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Open Source Software Country Intelligence Report

Greece

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Greece

Executive summary

Greece does not have a centralised approach to the implementation and promotion of open source software (OSS). Rather, most of this work is carried out by independent strategic actors, such as non-profit organisations and advocacy groups. The Open Technologies Alliance (GFOSS) is a key organisation for the promotion of OSS throughout Greece.

Many public administrations and academic institutions collaborate with GFOSS to implement open source projects. These involve, for example, training sessions and providing the necessary knowledge to understand how to use the software that is available. GFOSS is also active in the political framework of the country. The government signed a four-year partnership with the organisation in order to facilitate the creation and use of OSS solutions within the government in 2015.

Although this partnership was not renewed, there are many initiatives at the local and municipal level that have been put in place in the last two decades, signalling a willingness among citizens and government staff to move away from proprietary software towards OSS solutions in public administrations.

Actors

This section presents the policy makers who are active in digitalisation efforts and influence the status of open source in public sector, as well as the main strategic players that work together with the government at all levels to raise awareness on OSS. However, there is no independent governmental body that is responsible for OSS policies in Greece.

Policy maker

- The Ministry of Telecommunications and Media Policy¹ brings together all the IT and telecommunications structures related to the provision of electronic services to citizens and the country's wider digital transformation. The purpose of the Ministry is to simplify the provision process by digitising it in order to reduce bureaucratic burdens. However, neither the use of OSS within the Ministry itself nor its promotion by the Ministry throughout the country are mentioned.

Strategic players

- A relevant actor in the open source ecosystem in Greece is the Open Technologies Alliance (GFOSS)², a non-profit organisation founded in 2008 to promote openness through the use and

¹ <https://mindigital.gr/>

² <https://gfoss.eu/>

the development of open standards and open technologies in public administrations. Major Greek universities and research centres participate in GFOSS, while leading members of the Greek community of developers play a key role in the implementation of its recommendations.

- The Greek Linux User Group³ (GreekLUG), established in 2008, is an NGO that deals with OSS. Their activities involve presentations, seminars, talks, workshops and various events. They are active in the education sector, offering IT courses to teachers and students on OSS. GreekLUG also actively participates in the creation of educational material. Another project of the organisation is in the health sector of Greece, where the community has developed an electronic patient file that was also translated into other languages.

Policy and legal framework

This section recapitulates the main open source software-related policies and legal acts of the last ten years. The list is presented in a chronological order, starting from the most recent milestone.

- The Greek government signed a 4-year agreement with GFOSS⁴ in 2015 to facilitate the creation, promotion and reuse of open data, open content and OSS solutions in public administrations. Having signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Creative Commons organization, GFOSS is now a legal affiliate of Creative Commons in Greece and Cyprus. Creative Commons licenses were transposed into Greek law and translated into Greek in 2007.
- In 2011, the Greek parliament enacted an e-Governance law (Law 3979/2011)⁵ that makes it mandatory for public administrations to develop software for which the source code is open and can be modified and distributed freely.

Open source software initiatives

This section presents an overview of the main open source software-related initiatives in Greece. The list is presented in a chronological order, starting from the most recent initiative.

- 5G in Patras, 2019⁶: The city of Patras was selected by the Greek Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media as one of the first 5G pilot cities in Greece. Under this plan, 5G infrastructure has been deployed across the city to facilitate 5G trials and validate the effectiveness of the proposed architecture. The 5G-VINNI facility in Patras has become an exemplary open source 5G-IoT facility. Most of its components will be offered as OSS.

³ <https://www.greeklug.gr/el/>

⁴ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/news/greece-promote-open-source>

⁵ https://www.minfin.gr/en_US/web/guest/nomoi/-/asset_publisher/R70RHvx4EwU1/content/nomos-3979?inheritRedirect=false&redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fminfin.gr%2Fen_US%2Fweb%2Fquest%2Fnomoi%3Fp_id%3D101_INSTANCE_R70RHvx4EwU1%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-2%26p_p_col_count%3D1

⁶ <https://ercim-news.ercim.eu/en117/special/patras-5g-an-open-source-based-end-to-end-facility-for-5g-trials>

- Panhellenic Open Technology Competition, 2019⁷: The competition, first launched in 2019, initially focussed on the theme of open robotics. Participating teams were required to publish their work as OSS on GitHub. The competition was organised by 33 universities, academies and technical education institutes, together with GFOSS and teachers from primary and secondary schools. The subject of the 2020 competition is climate change.
- *Diadikasies* MediaWiki, 2018⁸: GFOSS and Greek public services began the collaborative project *Diadikasies* (in English: process) to create and manage documentation for the country's public sector procedures. The project involves 200 public administration staff and university researchers. The Wiki knowledge base can be constantly enriched with documentation of public sector services and processes. GFOSS has offered training for municipalities and courts, and all educational material is available on Moodle for public servants.
- Identity-management solution, 2017⁹: In 2017, the city of Heraklion developed an identity-management software solution combining OpenLDAP for directory services and an identity server from WSO2. The city has been using open source components for administrative websites and emailing solutions since 2016, given that open source was an important component of the 2016 Smart City Strategy. Heraklion recommends that other municipalities reuse the solution, thereby saving costs.
- Region of Attica, 2016¹⁰: The Region of Attica signed a Cooperation Agreement with GFOSS in order to establish a framework for cooperation. The region aimed to improve digital services provided to citizens by enhancing transparency, combating bureaucracy, and reducing the costs of administrative procedures. The agreement also included training public servants in the use of OSS and offering workshops and conferences.
- LibreOffice in Levadeon, 2015¹¹: The Greek city of Levadeon switched from proprietary software to LibreOffice in 2015. The switch was part of a series of technological upgrades and new digital services to provide the necessary tools and services to better serve the public.
- GIS in Western Greece, 2015¹²: The Decentralised Administration of Peloponnese, Western Greece and the Ionian administration recommended the use of OSS solutions for Geographic Information Systems (GIS) - specifically the Qgis software¹³. At present, it is used by the regions' respective forestry departments.

⁷ <https://openedtech.ellak.gr/>

⁸ https://el.diadikasies.gr/%CE%91%CF%81%CF%87%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE_%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%AF%CE%B4%CE%B1

⁹ <https://www.slideshare.net/wso2org/wso2con-eu-2018-gdpr-compliance-and-iam-services-in-a-european-municipality>

¹⁰ <https://eellak.ellak.gr/2016/05/23/sto-epikentro-tis-periferias-attikis-to-logismiko-anichtou-kodika-simfono-sinergiasias-gia-tin-proothisi-tou-elftherou-logismikoulogismikou-aniktou-kodika/>

¹¹ <https://ellak.gr/2015/05/anavathmisi-psifiakon-ipiresion-sto-dimo-levadeon/>

¹² http://apd-depin.gov.gr/files/Docs/PDF/Pliroforiki/egkyklios_software_QGIS.pdf

¹³ <https://qgis.org/en/site/>

- Open Geodata platform, 2015¹⁴: The Greek government's open geodata platform, launched in 2010, has made several tools and extensions available as open source. It relies exclusively on OSS developed under the PublicaMundi project.¹⁵
- LibreOffice in the municipality of Kalamaria, 2013¹⁶: In order to save costs, Kalamaria switched to LibreOffice, as reported by the Greek Linux User Group in 2013. The Group helped the municipality by giving suggestions and presenting various solutions on offer. They also proposed some innovative web-based LibreOffice seminars and webinars and offered support to users.
- Eoptes, 2008¹⁷: The Eoptes project, launched in 2008, is an OSS solution designed to manage and monitor school PCs in computer labs, allowing teachers to share their screens with students in a classroom environment. It is used by more than 500 schools in Greece alone, and it is used widely in Portugal, Italy and the Netherlands.

¹⁴ <http://geodata.gov.gr/content/news/%ce%ba%ce%b1%ce%bb%cf%89%cf%83%ce%bf%cf%81%ce%af%cf%83%ce%b1%cf%84%ce%b5-%cf%83%cf%84o-%ce%bd%ce%ad%ce%bf-geodata-gov-gr/>

¹⁵ <http://publicamundi.eu/>

¹⁶ https://www.greeklug.gr/images/stories/drastiriotites/pressrelease-20130111-dim_kal-libreoffice-en.pdf

¹⁷ <https://epoptes.org/>

