



Covid-19 effects on democratic debate in Greece

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Democracy

- ▶ The word '**democracy**' has its origins in the Greek language. It combines two shorter words: '**demos**' meaning whole citizen living within a particular city-state and '**kratos**' meaning power or rule.
- ▶ The term appeared in the 5th century BC in Greek city-states, notably Classical Athens, to mean "**rule of the people**".
- ▶ Features of democracy often include **freedom of assembly, association, property rights, freedom of religion and speech, inclusiveness and equality, citizenship, consent of the governed, voting rights**, freedom from unwarranted governmental deprivation of the **right to life and liberty**, and **minority rights**.



Covid-19

According to WHO:

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Most people infected with the virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. However, some will become seriously ill and require medical attention. Older people and those with underlying medical conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, or cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. Anyone can get sick with COVID-19 and become seriously ill or die at any age.

The history of COVID-19 in Greece

- 26 February 2020 – 1st infected patient is identified in Greece.
- 20 March 2020 – Greek government announces closing up of schools for 2 weeks
- 30 March 2020 – Greek government announces lockdown for 2 weeks. Citizens are obliged to send a text message to a 5-digit number in order to declare the reason of leaving their residence (i.e. 1: visiting the pharmacy, 2: food shopping, 3: exercising in open space, 4. going to work, etc). Police could check any citizen on the street, in case the citizen has not texted the message, they got a **fine** of **150** euro.
- Easter 2020 – Nobody is allowed to visit other houses, or is allowed to drive/walk at a distance bigger than 2 km away from their residence. The **fine** was **300** euro.
- 31 May 2020 – Lockdown still continues in Greece. Texting message is still obligatory and paying fine if citizens do not comply. Nobody is allowed to drive away from residence unless they need to go to work.
- 1 June 2020 – Schools open up again. Students are accompanied by parents only by texting message. If this does not apply, a **fine** is given by the police.
- 25 June 2020 – Tourists are arriving. Greece is no longer afraid of covid-19.

The history of COVID-19 in Greece (cont.)

- 1 September 2020. **Face mask is obligatory from the age of 4, both indoor and outdoor.**
- 30 October 2020. Touristic period is now over in Greece. Another lockdown is announced by the Greek government. **Successful measures (texting messages, getting fines)** for dealing with the virus, continue.
- Students are obligated to attend online teaching. Nobody has received funding for buying tablet/laptop. At the same time, parents are obligated to work from home.
- Meanwhile, the **Greek government announces merging and shutting down of hospitals.** The existing departments in hospitals are mostly turned into covid-19 clinics (which means that patients with heart diseases, cancer, etc etc etc can no longer visit hospitals). Covid-19 patients are dying alone in hospitals. Patients are dying alone in hospitals.
- The Greek government hires about **10,000 policemen/policewomen** to deal with the covid-19 crisis. The government also invests in buying about **700** new cars for police use.
- Christmas 2020, New-Years eve. No one is allowed to walk/drive 2km away from home. A **fine** of **300** euro is applied to those who do not comply.

The history of COVID-19 in Greece (cont.)

- ▶ January 2021. Vaccinations in medical staff has begun. Schools open for 2 weeks, students are allowed to go with parents by texting message.
- ▶ Easter 2021. Same as Easter 2020.
- ▶ April 2021. Vaccination centers open for citizens. **Media is informing citizens about the importance of vaccination while already dividing the country in two groups** (a) people in favour of vaccination (characterized as normal, safe-for-public-health, concerned-for-country, privileged, etc), (b) those against vaccination (characterized as sprayed, abnormal, uneducated, not-carrying-about-public-health, etc). This division and characterisation from media continue for at least 1 year
- ▶ May 2021. Schools re-open. Students above 4 years old wear face masks inside and outside. Business are opening. Everyone is obligated to do self-test for covid-19 twice a week.
- ▶ June 2021. Greek prime Minister announces that those who will not be vaccinated, will be forced to do so on September. Meanwhile, tourists are visiting Greece, borders are open again and Greece is safe from the virus.

The history of COVID-19 in Greece (cont.)

- ▶ September 2021. Greek prime Minister announces that those without vaccination or recovery certificate are obligated to do a self-test (which they need to buy) twice a week. Students over 4 years old still have to wear a face mask and do a free self-test twice a week. **UNVACCINATED DOCTORS and MEDICAL STAFF ARE NOT ALLOWED TO PRACTICE MEDICINE OR WORK ANYWHERE ELSE.**
- ▶ October 2021. Greek government announces that citizens without vaccination or recovery certificate are not allowed to visit theaters, cinemas, museums or go to the gym. They are allowed to go shopping by showing a negative result from a covid-antigen test (which they need to pay for). They are allowed to go to work **IF** the employer agrees (again they need to pay for their covid-antigen test twice a week). Citizens who have got a vaccination (3-times vaccinated or 2-times would expire in 6 months) or recovery certificate would go anywhere without a covid-antigen test. According to the Greek government they are **privileged** citizens and they are **rewarded for complying** with the vaccination campaign. None of the above applies for non-vaccinated policemen/policewomen.

The history of COVID-19 in Greece (cont.)

- Meanwhile, unvaccinated citizens who get infected with covid-19, need to pay for a PCR test (average cost 50 euros) in order to get a recovery certificate. The same applied to children/students. This does not apply to vaccinated citizens.
- Unvaccinated citizens over 65 years old pay a fine of 100 euros per month.
- March 2022. Unvaccinated medical staff and doctors begin a hunger strike (lasted for about 40 days) outside the Greek Ministry of Health. Medical staff and doctors protest outside the Greek parliament https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IU_z4pKgybl&t=16s





The history of COVID-19 in Greece (cont.)

- May 2022. Covid-19 measures are freezing. Touristic season is now open again!
- October 2022. Unvaccinated employees have to pay for a covid-antigen test once a week. This does not apply for vaccinated employees, since they do not need to do a test.
- November 2022. Unvaccinated doctors and medical staff begin a second hunger strike outside the Greek Ministry of Health.
- February 2023. **UNVACCINATED DOCTORS and MEDICAL STAFF return to work.**



Covid-19 effect on democracy in Greece

During the period **March 2020 – February 2023** the Greek Prime Minister has:

- ▶ **Shut down public clinics and hospitals**, including the biggest hospital for children in Athens (which could host 158 children for pediatric, surgical, psychiatric conditions, etc). The budget for the health sector was **cut by 572,000,000 euros**.
- ▶ Shut down University schools and hired police force in order to abolish the asylum. **University students and teachers are in constant protest with the government, receiving direct police brutality**.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAxGHv34x8I>
- ▶ **Every concept of democracy was abolished. Police brutality was everywhere, especially during lockdowns**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bg4TW1TDs9M>



Covid-19 effect on democracy in Greece

Do we still think that we live in a democratic country where a democratic dialogue is a tool of communication?

Thank you for your attention