

Megalopoli, Greece

Photo by Arxitektonas

GENERAL INFORMATION

Country: Greece

Region Name: Megalopoli – Peloponnese

Region NUTS2 code: EL65 – Peloponnese

Region NUTS3 code: EL651 – Argolis, Arcadia

Main urban centres in the region:

Kalamáta - 69.849

Trípoli - 47.254

Kórinthos - 38.132

Sparti - 35.259

Árgos - 22.209



**NUTS: Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics*

NOTICE ON COVID-19

The data contained within this regional profile was primarily gathered prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is recognised that the pandemic has had an adverse impact on energy demand within the region. Although the consequences and implications are significant, they remain emergent and dynamic. An update to this document should be considered, once these consequences and implications are clearer and more quantifiable.

Overview

The Peloponnese region is situated in southern part of mainland Greece, covering most of the Peloponnese peninsula. The region has an overall population of 577.903 and is divided into five prefectures (Arcadia, Argolis, Corinthia, Laconia and Messenia), which are further subdivided into 26 municipalities. The municipality of Megalopoli with a population of 10.687 hosts the lignite mines and power plant since the 1970's. In addition, its neighbouring municipalities of Tripoli, Gortynia, Oichalia,

Kalamata and Sparta are also affected by the low-carbon transformation in Greece and the European Union, as the majority of the miners and power plant workers live in Megalopoli and those surrounding municipalities.

The energy transformation in Megalopoli began in 2011, with the first two plant units Megalopoli one and two being withdrawn in 2014. The withdrawal of the remaining two lignite plant units, Megalopoli three and four is planned by 2022 and 2023 respectively.¹ Megalopoli is one of the two regions in energy transformation in Greece, with the second being Western Macedonia.

¹ PPC, 2019

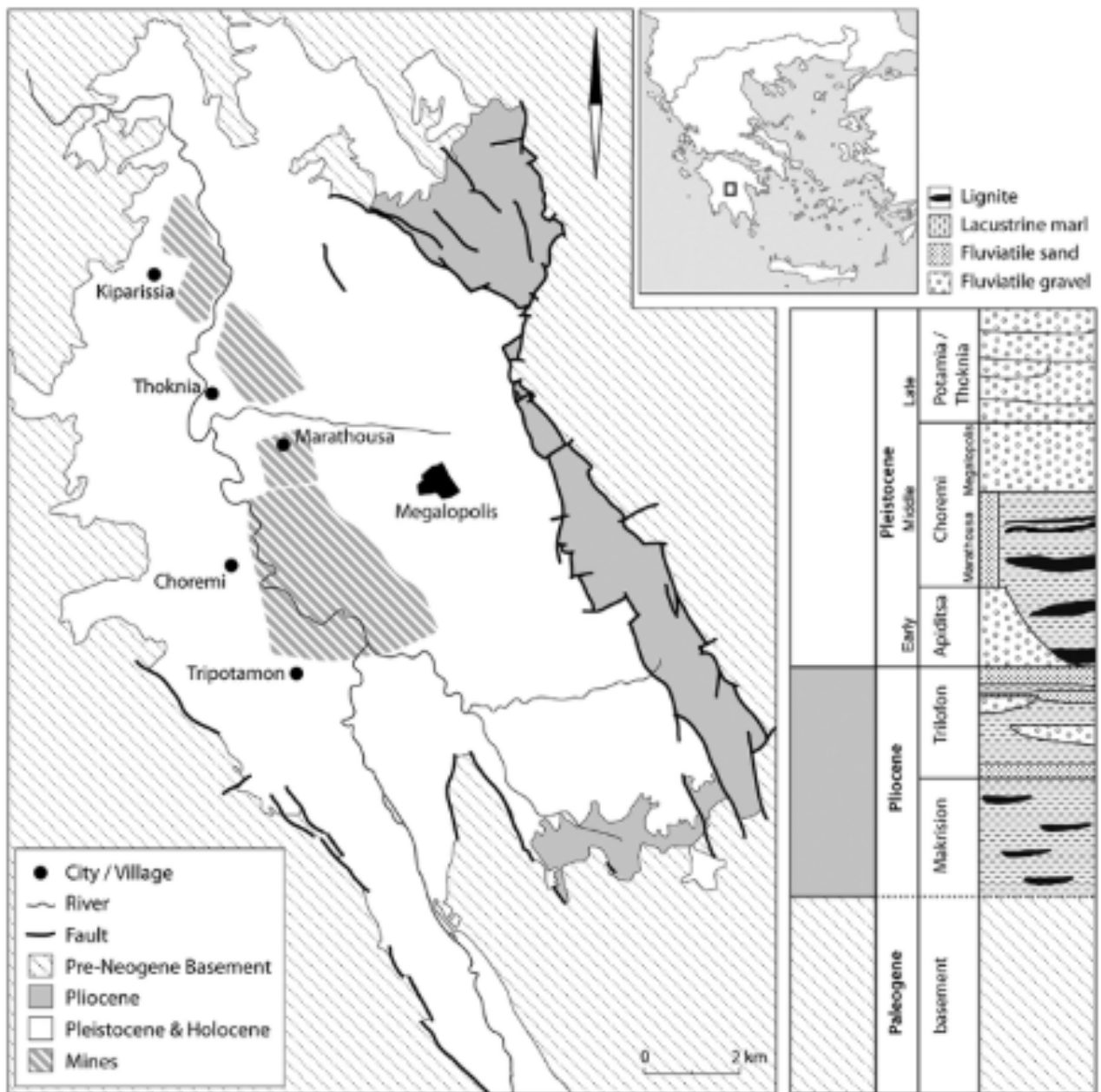


Figure 1. Geology of the Megalopoli basin

Source: Thompson et al (2018), In search of Pleistocene remains at the Gates of Europe: Directed surface survey of the Megalopoli Basin (Greece)

Regional socio-economic profile

Regional socio-economic profile				
	Argolis, Arcadia (NUTS 3) <i>Data for prefecture of Arcadia, unless otherwise stated</i>	Peloponnese (NUTS 2)	National Average (NUTS 0)	Date / Source <i>[Source: Eurostat unless otherwise stated]</i>
Population [persons]	82.436 ²	576.749	10.741.165	Reference Date: 2018 Code: demo_r_d2jan
Population density [persons/km2]	27,4 persons/km2 (Argolis, Arcadia)	37,3 persons/km2	82,2 persons/km2	Reference Date: 2017 Code: demo_r_d3dens
Employment [No. persons employed]	73.110	201.900 Employees	3.751.100 Employees	Reference Date: 2018Q4 Code: namq_10_a10_e
Employment rate [% share of population aged 20-64]	35%	65,0%	59,5%	Reference Date: 2018 Code: lfst_r_lfe2emprt
Unemployment rate [% share of labour force aged 15-74]	20%	14,4%	19,3%	Reference Date: 2018 Code: lfst_r_lfu3rt
GDP per person [€]	€16.983 ³	€14.100	€16.800	Reference Date: 2017 Code: nama_10r_2gdp
Educational attainment [% share of population aged 15-64]	Argolis, Arcadia (NUTS 3)	Peloponnese (NUTS 2)	National Average (NUTS 0)	Date / Source <i>[Source: Eurostat unless otherwise stated]</i>
Less than secondary education	45.05% ⁴	33.5%	26.4%	Reference Date: 2018 Code: edat_lfse_04
Secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education	37.05% ⁵	42.7%	41.8%	Same as above
Tertiary education	17.92% ⁶	23.8%	31.7%	Same as above
Employment by sector: [% of total employment]	Argolis, Arcadia (NUTS 3) Data for prefecture of Arcadia, unless otherwise stated	Peloponnese (NUTS 2)	National Average (NUTS 0)	Date / Source <i>[Source: Eurostat unless otherwise stated]</i>
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	19.008	25.5%	11.6%	Reference Date: 2018 Name: Empl / NACE Code: lfst_r_lfe2en2
Industry	5.117 (including mining and quarrying)	8.7%	11.4%	Same as above
Mining and Quarrying				

² <https://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SP018/>

³ <https://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SEL57/>

⁴ <https://www.inegsee.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/e-book-MELETH-PELOPONNHOSOS.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.inegsee.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/e-book-MELETH-PELOPONNHOSOS.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.inegsee.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/e-book-MELETH-PELOPONNHOSOS.pdf>

Construction	4.386	5%	4%	Same as above
Distributive trades, transport, accommodation and food services	20.470	28.4%	32.4%	Same as above
Information and communication	731		2.6%	Same as above
Financial and insurance activities	731	1%	2.3%	Same as above
Real estate activities	<731		0.1%	Same as above
Professional, scientific, technical, administrative and support services	4.386	4.7%	8%	Same as above
Public administration, defence, education, human health and social work activities	13.159	20%	23.3%	Same as above
Arts, entertainment and recreation; other services	4.386	6%	4.3%	Same as above
GVA per sector [% of total GVA]	Argolis, Arcadia (NUTS 3)	Peloponnese (NUTS 2)	National Average (NUTS 0)	Date / Source [Source: Eurostat unless otherwise stated]
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	na	9.76%	4.2%	Reference Date: 2017 Code: <i>nama_10_a64</i>
Industry	na		14.9%	Same as above
Mining and Quarrying	na	20.68%	0.5%	Same as above
Construction	na	2.9%	2.35%	Same as above
Distributive trades, transport, accommodation and food services	na	19.65%	24.3%	Same as above
Information and communication	na	1.54%	3.5%	Same as above
Financial and insurance activities	na	2.66%	4%	Same as above
Real estate activities	na	17.23%	17%	Same as above
Professional, scientific, technical, administrative and support services	na	2.05%	5.2%	Same as above
Public administration, defence, education, human health and social work activities	na	18.31%	20.3%	Same as above
Arts, entertainment and recreation; other services	na	5.15%	4%	Same as above
Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME) [% of total]	Argolis, Arcadia (NUTS 3)	Peloponnese (NUTS 2)	National Average (NUTS 0)	Date / Source [Source: Eurostat unless otherwise stated]
Share of total employment			83%	2019
Share of total value added			43.3%	2019

The Peloponnese region (NUTS 2) is a largely rural region, in which agriculture has traditionally made up an important share of

the economy. While Kalamata is the biggest city in terms of population, Tripoli is the capital of the region where the regional administration is located. The region is one of the least densely populated in Greece with 37.2 inhabitants per km² (2018). The region experienced a decline in its population post the 2008 financial crisis. Megalopoli and the surrounding area is characterised by a downward population trend, low educational attainment, an ageing population and an increased risk of poverty-and-social-exclusion.

The primary sector has the highest share of GDP compared to all other Greek regions. The primary sector is based on the production of olive oil and olives, citrus fruits, vegetables as well as livestock. In the secondary sector, the regional industrial activity is largely accounted for by crude oil refineries in the area of Korinth, which is not far from Athens, as well as the energy production plants in Megalopoli. The tertiary sector is the largest in terms of employment in the region but has one of the lowest shares in GDP compared to other Greek regions.

Unemployment in Megalopoli and surrounding areas ranges from 12% to 26%, with the municipality of Megalopoli having the highest proportion (approximately one out of four) unemployed people. Many factors contribute to

unemployment. The first is pragmatic, and refers to the absence of viable employment opportunities for persons with low educational attainment, which can often lead risk of poverty and social exclusion⁷. Another explanation is that many persons might not be actually looking for employment and rely on the Hellenic Manpower Employment Organisation's (OAED) unemployment benefit package. In certain cases, this can amount up to over 70% of the minimum wage⁸.

Educational attainment in Megalopolis is very low. In the municipality, the highest educational attainment for roughly 50% of the population is primary school, with roughly only 1 out of 10 persons holding a tertiary-level qualification. The situation is similar to neighbouring municipalities and municipalities in transition. In the neighbouring municipality of Gortynia, the highest educational attainment for over 85% population is also secondary school, with only 5% of its population holding a tertiary-level qualification.

7 Spyridopoulos, K. (2020). The new trajectory of social policy in Greece: An ambulance service or a sustainable pathway to social policy improvement at the local level?. *Social Cohesion and Development*, 15(1), 31-47. doi: <https://doi.org/10.12681/scad.25020>

8 OAED.GR (n.d.). Ανεργία και Παροχές Ασφάλισης Μισθωτών. Available at: <https://www.oaed.gr/aneugia-kai-paroxes-asfalisis-misthwtwn?tab=taktiki-epidotisi-anerghias&tab2=koini-anerghoi&tab3=yposos-epidotisis>

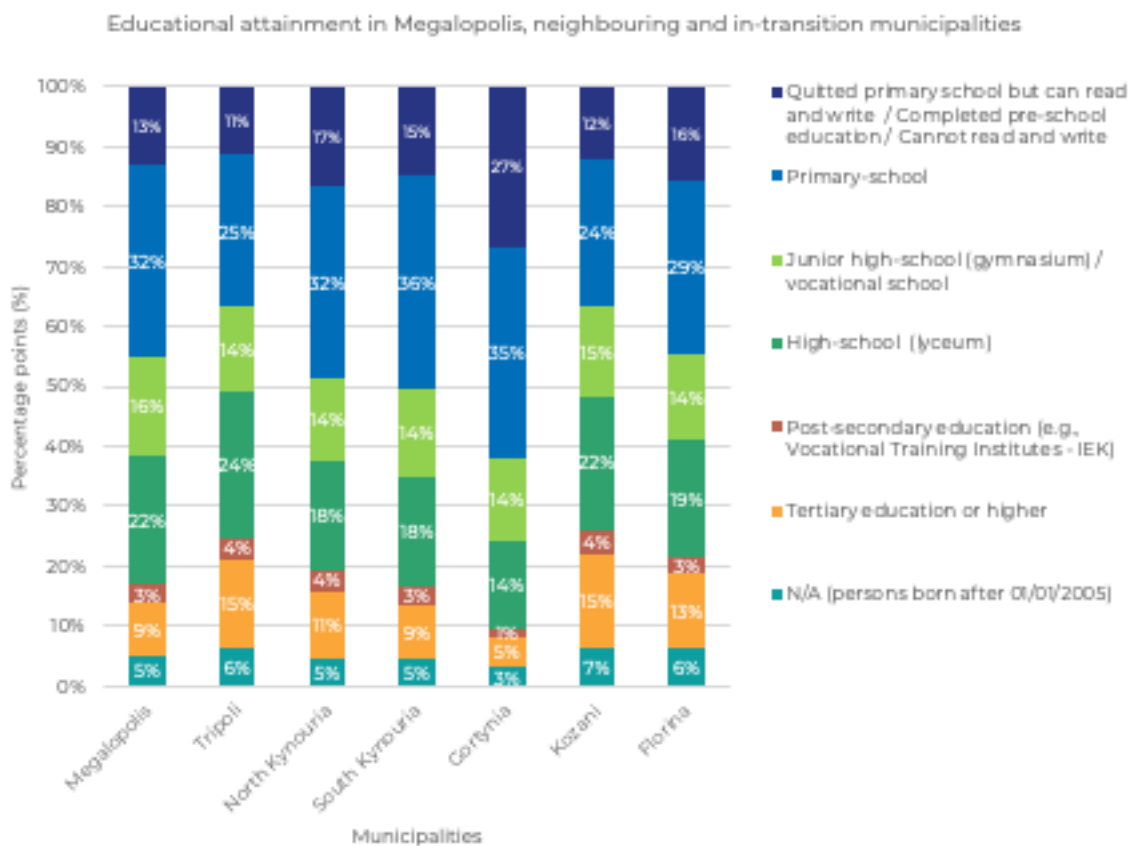


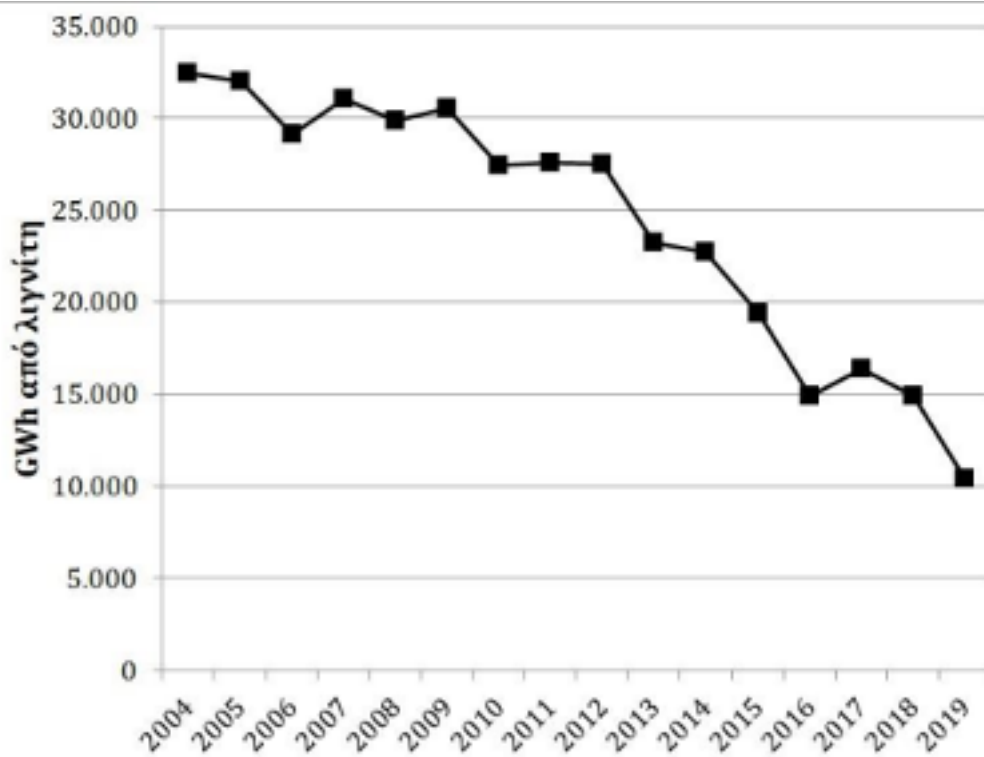
Figure 2. Educational attainment in Megalopoli, neighbouring and under-transition municipalities in 2011

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority. Census data. Reference year: 2011.

Regional coal industry and coal power plant profile			Date
Coal mining			
Type of coal (e.g. hard or lignite)	Lignite		
Type of coal extraction (e.g. surface or deep mining)	Opencast sites		
Number of coal mines	3 (Choremiou, Marathousas and Kyparission)		
Production of coal [Mt annual]	10.4 million tonnes (2010 figure)		TRACER 2019
Main (largest) coal mining enterprises			
Name	Ownership (e.g. public or private)	Number of employees	
PUBLIC POWER CORPORATION (PPC)	Private	18,572 (2014)	PPC website
Subsidiary: Lignitiki Megalopoli	Private	~1,000	PPC website
Coal power plants			
Number of coal power plants		4 units	PPC website
Installed capacity [MW]		550	PPC website
Share of coal in regional power generation mix [%]			
Main (largest) coal power plant operators			
Name	Ownership (e.g. public or private)	Number of employees	
Megalopoli Power Plant		~ 1,000 people	
Regional employment in coal mining and coal power plants			
Employment	Number	Share of total regional employment [%]	
Coal mining (direct employment)	4.900 (Greece)		
Coal power plants (direct employment)	1.600 (Greece)		
Other coal-related activities [e.g. supply chain and services to coal operations]	2.438 (Greece) 767 (Peloponnese)		

Geographical characteristics of coal-related industry

Figure 3. Produced electric energy from lignite in Greece 2004-2019



The wider basin of Megalopoli includes the city, the 3 lignite mines, the power plants and farmland. The basin's length is about 20km, its width is about 1.2 km and it covers an area of less than 250km². The surface of the basin is in an altitude of 340-450 m above sea level. The basin is also rich in water with various rivers and lakes of which the most significant one is the river of Alfeios. As lignite mining is carried out by surface excavation, open-cast mines have occupied large areas of the basin.

Energy production from lignite has been gradually decreasing for many years all around Greece including Megalopoli. June 7-9 in 2020 was the first period of 40 hours that no lignite unit was in use throughout the country.

Socio-economic characteristics of coal-related industry

Lignite mining started in Megalopoli during the 1970s and became its main economic activity in the absence of a developmental model that encouraged economic diversification and protection of the environment⁹. This resulted in the neglect of other economic activities and sequentially, the reliance of the local community on jobs within or closely affiliated with lignite mining. In addition, this led to a consolidation in the collective consciousness that lignite mining is the only viable pathway to individual and community prosperity. This is one factor that explains local resistance to the transition away from coal^{10 11}.

In the prefecture of Arcadia, the lignite sector generates 50% of jobs and 64% of the Gross Value Added in the energy sector in the Peloponnese region¹². In the region of Arcadia, this translates to 1,600 direct jobs, which, taking into account the total lignite-fired value chain, adds up to 3,100 jobs (60% of the jobs in the energy sector in the region). The nearby administrative region of Messenia also has a high proportion of its workers in the sector, at roughly one in five (21%).

Lignitiki-Megalopolis SA (a subsidiary of Public Power Corporation), which operates the lignite power plants in Megalopoli and owns the exploration and exploitation rights for lignite mining, directly employs 970 persons (2020 Q1), with a further 350 jobs in local contractors whose activities are almost exclusively undertaken for Lignitiki-Megalopolis. The company estimates that around 60% of its employees live in Megalopoli, with many of the remainder commuting from towns elsewhere in the region (mostly Tripoli & Kalamata).

Mining has also influenced housing. Due to the large area that the open cast mines occupy, many residents were forced to move to neighbouring settlements or create new ones. Many houses were demolished, and the urban planning of the area gradually changed.

⁹ Tsigkanou. (2018)

¹⁰ Tsigkanou. (2018).

¹¹ Kartsonis (2019).

¹² SDAM (2021).

Common socio-economic factors, trends and challenges affecting these communities

Megalopoli shares some of the typical characteristics of coal regions, amongst others these include a coal-mining identity, a narrow economic base, and vulnerability to direct and indirect job losses when transition away from coal begins¹³.

Some of the main challenges and threats include the following:

- High dependency of local economies on lignite activity
- Low educational attainment of the workforce
- Limited digital infrastructure
- Delignification of power generation
- Limited mobilisation of competent local authorities
- Ineffective cooperation of stakeholders
- Insufficient funding
- Complex licensing process
- Low adaptability of existing workforce
- Outflow of human resources (workforce)

Coal transition strategies, plans and projects

Current status and timeline of coal transition

The area of Megalopoli has entered the post-lignite period in recent years, as the lignite production has been steadily declining for the past 15 years. The energy transformation in Megalopoli began in 2011, with the first two plant units Megalopoli one and two being withdrawn in 2014. The withdrawal of the remaining two lignite plant units, Megalopoli three and four is planned by 2022 and 2023 respectively.

Unit 3 (0.25 GW) is due to be decommissioned in 2022 (licence expires in 2025); this unit also supply heat to the town's district heating systems, for which no alternative solution has been determined (as of 2020 Q1). Unit 4 (0.26 GW) is due to be decommissioned in 2023 (license expires in 2036).

¹³ Stanley, Michael C.; Strongman, John E.; Perks, Rachel Bernice; Nguyen, Helen Ba Thanh; Cunningham, Wendy; Schmillen, Achim Daniel; McCormick, Michael Stephen (2018).

Current strategies and plans for economic diversification / development and decarbonisation

The Greek government, as a response to the challenges faced by the region of Western Macedonia and the municipality of Megalopoli, has created a Just Transition Plan (Masterplan)¹⁴. This Masterplan is the key reference document for the just transition of Western Macedonia and Megalopoli. Drawing on international experience, state-of-art literature¹⁵ and consultation of institutional, social, and economic partners, the Masterplan sets out the vision for the future, backing this with financial and tax incentives, upskilling and reskilling initiatives, financial instruments, and investments from the public and the private sector¹⁶.

The Masterplan is further specialised in three specific Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTps), one for each area undergoing transition (i.e., Western Macedonia, Megalopoli, South and North Aegean Islands and Crete). These TJTps will feed into the preparation of the country's Just Transition Development Programme (JTDP) which will fall under its Partnership Agreement (PA) 2021 - 2027. Until the PA comes into effect, the technical secretariat of the JTP has designed a bridge programme (special transition programme) for the period 2020 – 2023, leveraging funds of the PA 2014-2020, the Green Fund and other financial instruments such as the EU Recovery Fund¹⁷. The special transition programme will help the areas with a package of concrete measures in the short and mid-term period that can help mitigate the impacts of the transition away from coal. These measures, along with those foreseen overall in light of the transition support, build on the World Bank's Road Map and other relevant sources.¹⁸

The Masterplan's vision for the future is to promote sustainable development through leveraging the competitive advantages of each area with the aim of fostering prosperity and the improvement of citizens' lives. To realise this vision, the Masterplan foresees five key growth pillars and several horizontal actions which will help rebuild the developmental pathway of coal regions in Greece.

On top of the Masterplan, the Greek government has launched in 2021 the Green Fund which provides financial resources for projects and actions for the development of sustainable economic activities of low carbon and environmental footprint in the Municipality of Megalopoli. The Green Fund consists of the following pillars:

Pillar 1 – Action plans for sustainable energy and climate

Pillar 2 – Action plans for circular economy

Pillar 3 – Programme for energy communities

Pillar 4 – Pilot programme for circular management of urban liquid waste (Megalopoli not included)

Pillar 5 – Developmet of specialised innovation zone in Western Macedonia (Megalopoli not included)

Pillar 6 – Business park of Megalopoli

At a local level, there has been a recent preliminary agreement for the creation of an industrial park in the Megalopoli area¹⁹ and discussions regarding the creation of an exhibition park²⁰. Furthermore, the municipality has also highlighted interest from private parties for the creation of manufacturing units for Electrical Vehicles (EVs) or their spare parts, optic fibres, as well as the interest from recycling companies in a potential circular economy park²¹. Finally, the municipality has some ideas to diversify its developmental model which might in turn, spur further investments. These include, amongst other ideas, the following:

- rail, road, and cycling infrastructure projects
- the development of livestock, smart-agriculture, and biogas units
- the creation of an elderly care centre and a rural corrective centre

14 ΣΔΑΜ (2020). Επικαιροποιημένο Master Plan Δίκαιης Αναπτυξιακής Μετάβασης των λιγνιτικών περιοχών. Available at: <https://sdam.gr/node/252>

15 In particular, the Regional Government of Western Macedonia sought the assistance of the World Bank to develop a Road Map for a Managed Transition of Coal-Dependent Regions in Western Macedonia. The output of the assistance was 11 standalone reports which are also brought together under a Road Map for a Managed Transition of Coal-Dependent Regions that was used to inform the Master Plan.

16 ALEXANDRA MAVROGONATOU (2021). Greek Regions in Energy Transition – Progress Update in Planning, Implementation and Combining Recourses. Technical Secretariat of the Greek JTDP Steering Committee. PowerPoint Slides.

17 Sdam.gr (n.d.). Ειδικό μεταβατικό πρόγραμμα Δ.Α.Μ. 2020 - 2023. Available at: <https://sdam.gr/node/253>

18 A Road Map for a Managed Transition of Coal-Dependent Regions in Western Macedonia (English). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/103611593562422573/A-Road-Map-for-a-Managed-Transition-of-Coal-Dependent-Regions-in-Western-Macedonia>.

19 Megalopoli.gov.gr (2021). Available at: <https://megalopoli.gov.gr/10982-2/>

20 Συνέντευξη Δημάρχου Μεγαλόπολης στο δελτίο ειδήσεων του BEST TV. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7p-RNYHsiU>

21 ΣΔΑΜ (2021). Ερωτηματολόγιο διαβούλευσης εδαφικού σχεδίου δίκαιης αναπτυξιακής μετάβασης Δήμου Μεγαλόπολης. Φεβρουάριος 2021.

Principal actors in development and implementation of transition strategies and plans

The Government Committee has as its main responsibility the approval and monitoring of the implementation of the Fair Development Transition Plan and consists of:

- The Minister of Environment and Energy, as President
- The Minister of Finance
- The Minister of Development and Investments
- The Minister of Interior
- The Minister of Rural Development and Food
- The Deputy Minister of Development and Investments, responsible for public investments and the NSRFS

A Steering Committee was set up as a Working Group to coordinate the activities required for the preparation and implementation of SDAM. By decision of the Government Committee, Mr. Kostis Moussouroulis was appointed Chairman of the Steering Committee, accompanied by:

1. The Secretary General of Economic Policy
2. The Secretary General of Public Investments and NSRF
3. The Secretary General of Energy and Mineral Raw Materials
4. The Regional Governor of Western Macedonia
5. The Regional Governor of Peloponnese
6. The Chairman of OAED

The CEO of PPC

At local level, the Municipality of Megalopoli in collaboration of other local stakeholders have been active in discussing, collecting ideas and contributing to strategies for the transition and economic diversification of the region.

Role of civil society

A number of actors are interested in the developments regarding the transition of Megalopoli, for instance Cities Network for Sustainable Development, WWF Hellas, University of Peloponnese, Green Tank have produced reports or executed other work in relation to the transitioning.

Principal legislative drivers of transition

The National Energy & Climate Plan (NECP) aims towards a climate-neutral economy by 2050, the Greek government is committed to withdraw all lignite power plants by 2023, with the exception of "Ptolemais V" plant expected to be operational by 2028.

Transition challenges

Nature and scale of transition challenges

One of the pressing issues in the context of the transition away from coal of a mono-industry economy suffering from an ageing population, depopulation and low educational attainment is absorbing the immediate impact on the workforce. Megalopoli would need to prepare for both medium-to-long term growth opportunities as well as short-term social protection measures. In this context, one important dimension is determining post-mining land-use to avoid excessive spending in areas that could be repurposed in a more cost-efficient manner for more optimal use with the tools to do so being available.

In the context of its transition pathway, Megalopoli needs to create favourable conditions to attract inward investments. The current mix of investment incentives is positive but might not be sufficient to address shortcomings of the municipality, such as lack of digital and physical infrastructure, innovation, and an adaptable workforce.

Current or expected transition challenges facing the region [Please tick box as appropriate]	High (priority) importance	Moderate importance	Minimal importance	Not important
Air quality		X		
Environmental degradation of land	X			
Demographic change (e.g. population ageing, outward migration)	X			
Narrow / concentrated industrial structure	X			
Modernisation of industry / re-industrialisation		X		
Employment creation	X			
Reskilling	X			
Transport infrastructure and mobility		X		
Social cohesion		X		
Limited partnerships and consensus		X		
Other challenges (please specify):				
Skills weaknesses [Notable weaknesses or needs in terms of skills specialisation and availability]				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low formal education attainment • Low entrepreneurial spirit in the region • Shortage in digital and ICT skills 				
Infrastructure weaknesses [Notable weaknesses or needs in terms of available regional infrastructure (e.g. transport, connectivity, ICT)]				
-Lack of public transport (other than bus)				
Weakness in other industries and economic activities [Notable non-coal regional industries and/or economic activities suffering from decline]				
While a number of alternative diversification activities are mentioned as opportunities (e.g. tourism) there have been limited or no initiatives to establish and grow those.				

Transition opportunities				
Transition opportunities where the region is already active or where there is interest to develop activities [Please tick box as appropriate]	High (priority) interest	Moderate interest	Minimal interest	Not interest
Reconversion of coal-related sites / locations for renewable / alternate energy				
Biomass	X			
Energy storage				X
Gas				X
Geothermal		X		
Hydro power and pumped hydro-storage		X		
Hydrogen				X
Solar	X			
Wind				X

Other energy				
Reconversion of coal-related sites for new economic and social activities		X		
Repurposing of coal-related industrial infrastructure		X		
Heritage, culture and tourism		X		
Low carbon mobility and transport				
Diversification of coal-related supply chain and service activities		X		
Other opportunities				

Current partnerships, initiatives and investments supporting economic diversification / development and decarbonisation

Megalopoli has a number of inherent strengths and opportunities. The region has a solar potential of 1,700 kWh/m²/year²², which is beneficial for installing photovoltaic parks. PPC in this respect has already made public its plans to install a photovoltaic park of 500 Megawatt in the area²³. At the same time, Megalopoli has a relatively high wind power potential, with average annual wind speeds of 7.5 – 9.0 meters per second and power density 500 – 950 W per square meter²⁴, which can potentially benefit the creation of wind parks. Finally, exploring the potential of other renewable sources such as biomass or hydropower is also worth investigating in Megalopoli and the broader region, with some small-scale projects already in place²⁵. Using renewable sources can be the first step towards helping the municipality to re-invent its identity and follow a greener pathway. For example, using local renewable energy, the municipality can power public and municipal buildings in the context of a broader retrofit and upgrade of its energy efficiency. Investments in the thermal retrofit of buildings, solar, and onshore wind capacity can be low-hanging fruits (i.e., easy wins) and have proven to have great job potential in other countries facing transition away from coal, such as Poland²⁶. Finally, using the same local power, Megalopoli could also possibly make a business case for promoting the use of electric vehicles and/or bicycles and mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) A MaaS network could service the tourism sector, but also intra-municipality and intra-regional mobility (e.g., incoming workers).

Another key-strength of Megalopoli is the climate of the area, which is beneficial for the development of the agri-food sector. In particular, one third of the arable land for cereal, livestock and industrial products as well as the majority of the melon production is located in the broader geographical area of Megalopoli. In addition, the area can produce agricultural products such as olive oil (vanilla Mainalou), organic honey, walnuts, wine (Moschofilero Mantineias) with export potential to European and third countries. To tap this potential, a Bioeconomy Hub 360o pilot project has been put forward. The Bioeconomy Hub 360o aims to help the community re-invent its identity in sustainable, circular and organic agriculture and create added value across the agri-food sector, leveraging the opportunities of Industry 4.0 (I.4.0).

Another axis for development for Megalopoli could be the tourism sector. Megalopoli has a rich natural, cultural and religious heritage. This heritage, along with a renewal of the environment stemming from land restoration, could become an attraction for alternative forms of tourism such as agricultural, sports, walking, hiking and ecotourism. Further, Megalopoli boasts the oldest ancient theatre in Greece. Other important points of historical interest include the ancient city of Lycosura²⁷ and Mount Lykaion, where in ancient times, the Lykaion Games, the precursor of Olympics, were held.

Other current applied for technical assistance support for economic diversification / development and decarbonisation

LAURA: Through the LAURA project, the city will promote environmentally friendly economic activities and a more environmentally friendly lifestyle in general for its citizens. The installation of smart meters and controls in 5 public buildings of the city, will move the municipality forward in its effort towards decarbonization by enabling the public building's energy consumption to transition from a supply-side to a demand-side model.

ECCoBox: ECCoBox will encourage Megalopoli and citizens to energize an Energy Community and participate in the energy transition through the right to self-produce and consume electricity. An Energy Community motivating voluntary participation, engaging citizens, and encouraging public entrepreneurship is the vehicle to a community building sustainable energy transition.

22 IENE (2020). Υφιστάμενη Κατάσταση και Προοπτικές για τις περιοχές σε ενεργειακή μετάβαση στην Ελλάδα. Σελ. 17. Available at: <https://www.iene.gr/articlefiles/final%20report.pdf>

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Czyżak et al. (2020). Green jobs in coal regions. Case study: Belchatów. Instrat Policy Paper 04/2020. Publication available under: www.instrat.pl/belchatow-2020 Study commissioned by: Fundacja ClientEarth Prawnicy dla Ziemi

27 Lycosoura which is said by Pausanias to be the oldest city in the world -

Notable research capabilities and facilities

The University of the Peloponnese was established in 2000 and accepted its first students in 2002 with the beginning of operations of the Department of Computer Science and Technology and the Department of Telecommunication Science and Technology of the School of Science and Technology. It has its headquarters in Tripoli and is developed at the level of integrated schools in the five capitals of the prefectures of Peloponnese. The headquarters of the University of the Peloponnese is in Tripolis and it comprises of five (5) Schools and nine (9) Departments located in the five Capitals of Prefectures of the Peloponnese Region (Tripolis, Corinth, Nafplion, Sparta, Kalamata).

Notable infrastructure e.g. transport, investment sites, ICT, utilities

The city of Megalopoli is located at a central point in the Peloponnese connected with Athens, Corinth, Sparta, Tripoli and Kalamata through one of the newest highways in Greece. Its central location in Peloponnese could make Megalopoli a connecting hub of those bigger cities.

Initiative for coal regions in transition

The Initiative for coal regions in transition is an initiative by the European Commission.

ec.europa.eu/coal-regions-in-transition

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