

The Greek economy at a glance

Strong growth

- In the last three years, the Greek economy has been expanding at an average annual rate of 4%, which is one of the highest rates in the Eurozone.
- Despite the international economic turmoil, growth is expected to remain high.
- In its spring forecasts, the European Commission estimates that Greece's growth rate will reach 3.4% in 2008 as opposed to the 1.7% growth rate expected for the eurozone, i.e. it will be double the eurozone rate. It also forecasts that in 2009 it will remain high at 3.3% as opposed to 1.5% in the eurozone.
- Growth is now mainly driven by private investment and exports rather than an increase in public spending, as was the case in the past.

Rapid deficit reduction

- The public deficit was reduced from 7.4% of GDP in 2004 to below 3% in 2006 and 2007.
- The deficit is expected to be further reduced to 1.6% of GDP in 2008.
- A balanced budget is expected to be achieved in 2010.

Job creation and falling unemployment

- Unemployment fell from 11% in February 2004 to 9% in February 2007 and to 8% in February 2008.
- In 2008 and 2009, unemployment is expected to fall below 7.5%. This is also projected by the European Commission.

Increasing investment

- In 2007, total investment in Greece went up to 25.7 % of GDP, the 3rd highest rate among eurozone countries.
- In 2006, Foreign Direct Investment reached €4.3bn (2% of GDP), nine times higher than 2005.
- High private and public investment inflows reinforce the production and export potential of the country.

Rising exports

- Exports of goods went up by 22.8% in constant terms in the period 2005-2007.

The progress of the Greek economy in key numbers

	2005	2006	2007	2008
General Government Deficit (% of GDP)	5.1%	2.6%	2.8%	1.6%
General Government Debt (% of GDP)	98%	95.3%	94.5%	91%
Real GDP Growth Rate in Greece	3.8%	4.2%	4.0%	3.6%
Unemployment Rate	9.5%	8.6%	8.0%	7.5%

Greece as a gateway to Southeast Europe

Business & Banking Hub

- More than 3,600 Greek firms and more than 3,000 branches of Greek banks operate in Southeast European countries and have invested over €15bn.

Energy Hub

- According to the agreement signed by Russia, Bulgaria and Greece in March 2007, a Trans-Balkan pipeline will run from the Bulgarian Black sea port of Burgas to the north Greek port of Alexandroupolis, strategically placing Greece on the East-West energy corridor.

Maritime and Shipping Hub

- Greece owns the largest fleet in Europe and the third largest in the world.