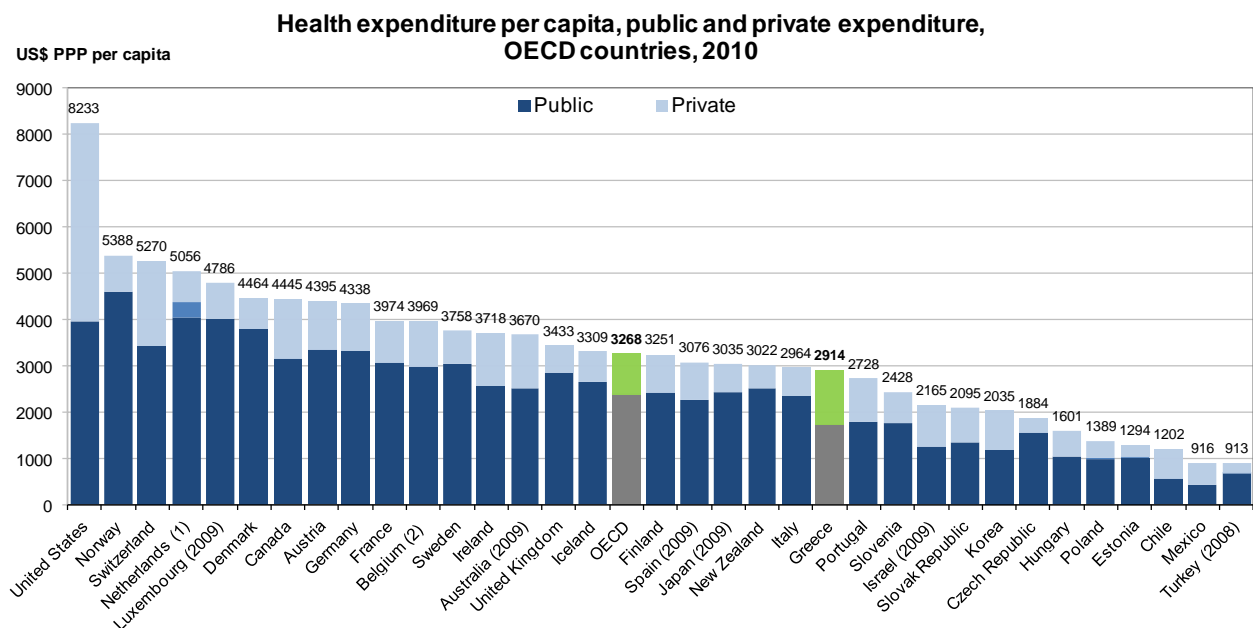
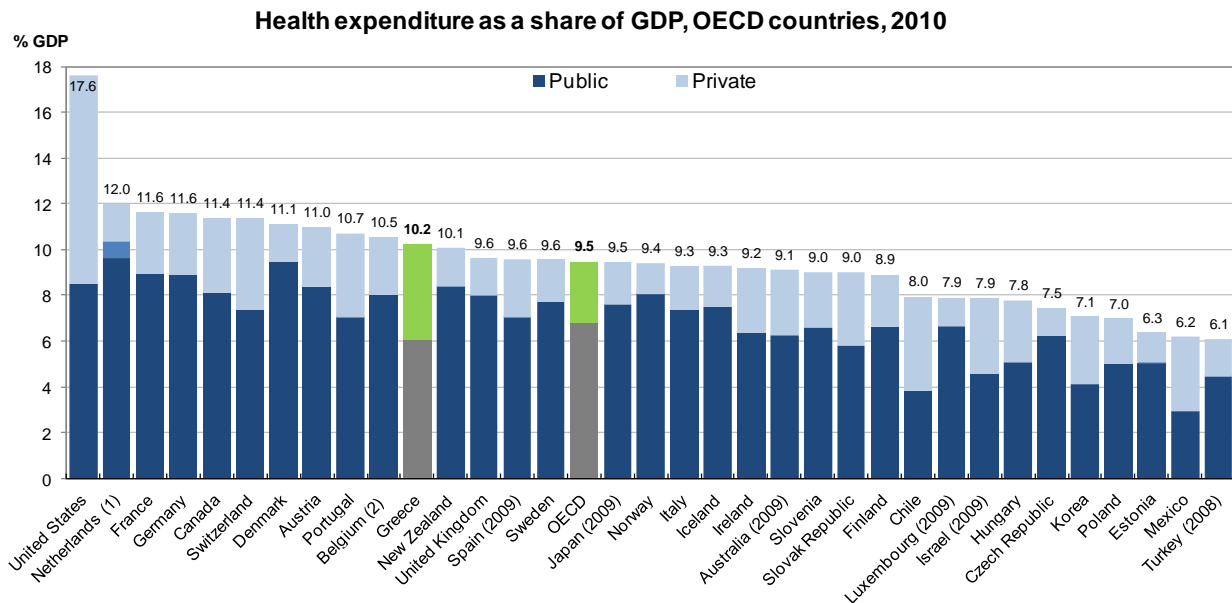


OECD Health Data 2012

How Does Greece Compare

Total health spending accounted for 10.2 % of GDP in **Greece** in 2010, above the average of 9.5% in OECD countries, but down from 10.6% in 2009. The financial and economic crisis initially led to a rapid increase in the health spending to GDP ratio, as the Greek economy slumped but health spending was maintained. However, a subsequent cut in public spending has seen the health share of GDP fall. Health spending as a share of GDP is highest in the United States (which spent 17.6% of its GDP on health in 2010), followed by the Netherlands (12.0%), and France and Germany (both 11.6%).

Greece ranks below the OECD average in terms of health spending per capita, with spending of 2914 USD in 2010 (adjusted for purchasing power parity), compared with an OECD average of 3268 USD in 2010.



1. In the Netherlands, it is not possible to distinguish clearly the public and private share for the part of health expenditures related to investments.
 2. Total expenditure excluding investments. Source: *OECD Health Data 2012, June 2012*.

Data are expressed in US dollars adjusted for purchasing power parities (PPPs), which provide a means of comparing spending between countries on a common base. PPPs are the rates of currency conversion that equalise the cost of a given 'basket' of goods and services in different countries.

Health spending in **Greece** increased between 2000 and 2009 at a rapid rate of 6.1% per year in real terms on average, but it fell by 6.5% in 2010 driven by a sharp reduction in public spending on health as part of government-wide efforts to reduce the large budgetary deficit. Most of the reductions in public spending have been achieved through cuts in wages and actual reductions in the number of health workers, as well as price decreases for pharmaceuticals. As in many other countries hard-hit by the recession, investment plans have also been put on hold.

The public sector is the main source of health funding in all OECD countries, except Chile, Mexico and the United States. In **Greece**, 59.4% of health spending was funded by public sources in 2010, which is much lower than the OECD average of 72.2% in 2010.

Resources in the health sector (human, physical, technological)

There remain more physicians per capita in **Greece** than in any other OECD country. During the past decades, the number of doctors per capita increased rapidly in **Greece** and now stands at 6.1 practising physicians per 1000 population in 2010, nearly twice as much the OECD average of 3.1. On the other hand, there were only 3.3 nurses per 1000 population in **Greece** in 2009, a much lower figure than the average of 8.7 in OECD countries. There is evidence of an over-supply of doctors and under-supply of nurses in **Greece**, resulting in an inefficient allocation of resources.

The number of acute care hospital beds in **Greece** was 4.1 per 1000 population in 2009, above the OECD average (3.4). Contrary to most OECD countries, the number of hospital beds per capita in **Greece** has not fallen over the past decade.

In **Greece**, the number of computed tomography (CT) scanners and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) units is much greater than in most other OECD countries. There were 34.3 CT scanners per million population in 2010, a number that is much higher than the OECD average of 22.6. And there were 22.6 MRIs per million population, nearly twice as much the OECD average of 12.5. In **Greece**, most CT and MRI scanners are installed in private diagnostic centres, with only a minority found in public hospitals. There is no regulation around the purchase of MRI units in **Greece**, while the purchase of CT scanners requires a licence that is granted following a review based on a criterion of population density. There are also no guidelines concerning the use of CT and MRI scanners once these equipment have been purchased.

Health status and risk factors

Most OECD countries have enjoyed large gains in life expectancy over the past decades, thanks to improvements in living conditions, public health interventions and progress in medical care. Life expectancy at birth in **Greece** stood at 80.6 years in 2010, almost a year higher than the OECD average (79.8). However, life expectancy in **Greece** remains lower than in a number of OECD countries (such as Japan, Switzerland, Spain and Italy), where life expectancy now exceeds 82 years.

The proportion of smokers among adults has shown a marked decline over the past two decades in most OECD countries, but not in **Greece**. **Greece** has the highest rate of daily smokers among adults of all OECD countries, with a rate of 31.9% in 2009, compared with an OECD average of 21.1%. Sweden, the United States and Australia provide examples of countries that have achieved remarkable success in reducing tobacco consumption, with current smoking rates among adults around 15%.

At the same time, obesity rates have increased in recent decades in all OECD countries, although there remain notable differences. In **Greece**, the obesity rate among adults – based on self-reported height and weight – was 17.3% in 2009. This is lower than for the United States (28.1% in 2010). The average for the 29 OECD countries with self-reported data was 15.0%. Obesity's growing prevalence foreshadows increases in the occurrence of health problems (such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases), and higher health care costs in the future.

More information on *OECD Health Data 2012* is available at www.oecd.org/health/healthdata.

For more information on OECD's work on **Greece**, please visit www.oecd.org/greece.