

REGION OF WESTERN GREECE

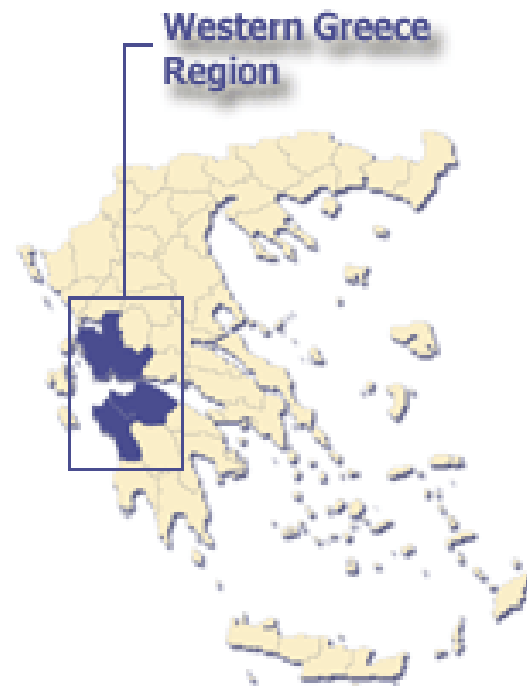
Basic regional socio economic data:

Area	11.350 km² , covering 8,6 % of the total country area.
Population (2001)	740.506 people , making it the fourth largest (in population) region in Greece, accounting for 6,8 % of the country total. About 45,1 % of the population is urban, 11,4 % is semi-rural and 43,5 % is rural.
Administration	Three Prefects, namely Achaia, Ileia and Aetoloakarnania, which are further divided to 72 Municipalities and 2 Communities. The largest Municipality is Patras, with a population of about 160.000 inhabitants.

The Region of Western Greece occupies the SW part of Peloponnese and the Western part of Sterea Hellas. Most of the area is mountainous (45,3 %) and semi-mountainous (25,6 %), whereas only 29,1 % is flat.

The port of Patras is a reference point for the entire region, since it is the main gate to Greece from Italy and the rest of Western Europe. Achaia is the third largest prefect (in population) in Greece, following Attika and Thessaloniki, whereas Aetoloakarnania is the largest prefect (in area) in Greece.

The region presents unique opportunities for **tourist** development, since the presence of areas of tremendous natural beauty, very old monasteries and other religious monuments, as well as the existence in the extended area of some of the most important ancient monuments in world history (Mycenae, Delphi, Olympia, Epidavros etc.), provides opportunities for development of Ecological, religious, archaeological, athletic and professional tourism.



Economic data

GDP	5,2% of Greek GDP for 2001 (classified 6 th among the 13 Greek regions)
Per capita GDP	10,1 kEuro for 2002 (79% of Greek average, 58% of EU25 [2001]) – Ranking 13 th among the 13 Greek Regions
GDP Composition	14% Primary sector, 18% Secondary sector, 68% Tertiary sector
Productivity	73% of EU15 average (72% for Greece)

The **primary sector** is well developed, and it includes traditional agricultural products (vineyards, gardening and vegetables, olive oil, tobacco, cotton, wheat, rice, citrus, apples, peaches, potatoes, tomatoes, corn), animal farming products (sheep, goats, cows, pigs, bees, dairy, eggs), fishing and aquaculture products.

The **secondary sector** is dominated by some traditional industrial sectors (textile and clothing, food and drinks) but other sectors are also present in the area (cement, leather, arms and ammunition, wood, metal and non-metal products, electrical machines, furniture).

The **tertiary sector** is developing rapidly, mainly due to the rapid development in Banking and Credit infrastructure, strong Trade and other services, and of course Tourism.

Active population	Over 250.000 people for 2003
Unemployment rate	9% (39,9% for youth [ages 15-24], 67% long-term unemployment)
Employment by sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 31% for Primary sector - 17% for Secondary sector - 52% for Tertiary sector
Employment by sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 56,5% for Western Greece (2003) - 70,9% men - 40,5 women
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0,4% MSc and PhD (0,8% in Greece) - 5,6% University degree (8,2% in Greece) - 4,1% Technical education (6,8% in Greece) - 35,3% High-school graduates (37,5 in Greece) - 35,5% Primary school graduates (30,5% in Greece)
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Port of Patras, and smaller ports of Aegio, Kyllini, Katakolo, Astakos - Suspension bridge of Rio – Antirrio - Central road artery Patras – Athens, part of PAThe (Patras-Athens-Thessaloniki, Evzoni), which belongs to the TransEuropean Networks - Airports at Araxos and Andravida
Health infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 11 public hospitals, 2.235 beds, about 2.500 physicians, 17 Health Centres
Education – Research infrastructures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University of Patras - University of Ioannina (Agrinio branch) - Research Institute for Chemical Engineering and High Temperatures - Computer Technology Institute - Industrial Systems Institute - Acheloos Fish - Farming Research Centre - National Institute for Agricultural Research - Patras Science Park

Framework of Structural Funds and programmes operating in the region

The Regional Operational Programme (ROP) of Western Greece is a part of the Community Support Framework for Greece for the period 2000 – 2006 (3rd CSF). The main purpose of the programme is to promote the long-term development of the region of Western Greece. It will endeavour to profit from the region's geographical position as the country's western gateway and from its tourist development potential in connection with the Olympic Games in Greece. It is also planned to improve the existing infrastructure and to create the conditions for sustainable development by paying greater attention to environmental problems.

The total financial volume of the Programme amounts to 820,9 million euros. This amount consists of the total public expenditure (675,9 million euros) and the private co-financing (145 million euros). The contribution of the national public co-financing to the total public expenditure amounts to 169,9 million euros. The remaining amount of 506 million euros consists of the EU financial contribution to the Programme which is provided through assistance from the following funds:

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 389,8 million euros.
- European Social Fund (ESF) 35,1 million euros.
- European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, Guidance Section (EAGGF Guidance Section) 81 million euros.

The Programme sets out the following strategic priorities:

Priority 1: Enhancing and valorisation of the region's position as the country's western gateway

The region can benefit from its geographical position as the country's gateway, developing further the exchanges with Italy and the countries of Central Europe. The valorisation of this position will come from the improvement of the existing infrastructure and the completion of TEN priority roads via the PATHE axe and the Rio-Antirrio bridge, linking Peloponnese to Sterea Ellas.

Priority 2: Cultural and tourist development - deriving maximum benefit from the Olympic Games of 2004

The programme will endeavour to benefit from the region's geographical position as the country's western gateway and from its development potential in tourism in connection with the forthcoming Olympic Games in Greece. It is also planned to improve the existing infrastructure and to create the conditions for sustainable development by paying greater attention to environmental problems.

Priority 3: Restructuring and expanding the region's industrial base and promoting innovation

This region has an important urban centre (Patras), which disposes of a traditional industrial base. There is a need for its restructuration and expansion. The programme will contribute towards developing the region which has clear potential as regards new technologies and innovation, due in particular to Patras University's dynamism in that field.

Priority 4: Improving urban infrastructure - enhancing the quality of life

The city of Patras has some infrastructure problems, which affect the quality of life of its inhabitants. The programme will provide support to health, welfare, and environmental amenities in the city of Patras and other urban and semi-urban centres of the region. Enhancing the quality of life and the value of urban areas is one of its priorities.

Priority 5: Maintaining employment and specialisation of human resources

This programme will enable 6,190 jobs to be created during its implementation phase and will endeavour to benefit from the region's geographical position as the country's western gateway, and from its development potential in tourism. Another major event, which can maintain and create employment, is the Olympic Games in 2004. The development of improving training opportunities will help to specialise human resources and to pave the way for creating new jobs and for sustainable and balanced growth.

Priority 6: Sustainable rural development

There is a need to upgrade the rural infrastructure and to re-adapt production in order to promote sustainable development for rural, mountain and less-favoured areas. The programme is intended

to encourage the sustainable development of these areas by offering opportunities, mainly in the eco-tourism sector. In this context, its wild natural beauty is the most important advantage.

Priority 7: Technical assistance

There is also provision for technical assistance to implement the programme. Financial support is available covering administration, monitoring and control.

Overall responsibility for the implementation of the 3rd CSF programme, including the ROP of Western Greece, belongs to the CSF Managing Authority which is a special authority of the **Greek Ministry of Economy and Finance**.

Management and monitoring of the Operational Programme is done by the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme of Western Greece which is supervised by the General Secretary of the Region of Western Greece. This Unit consists of experienced personnel hired from the private sector as well as the wider public sector.

1. Other relevant regional development programmes operating, organizations supporting the region in the management process
 - a) **Operational Plan : “Information Society”** – It’s strategic objective is the preparation of programming processes, institutional structures, public-private networks, «hard» and «soft» infrastructure and implementation-monitoring mechanisms aimed at solving endogenous developmental problems, decreasing regional disparities by EU standards (social cohesion) and setting up the grounds for the gradual transformation of the regional economy into an information-based one.
 - b) **ERDF innovative actions 2000-2006: “INNACT-RWG 2002-2003”** – It’s strategic objective is threefold:
 - o Creation of a regional economy based on information and technological innovations
 - o Creation of e-EuropeRegions: placing the information society at the service of regional development initiatives
 - o Establishment of regional identity and sustainable development
 - c) **WISE Plan: “Western Greece Integration Strategy for Employment Stimulation”** – It’s strategic objective is the development of an integrated approach coping with the problem of unemployment in the region
 - d) **Operating Plan: “Politeia (State) - modernization of public administration”** – It’s strategic objective is the modernization and the efficiency increase of the administrative institutions, functions and organizations at the regional level of governance
 - e) **Special Local Government Programme: “EPTA”** - EPTA is a programme to cover the basic operating and investment expenses of the new Municipalities
 - f) **New Development Law 3299/2004** – It is the main financial tool for promoting industrial investments in Greece. Except for very large investments, all other projects are funded and monitored locally by the Region of Western Greece.