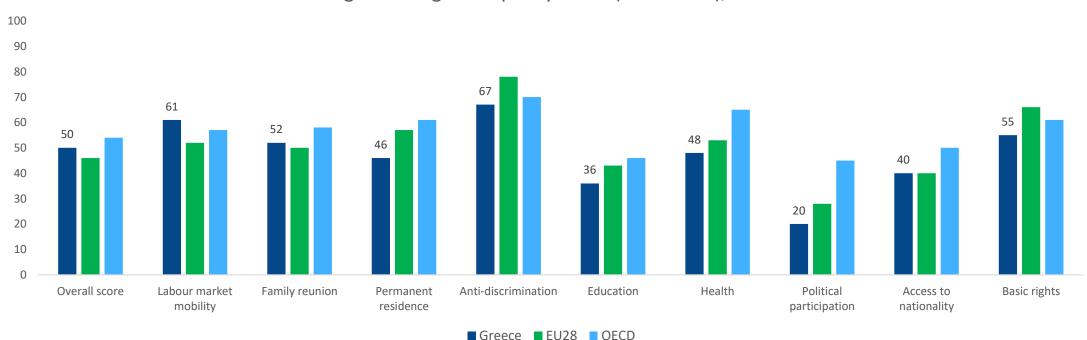


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There is significant room for improvement in Greece's integration of existing migrants and refugees...



Migrant integration policy index (out of 100), 2019

Source: Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)

...in areas such as education, political participation, rules on permanent residence and attribution of citizenship, basic rights, and discrimination. Better integration promotes economic growth, social cohesion, and prosperity.



Greece is not an attractive destination for highly skilled migrants

Other permits Blue cards Luxembourg 1103 Cyprus 1467 Germany 348 Ireland 1236 Latvia 113 Denmark 1055 EU27 82 80 Lithuania Netherlands 822 Poland 55 574 Sweden 54 Czechia 48 Croatia Finland 328 45 Malta Estonia 297 38 Bulgaria 38 Austria Austria 211 30 France Portugal 183 Finland 23 Slovenia 19 EU27 104 18 Estonia 96 Spain Netherlands 11 59 11 Latvia Romania Belgium 10 France 20 Italy 7 Italy 10 Sweden 4 Portugal 2 Poland 8 Slovakia 2 Belgium 4 Spain 2 Greece 1 Greece 1 Hungary 1 0 Czechia 200 400 600 800 0 1000 1200 0 200 400 600 800 1000 1200 1400 1600 Source: Eurostat (migr_resocc, migr_resbc1, demo_pjan). Data processing: IOBE.

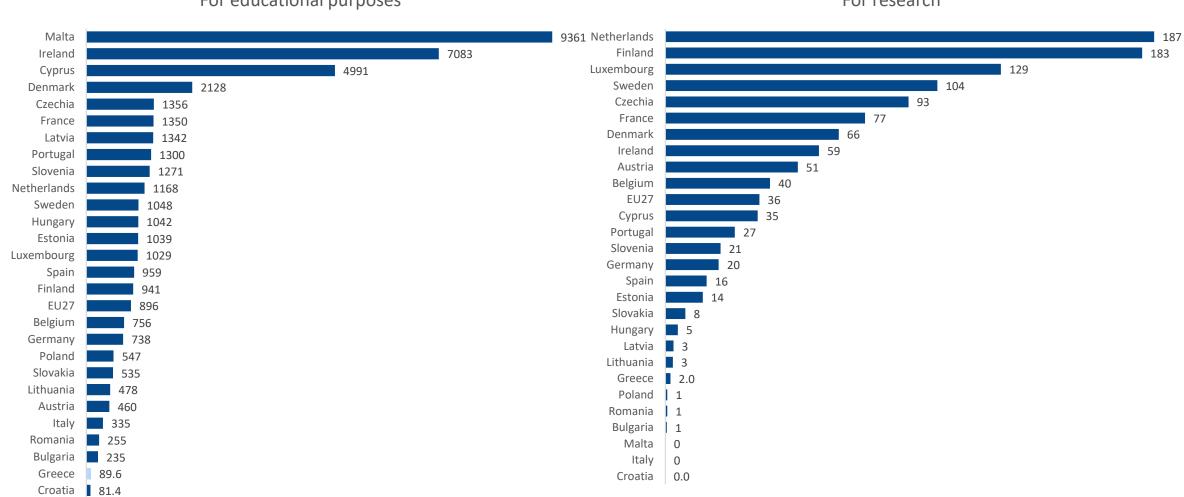
Issuance of new permits to highly skilled workers by EU country, per million inhabitants, 2019

Greece is ranked last out of all EU member states in the number of new licenses granted to highly trained workers in 2019



Greece's attractiveness to university students and researchers from third countries is low

Issuance of new permits by EU country, per million inhabitants, 2019



For educational purposes

For research



Source: Eurostat (migr_resfirst, demo_pjan). Data processing: IOBE.

Proposed immigration policies (1)

Better integration of immigrants

- Acceleration of the necessary procedures for obtaining legalization documents
- Simplification of the procedure for granting an indefinite-term resident permit
- Acceleration of family reunification procedures
- Simplification of the naturalization process for new immigrants
- Better access to public services (such as health and education), especially for children of immigrants
- Protection against discrimination at work, in education, in public services, and in public spaces

Interception of migratory outflows and repatriation of Greeks abroad

- Improve employment prospects in Greece
- Examine how effective financial incentives are for the repatriation of Greeks and act accordingly
- Inform Greeks abroad about specialties that have shortages in Greece



Proposed immigration policies (2)

Make the country more attractive to highskilled immigrants

- Attract high-skilled workers through the blue card program in Greece
- Examine the possibility of introducing a point-based immigration system
- Facilitate both the starting and the sustainable operation of businesses by foreign entrepreneurs
- Further simplify foreign degree equivalency procedures and reduce application processing time

Make higher education more extroverted in order to attract more foreigners

- High-quality university programs can attract international students, researchers, and professors
- Offer more study programs in English
- Adequate funding, external evaluation, inter-university collaboration, and collaboration with businesses, organizations, and other non-educational bodies
- Recognize degrees obtained from private institutions in combination with an assessment of the quality of their studies by an independent Greek educational authority
- Simplification of the bureaucratic procedures to which foreign students are subject



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The macroeconomic effects of demographic changes and policies are based on Eurostat's projection scenarios

Baseline scenario

- Implementation of family policies and policies that will ensure moderate immigration inflows
- Corresponds to the population projections of Eurostat, which result from the baseline assumptions for fertility and migration in Greece

Pessimistic scenario

- No measures are taken to address demographic change
- Based on Eurostat population projections, under low fertility and low migration assumptions

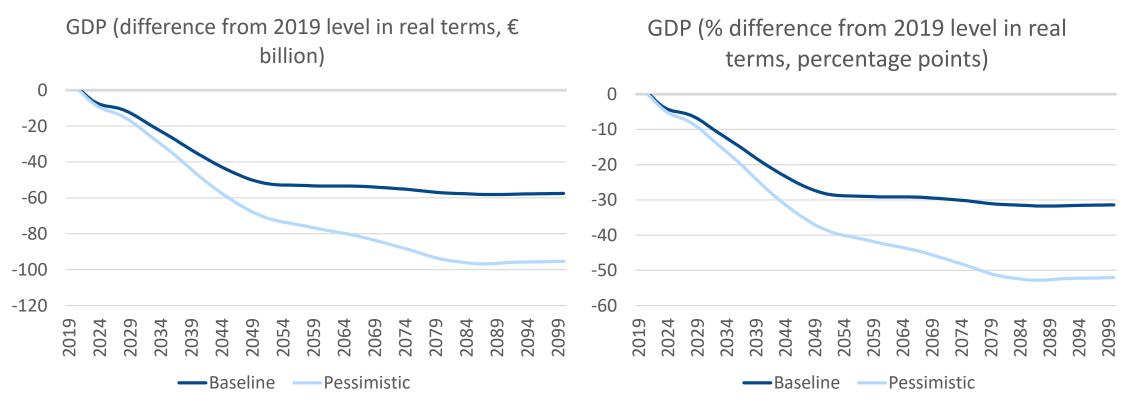
Sensitivity analysis

- Higher/lower fertility rates
- Higher/lower migration inflows

The effects on economic variables are calculated through macroeconomic simulations of a dynamic stochastic general equilibrium model.



In the baseline scenario real GDP will decline by €58 billion by 2100, or 31% compared to 2019

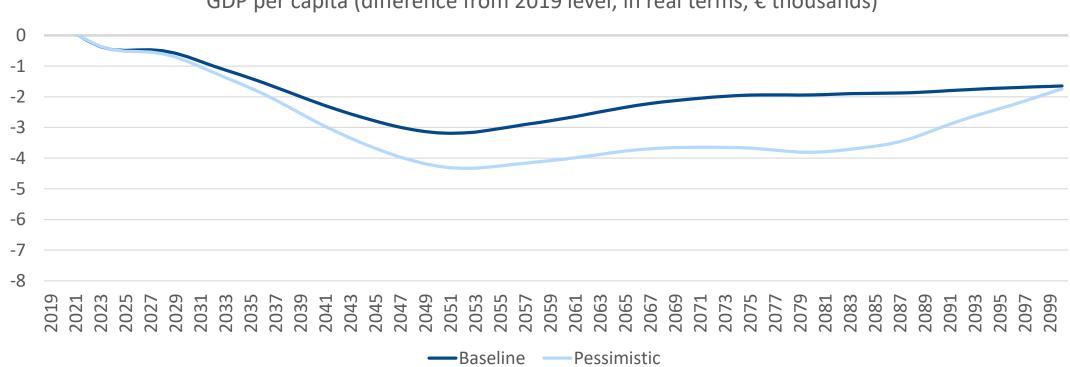


Assumptions: Pension expenditure per elderly remains constant in real terms, care expenditure per elderly increases in real terms at an annual rate of 0.5%, additional public spending on care and pensions is financed by an increase in income taxation, productivity declines with an increase of the percentage of the elderly in the population

In the pessimistic scenario, population will decline sharply leading to an annual GDP loss of €95 billion by 2100, or 52% compared to 2019



In the baseline scenario, GDP per capita will decline by more than €2,000 per year for most of the period

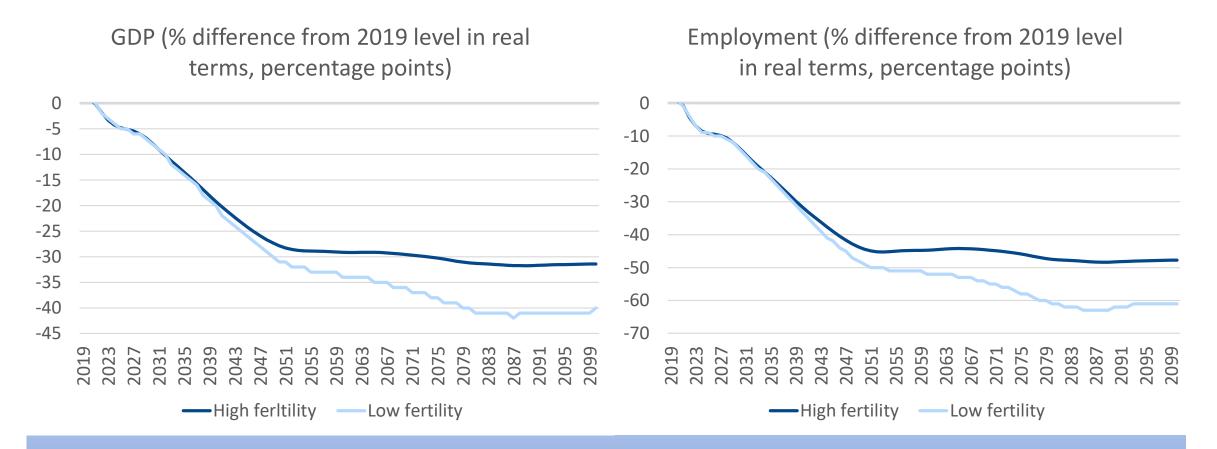


GDP per capita (difference from 2019 level, in real terms, € thousands)

In the pessimistic scenario, GDP per capita will decline by up to €4,000 per year for most of the period



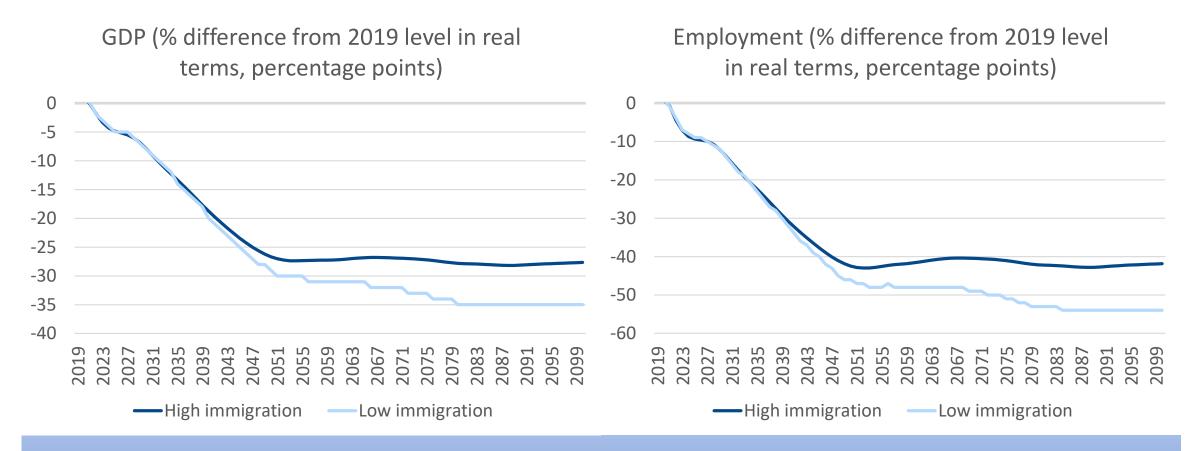
With low fertility, real annual GDP and employment will be 40% and 61% lower, respectively, in 2100 compared to 2019



Fertility-enhancing policies can significantly limit the losses – 31% reduction in GDP and 48% reduction in employment in the high-fertility scenario.



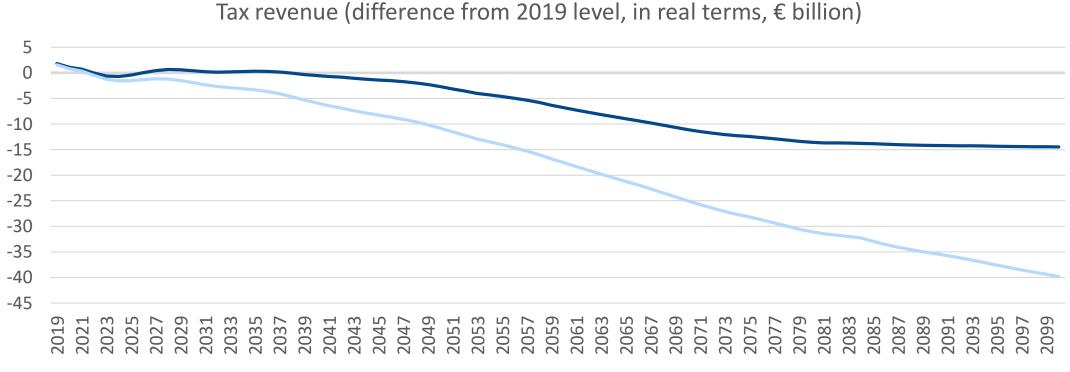
With low immigration, real annual GDP and employment will be 35% and 54% lower, respectively, by 2100, relative to 2019



Implementing more effective immigration policies can decrease annual GDP losses by 7 percentage points (pp) and employment losses by 12 pp. at the end of the forecast period (2100).



Government revenue will be reduced by €14 billion by 2100, or 19% compared to 2019, even in the baseline scenario with optimistic assumptions



-Baseline -Pessimistic

Assumptions: Fixed corporate and consumption tax rates, fixed property taxes as a percentage of GDP, personal income tax increases to cover additional spending on care and pensions and keep the budget balanced.

In the pessimistic scenario, government revenue will decline by €40 billion until 2100, or 52% compared to 2019



- Introduction
- Demographic changes and projections
- Main impacts and challenges
- Conclusions

Conclusions

The population of Greece is declining

- From 2011-2021 the country's population declined by 441 thousands (-4,0%)
- Births started declining in 1980
- The fertility rate has fallen below 1.5 since the late 1980s, down from 2.1-2.5 in the 1960s and 1970s

The decline and ageing of the country's population is projected to continue in the coming decades

- The population is projected to decline to 8.1 million by 2100 in the baseline scenario
- A 2.5 million people or 24% decline of the population compared to 2021
- The old-age dependency ratio is projected to surpass 0.6 points after 2050, up from 0.35 points in 2020 and 0.29 points in 2010



Conclusions

Demographic changes can have a serious impact on society and the economy

- Risk to the sustainability and adequacy of pensions
- Smaller workforce and lower productivity
- Deterioration of average health and increase in demand for health services and long-term care
- Significant reduction in the student population and in the quality of education

The demographic issue significantly affects the economic development of the country

- In the baseline scenario, GDP will decrease by €58 billion (or 31%) by 2100 compared to 2019, employment will decrease by 2.1 million people (or 48%), fiscal revenue by €14 billion (or 19%) and GDP per capita by approximately €1,740 (or 10%), in constant 2019 prices.
- Fertility policies and migration policies are critical, and could limit GDP losses in 2100 by up to 10 or 7 percentage points, respectively

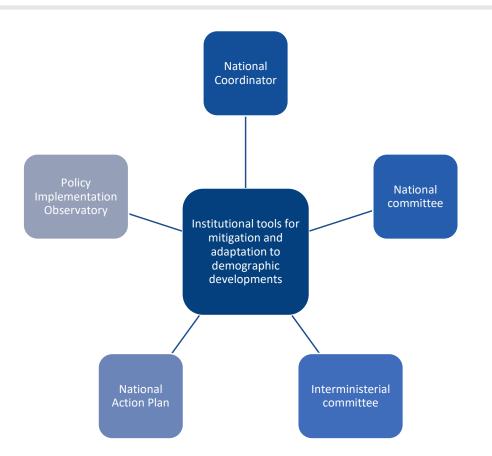
Concerted effort is needed to delineate an appropriate strategy to adapt to demographic developments and to mitigate the problems caused by demographic changes



Policy recommendations – Creating appropriate institutions

The creation of institutional tools is proposed with the aim of delineating, implementing, and evaluating population policies

- Demographic change is a multidimensional problem
- Coordination of services from many social sectors is required
- It is important that all stakeholders participate



The implementation of strategies in Greece often stumbles into institutional inadequacy, which leads to a lack of coordination, targeting, implementation, evaluation, and improvement of the relevant policies. The creation of the appropriate institutional tools is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of the proposed policies.



Suggested institutions and roles for the design, implementation monitoring and assessment of policies on demographics

National Coordinator for Mitigation and Adaptation vis-à-vis demographic trends

- Purpose: Coordination of the effort to create a National Action Plan for the implementation of policies aimed at mitigating and adapting to demographic changes
- State service, with an institutional status that will oblige other state services to respond to requests for the provision of data and reports

National Action Plan

- Policy document describing existing and planned policy measures, with associated quantitative and qualitative targets, milestones, funding sources, and timelines
- Five-year cycle, with regular evaluation and revision
- Annual monitoring report

National Committee

- Purpose: Substantial deliberation and communication of the National Action Plan to society
- Meets once a year

Interministerial committee

- Purpose: Support of the National Coordinator in the collection of administrative data and information for the planning and implementation of measures by the relevant ministries
- Meets after convergence by the National Coordinator, in order to plan and monitor the National Action Plan

Policy Implementation Observatory

- Purpose: Analysis and evaluation of data related to the course of implementation of the National Action Plan
- Independent research entity/project





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