



Christodoulou, Mavrikis & Comminos Inc.
Attorneys

Doing Business in Greece

INTRODUCTION

Greece is a full member of the European Union and encourages foreign investment in all sectors. A number of state aids are available aimed at promoting investments in certain sectors and areas of Greece. Greek multinationals are active in the Balkans, whilst a number of companies have recently invested in South Africa.

National and local government policy considerations

- The government welcomes foreign investment and supports the free enterprise and free-trade system
- Greek and foreign investors are treated equally
- Repatriation of proceeds and transfer of profits are effected through mediating banks.

Possible business structures

- Foreign ownership is permitted without restriction in almost all sectors
- The most common forms of business establishments for foreign investors are the corporation (societe anonyme) and the limited liability company. A minimum capital requirement is imposed on both societies anonymes and limited liability companies.

Setting up or acquiring a Company

- An investor can either form a company or acquire an existing company without any requirements for approval by the Greek government in relation to the valuation of the acquisition

Investment Incentives

- General and regional non tax and tax incentives are available to both local and foreign investors

- Special industry incentives as well as export incentives are also available to investors generally

Locations/ Industries

- The government encourages establishment of industrial enterprises within specific industrial areas near the major cities of the country specifically designed to offer infrastructure and facilities for industry
- Location in less developed areas is encouraged through higher incentives

Finance

- Long-term financing from specialized credit institutions is available to local and foreign investors
- Credit and financial services are also available from a large number of domestic banks and branches of foreign banks

Tax planning considerations

- Profits are taxed at the company level, and dividends are distributed free of any withholding or income tax.
- Expatriate personnel generally receive the same treatment as local personnel.

Offshore operations

- Greece has entered into a number of double taxation treaties, including treaties with Cyprus and South Africa. This creates an opportunity to make use of the various offshore structures provided for in these countries.

Information and assistance

- Christodoulou Mavrikis & Cominos Inc Attorneys** operates as **Oracle Worldwide Legal Services** in Greece with offices in Johannesburg, Athens and Brussels and associated offices in a number of Balkan countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, and in the former Soviet Republics.
- The firm can offer assistance in any kind of investments as well as in professional services, legal and tax matters.
- Special services such as finding joint venture partners, locating premises or land for development either for the conduct of business or for investment purposes. Introductions to financing and credit institutions and business associate's can be arranged as an added service to clients.
- The firm, together with specialized business and economic consultants can undertake formation of companies and applications for tax and incentive benefits.
- Assistance in importing capital and personal repatriation services are offered by a team of lawyers in the firm.
- Other areas of law offered by the firm include;

- Corporate Finance
- Environmental/Law & Energy
- Intellectual Property
- Insurance
- Employment
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Private Property and Construction
- Tax and Offshore Structures