



An EU Survey on Whole-of-Government Approaches to External Conflict and Crisis

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# Greece Report

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## 1 | Introduction

The global political, economic and security environment is increasingly characterised by complexity and instability, demanding joint efforts to address highly interrelated problems. To that end, the development of a whole-of-government approach (WGA) aims to provide a formula for the effective coordination of actors, both at the national and international levels, in order to maximise the effectiveness of policies and to ensure their coherence when pursuing common objectives.

However, in many countries – including Greece – the concept of WGA has long been an overlooked priority, and it is only recently that they have started taking the steps needed to adopt a WGA in their national policies. For many years, Greece has been characterised by deep-seated departmentalism, with various ministries being responsible for the development and implementation of policies in their respective field. The rigid structures of public institutions have nurtured the perception that different problems should be addressed independently by the responsible ministry or other national authority, while coordination of actors has been very limited and has usually only taken place on an ad hoc basis.

Nevertheless, over the last decade, Greece has had to face two unexpected crises that would challenge this perception, highlighting the need for both horizontal and vertical cooperation aimed at finding common solutions. Indeed, the country's economic breakdown, coupled with an unprecedented influx of refugees, presented a set of problems that no ministry was able to deal with on its own. At the same time, leading international organisations (e.g. the UN, NATO

and the OECD) were increasingly making explicit references to a WGA as a useful framework for policy development. Thus, over the last decade, Greece has started to take small, yet obvious steps towards the introduction of the WGA concept at the national level. At present, although there is still a long way to go before Greece will be implementing a WGA on all its internal and external policies, the country offers some tangible evidence that, in certain policy areas, a WGA has begun to underpin both policy development and the operational coordination of the actors involved. The policy areas that provide the most significant indications of a WGA are sustainable development and Greece's participation in CSDP missions and PESCO projects.

## 2 | What policies have been developed to further policy coherence?

Greece does not have any explicitly formulated WGA policies regarding the management of external crises and conflicts. However, certain evidence exists that either implicitly or explicitly indicates that the country is moving towards the formulation of WGA policies. The best example of such a WGA policy under development stems from Greece's adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as defined by the UN in 2015. Indeed, in July 2018, the General Secretariat of the Government published a document titled Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (VNR) (General Secretariat of the Government 2018: 15), presenting a detailed account of the progress made over the previous two years toward successfully accomplishing the SDGs at the national level. More precisely, the VNR aimed to: (1) present the institutional mechanism put in place in Greece that ensures the collective political ownership and commitment to accomplish successfully the SDGs and to foster a whole-of-government approach; (2) highlight the national policy and legal framework that incorporates the SDGs, focusing on the eight national priorities for the SDGs; (3) showcase the role played by key stakeholders in the implementation of the SDGs through the adoption of a whole-of-society approach; (4) provide some key means of implementation that ensure the comprehensive and integrated achievement of the SDGs at all governance levels (national, regional, local); and (5) present the main steps to be taken with regard to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The VNR builds on Greece's National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) of 2002 (Ministry for the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works 2002), which was developed following the adoption of the European Strategy for Sustainable Development in 2001, and which provided the basis for the development of Greece's National Strategy for Sustainable and Just Development 2030 (NSSJD) (Ministry of Economy and Development 2019), drawing from the SDGs of 2015. Unlike the NSSD, the NSSJD presented a truly strategic approach in which sustainable development issues are anchored at the highest political level. Thus, through the VNR, Greece is pursuing policy coherence both horizontally across policy sectors (e.g. economic, industrial, agricultural, tourism-related and cultural) and vertically at all levels of governance (national, regional and local).

Highlighting the premise that the successful implementation of the SDGs goes beyond the responsibilities of the central government, the VNR notes that Greece has adopted a "whole-of-society approach" that pays particular attention to ensuring strong stakeholder engagement at all stages (stock-taking, policy design and implementation) as well as to raising

awareness at all levels. Most importantly, however, the VNR indicates that the key for successfully implementing the SDGs at the national level will be setting up a robust, long-term institutional mechanism that follows a WGA. This explicit reference to a WGA is the first – and, to date, the only – clear evidence of a WGA concept related to a specific policy in Greece.

Although they do not include an explicit reference to the WGA concept per se, elements of a WGA can also be detected in two other policies. The first relates to Greece's provision of development and humanitarian aid to developing countries as defined by Law 2731/1999 (Government Gazette 1999). This law established the Directorate General of International Development Cooperation (Hellenic Aid) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the competent national authority. While shaping and coordinating Greek development policy, the DG is responsible for (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2018): (1) coordinating all relevant allocations out of the development budget; (2) submitting proposals on the national development strategy to the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Organisation and Coordination of International Economic Relations; (3) coordinating, implementing, promoting and monitoring humanitarian and development projects and activities to the benefit of developing countries; (4) representing the country in matters of international development at the relevant international fora and organisations (e.g. the EU, the OECD-DAC and the UN); (5) evaluating the humanitarian/development project proposals submitted thereto by NGOs and other institutions, and monitoring their implementation; (6) collaborating closely with competent authorities of the public and private sector, aiming at the effective administration of national development funds, the complementarity of projects and activities, and the coherence of national policies; (7) compiling statistical data on bilateral and multilateral official development assistance and preparing annual reports for Greece's parliament and the OECD-DAC; (8) proposing development policies in the context of the New European Consensus on Development; and (9) focusing on important development frameworks and submitting the relevant findings and recommendations to the minister for foreign affairs. To successfully perform this wide array of tasks, Hellenic Aid must continuously and closely interact and coordinate with many different national and international actors, which in turn results in what can be viewed as an indirect adherence to the WGA concept.

The second policy relates to the recently reinforced attempts to strengthen Greece's defence industry by participating in the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). At the European level, the WGA in this area was explicitly championed by the EU Global Strategy of 2016, which has been strongly supported by Greece. According to the General Directorate of National Defence Policy and International Relations (GDNDPIR) of the Greek Ministry of National Defence (MoD), Greece has welcomed PESCO as a unique opportunity to increase the capabilities of its security forces through the country's participation in multilateral projects related to technology, research and development. However, the clearest indication that Greece is moving towards adopting a WGA in this policy area is the emphasis that the MoD has placed on the establishment of a national framework for the "compulsory" participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in Greece's defence industry in the PESCO projects in which Greece is involved (Ministry of Defence 2018). At present, together with France, Germany and Italy, Greece is among the EU member states most actively participating in such projects. While it is leading five PESCO projects, it is participating in an additional nine projects. As Greece moves towards adopting a WGA, the MoD aims to engage with all enterprises in the Greek defence industry – both public and private – to create economies of

scale, halt the brain drain of Greek scientists, and strengthen the capacity-building of the Greek security forces.

### 3 | Who are the main actors involved in cooperating in a WGA?

As already mentioned, Greece has no explicitly formulated WGA policies on external crises and conflicts. However, the country actively participates in many EU CSDP, NATO and UN missions (e.g. EUFOR Althea, EULEX Kosovo, EUAM Ukraine, EUMM Georgia, EUTM Mali, EUNAVFOR Atalanta, EUNAVFOR MED Sophia, UNIFIL, KFOR, RSM Afghanistan and Operation Active Endeavour), providing both military and civilian personnel, depending on the mission's nature.

At the national level, the main actors responsible for Greece's participation in international missions are the government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and the Ministry of National Defence (MoD). Elements of a WGA can be found in the cooperation between the MFA and MoD at two different levels: first, at the ministerial level, through the direct communication of the responsible ministers; and, second, at the directorate-general level, between the General Directorate of National Defence Policy and International Relations (GDNDPIR) of the MoD and the various competent directorates of the MFA, depending on the international mission's framework (e.g. the EU, the UN or NATO). Moreover, regarding the participation of Greece in non-military CSDP missions, a WGA-like coordination is in place between the MFA, the MoD and the Ministry for Citizen Protection. Indeed, the inter-ministerial decision 1027/4/26d of 2010 between the three ministries stipulates that, in close coordination with the MFA and the MoD, the Ministry for Citizen Protection is responsible for selecting police personnel for civilian CSDP missions, when necessary (Government Gazette 2010). Other actors at the national level cooperate in a WGA-like manner, albeit not in relation to external conflicts and crises.

In the policy area of migration, Presidential Decree 123 of 2016 established the Ministry of Migration Policy (MMP) to address the ongoing migration crisis (Government Gazette 2016). Creating the MMP, whose responsibilities had previously been part of the mandate of the Ministry of Interior, was prompted by the realisation that coordinating the wide array of actors involved in the management of migrant populations in Greece demanded a dedicated authority that would assume full responsibility. Indeed, following a WGA on migration policy, the MMP is responsible for coordination among ministries (horizontal coordination) as well as coordination with regional and local authorities, international and national NGOs, and all other civil society actors (vertical coordination). Following the national elections of July 2019, the MMP became an integral part of the Ministry for Citizen Protection (Government Gazette 2019a). Although the government claimed that this would ensure more direct coordination between the relevant agencies dealing with migration, the opposition has criticised this decision as an attempt to treat migration primarily as a security concern.

Regarding sustainable development, a policy area on which Greece has recently been placing particular emphasis, the General Secretariat of the Government is the main actor for the WGA-like coordination of all actors involved. In the relevant inter-ministerial committee, all the ministries of the government are represented by their dedicated focal points at the level of directorate or directorate general. The WGA of the committee's work is reinforced by the

participation of other actors, such as the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) and the office of the deputy prime minister of Greece. Moreover, also in the area of development, the Directorate General of International Development Cooperation (Hellenic Aid) is the responsible agency for coordinating the efforts of national and international actors to provide humanitarian and development support overseas.

Finally, on the policy area of migration management, there are ongoing initiatives that indicate the application of a WGA at the local level, both horizontally (between municipalities) and vertically (between municipalities and civil society organisations that provide services to refugees). The most illustrative example of a WGA at the municipal level is the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee Issues (ACCMR), an organisation created by the City of Athens to map the different actors that provide support to migrants and refugees as well as to effectively coordinate their activities.

## 4 | How does your country operationalise a WGA?

Although they are not explicitly related to external conflicts and crises, there are various structures in place in Greece that bring together various authorities and actors and facilitate their cooperation and coordination in a WGA-like manner. The most well-known of those structures, the Government Council for Foreign Affairs and Defence (KYSEA), is the supreme decision-making body on issues of foreign policy and national defence in Greece, and its decisions are binding for all participating agencies. It was first established in 1986 and although its composition has changed many times, at the time of writing (July 2019) it comprised: the prime minister (serving as chairman); the minister of foreign affairs; the minister for citizen protection; the minister for national defence; the minister for shipping and island policy; and the chief of staff of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff (Government Gazette 2019b). In practice, the activities and utility of KYSEA have attracted a lot of criticism. For example, contrary to its stated mandate, the council most often limits itself to issues related to promoting or discharging high-ranking military staff rather than making decisions on the full range of policy fields it is responsible for.

Another structure that draws from the principles of a WGA is the National Council for Foreign Policy (NCFP). According to Law 3132/2003, which set the framework for the NCFP's establishment, the NCFP comprises: the minister of foreign affairs (serving as chairman); the chairman of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Parliament; the secretary general of the MFA; the head of the Centre for Analysis and Planning (CAP) of the MFA; two representatives of every political party holding seats in the parliament; and an equal number of foreign policy experts (Government Gazette 2003). The council was first established in 2003 and, unlike the KYSEA, it is responsible for providing guidance and advisory opinions to the Greek government for the strategic framing of the country's foreign policy. The NCFP has also been criticised over time for its failure to act as a genuine advisory body, with the most frequent critique being that it has become merely a channel for the government to inform opposition political parties about its foreign policy decisions.

The General Secretariat for Civil Protection (GSCP) is yet another institutional structure that implements a WGA as it pursues its mission "to design, plan, organise and coordinate actions regarding risk assessment, prevention, preparedness, information and response to natural,

technological or other disasters or emergencies, to coordinate rehabilitation operations, to monitor the above actions and to inform the public on these issues” (GSCP 2019). More precisely, the Civil Protection Operations Centre (CPOC), as part of the GSCP, applies a WGA in managing crises and coordinating the personnel of various agencies (e.g. the Armed Forces, the Hellenic Police, the Hellenic Coast Guard, the Hellenic Fire Service and specialised medical staff). Additionally, the GSCP has direct ties to the European Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), which operates in the framework of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCPM). If a public authority (whether of Greece, of another country or of an international organisation) calls on Greece to provide assistance, the CPOC applies the procedures for the sending and receiving of international assistance. In doing so, it cooperates with the International Relations, Volunteerism-Training and Publications Directorate of the GSCP in accordance with instructions of the Secretary General for Civil Protection.

In April 2019, Greece’s MFA presented a draft bill on the “modernisation of foreign policy” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019), which, among other things, provided the framework for the establishment of a National Security Council (NSC). Doing so represented a long-anticipated step towards the creation of an administrative structure to assume primary responsibility for national security. Although it did not make any explicit reference to a WGA, the draft bill made clear that the NSC would follow a WGA in pursuing its responsibility for “the development of an integrated and functional system of security and crisis management”. According to the draft, the NSC would consist of: the prime minister (serving as chairman); the deputy prime minister; the minister of foreign affairs; the minister for citizen protection; the chief of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff; the chairman of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Parliament; the director of the National Intelligence Service; the secretary general of the MFA; an official from the Head Diplomatic Office of the prime minister’s political office; and the national security adviser (serving as the principal rapporteur). The NSC would be an advisory structure to the prime minister responsible for the continuous coordination of all actors involved in national security affairs.

Following the national elections of July 2019, the newly elected prime minister appointed a national security adviser for the first time ever. The opposition criticised this decision as being too hasty given that there were still no final provisions for the establishment, composition and authorities of the NSC. Nevertheless, in August 2019, the Greek government introduced Law 4622/19 on the organisation, function and transparency of the government, the government bodies and the central state administration (Government Gazette 2019c). This law is essentially a blueprint for the restructuring and reorganisation of government institutions and various other administrative bodies. Despite lacking any explicit references to a WGA, the law introduced a top-down, centralised WGA, placing emphasis on the continuous interaction of all competent agencies for the successful implementation of government policies, including those related to foreign affairs and security.

## 5 | Conclusions

To sum up, elements of Greece’s implementation of a WGA in relation to external crises and conflicts are evident in the country’s participation in CSDP missions and PESCO projects. Yet, as already mentioned, it was not until 2018 that a formal national document, the Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

(VNR) (General Secretariat of the Government 2018), made an explicit reference to the adoption of a WGA in efforts to successfully accomplish the SDGs at the national level. Unquestionably, this is a rather significant indication that the WGA concept is no longer an alien idea in Greece, and that it is likely that similar references will be made at some future point regarding different policy areas. Nevertheless, the country is still quite far from implementing a comprehensive WGA that encompasses all policy areas, including those related to external crises and conflicts.

Indeed, for the most of part, policy coherence in Greece depends not on the existence of a formally articulated WGA strategy, but rather on the degree of cooperation and coordination among actors engaged with the given policies. Law 4622/19 (Government Gazette 2019c) (discussed above) was definitely a step towards introducing elements of a WGA at the central-government level, yet a clearly articulated WGA framework is still missing.

Drawing from the information presented above, it can be argued that the factors underpinning the success of a WGA in Greece are: (1) the level at which a WGA is initiated, with evidence indicating that policy coherence is more effective when initiated above the ministerial level; (2) the number of actors involved in the WGA framework, which is something that differentiates WGA from more narrow coordination frameworks; (3) the nature of the coordinating actors, as rather than being narrowed to inter-ministerial cooperation, a comprehensive WGA framework should also incorporate actors from regional and local administrations, the private sector and civil society; and (4) the existence of a well-developed WGA framework at the international level. Although these factors would not guarantee a WGA at the national level, they may offer valuable guidance for those wishing to develop and implement a WGA in Greece.

Taking into consideration these factors, the policy area in which Greece seems to be closer to an effective implementation of a WGA model is sustainable development. In addition to providing secretarial support to the relevant inter-ministerial committee, the General Secretariat of the Government coordinates with a wide array of actors in this area in order to develop policies aligned with the WGA framework set out by the UN.

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