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# The Western Silk Road in Greece

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## Western Silk Road in Greece

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Silk Road Overview

Since ancient times, the Silk Road served as a bridge between East and West, uniting three continents and different cultures along its route. Nowadays, the historic Silk Road revives again as an up-and-coming tourist destination, engaging numerous countries, with rich natural and cultural heritage<sup>1</sup>.

The continuously evolving sector of tourism offers an excellent opportunity for social development and economic growth in the wider Silk Road region, which should be further explored in order to reach its full potential in a sustainable manner.

In particular cultural tourism, given its broad remit and international appeal, has developed to become a significant phenomenon in the travel and tourism industry and one of the largest and dynamic segment of global tourism. As a result, policy makers, tourist boards and stakeholders around the world are viewing cultural tourism as an important potential alternative source of tourism growth which concerns an increasing part of the international tourism market. Accordingly, Silk Road tourism, as a special form of cultural tourism, can be used as a branding, marketing and development tool in a wide range of situations to further a wide variety of tourism policy goals.

Acclaimed as the "greatest route in the history of mankind" the ancient Silk Road has been an important vehicle for trade between ancient empires of China, India, Persia & Rome, through a complex network of overland and sea routes. Dating back to 200 BC, the route was a channel for communication among people and cultures, inspiring the exchange of goods (from glass, furs, porcelain, perfume, gems, and carpets to livestock, spices, mirrors, paper and gunpowder), know-how, technology, religion and ideas on art, science and philosophy. These ideas were then passed on again and again, both to the East and West, in what is considered to be the "greatest cultural exchange in the history of mankind". With its richly diverse cultural heritage and its wealth of natural tourism attractions spanning across 12,000 kilometres of ancient routes, the Silk Road today offers visitors the opportunity to experience a unique network of heritage destinations, following the footsteps of some of the world's most acclaimed explorers such as Alexander the Great and Marco Polo<sup>2</sup>.

Nowadays, the Silk Road is a rich tapestry of tourism destinations and products based on the unique and outstandingly rich heritage, nature, and traditions of dozens of distinct histories, peoples and cultures all along the timeless route now extending a warm welcome to visitors. In view of the above mentioned framework, the UNWTO launched in 1993<sup>3</sup> the Silk Road Programme, a collaborative initiative designed to enhance sustainable tourism development along the historic Silk Road route, aiming to maximize the benefits of tourism development for local Silk Road communities, while stimulating investment and promoting the conservation of the route's natural and cultural heritage.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://silkroad.unwto.org/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/introduction\\_to\\_the\\_silk\\_road\\_programme\\_eng.pdf](http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/introduction_to_the_silk_road_programme_eng.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> The concept of a Silk Road tourism project was first raised at UNWTO's General Assembly in Indonesia in 1993. (Source: <http://silkroad.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/bannerhistorywebsite.pdf>)

A key segment of this program is the Western Silk Road (WSR) Tourism Development Initiative, a joint tourism project, launched by the UNWTO and the European Union (EU) in 2016. The project aims at revitalizing the Silk Road heritage located in the European region, from the Caspian Sea, around the Black Sea and along parts of the Mediterranean basin.

The main assets that have motivated UNWTO and the EU to pursue this joint project are the untapped unique Silk Road heritage of the region, the available land and sea routes, the diverse cultural assets and the market that increasingly demands authentic travel experience, features that travelers can easily come across in Greece too. Therefore the implementation of a Silk Road Label that reinforces Greece's role in the Silk Road and at the same time serves as a quality assurance to the travelers is being suggested. Once applied to the entire Silk Road region, the label will reinforce the idea of the Silk Road as a cultural and trading road consisting of many different countries and also identify the participating Silk Road tourism destinations as such (WTO 2013).

Within this framework, and acknowledging the need for improving the current economic environment in Greece through sustainable ways, the research team of the Laboratory of Applied Economics and Development, with scientific responsible Dr. Stella Kostopoulou, Associate Professor of the School of Economic Sciences at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, participates in the Phase 1 of the Initiative: The Development of a Western Silk Road (WSR) Brand Research and Handbook, on behalf of Greece.

As a result of the aforementioned, a SWOT analysis of the WSR Brand of Greece has been conducted, aiming to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the tourism development prospect based on the WSR in Greece, with a particular focus on identifying the impact of creating and using a WSR Label across the country at a later phase.

Particularly, this research analysis has examined the existing usage of the Silk Road identity across the country, to highlight destination-based WSR experiences, audit connections and linkages through tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Greek key destinations, reveal "hidden" resources directly or indirectly related to the Silk Road and develop concepts, so as to strengthen the use of the WSR Brand to bring the expected benefits. Such benefits, as defined by UNWTO (2016) are, the capacities' reinforcement of tourism stakeholders willing to explore new markets and to engage new partners, the combination of the available tourism assets to increase visitor length of stay, regional dispersal and yield across the country and the differentiation of the tourism offer.

The analysis is designed to explore new opportunities for Greek destinations and local tourism stakeholders interested in cross-border partnerships and in developing novel products focused on untapped Silk Road heritage.

Considering the above mentioned characteristics, assets and benefits, the WSR tourism may be regarded as a main form of the sustainable tourism model and therefore provide solutions for economic, social and spatial problems/weaknesses in less developed regions and traditional tourism destinations of the country.

Such initiatives are crucial in order to ensure that sustainable tourism development becomes and remains a priority in local, regional, national, European and global level.

## 1.2 Methodological Approach

To accomplish this mission, specific methodology stages have been followed within this research, in line with the UNWTO Guidelines (WTO 2016), and a research plan has been formed in order to examine the potential of the WRS tourism development in Greece at the national and regional level. The regional scale analysis of the research has been introduced to respond to the spatial aspect that, while tourism is a worldwide phenomenon, eventually is formed locally, depending on the particularities of nations, regions and localities. Therefore, the research structure and its content are specified as follows:

**Stage 1.** Secondary research with accumulation of the available documentation on the specific subject by Greek and international bibliography. The data collection was carried out with techniques such as resourcing of data through secondary sources and archive material that are related to the Silk Road heritage of Greece (historical documents, academic articles and researches, museum archives, cultural products, festivals, music, traditional dances, gastronomy, folklore and other attributes).

**Stage 2.** Primary research which concerns the field study at the national, regional and local level, in order to collect qualitative information that was not possible to be gathered through the secondary research. So, at this stage, an extensive primary research has been embarked to comprehend the opinions, views and attitudes of tourism stakeholders involved in tourism development, marketing and delivery across the country, regarding the exploration of tourism development opportunities based on the Silk Roads in Greece. The data collection was carried out with techniques, such as questioning through on line submission, using Google Forms questionnaire. The aim of the questioning was to identify critical information and possible gaps and evaluate tourism opportunities for marketing and promotion WSR Brand at all levels: site, destination, regional and national.

For this reason, nearly 400 questionnaires have been sent to stakeholders in tourism development, falling into 3 categories: Tourism Industry, Government Authorities with relative competence and Civil Societies, such as: national authorities for tourism and culture; representatives of regional/local tourism organizations and tourism development companies; regional and local authorities; local populations and host communities at tourism destinations through their representatives; tourism establishments and tourism enterprises, including their associations (national and local); institutions engaged in financing tourism projects; tourism professionals and tourism consultants; trade unions of tourism employees; other juridical and natural persons having stakes in tourism development including non-governmental organizations specializing in tourism.

**Stage 3:** Conducting the SWOT Analysis. According to the data collected on Stage 1 and 2, a nationwide SWOT table is drawn, listing all the information identified for the above aim. For the nationwide SWOT Analysis to be drawn, a regional research analysis for each one of the 13 Administrative Regions of Greece has been conducted, aiming to examine the determining factors of tourism development at regional level. Attempts were made to highlight the cultural heritage for each Administrative Region (archaeological sites, monuments, museums, traditional art, folklore/ethnographic data, such as music and dance festivals and other events, gastronomy), natural

environment, infrastructure (transport, health, education etc.) and especially tourism infrastructure (hotels, chambers etc.), aiming to explore the tourism development opportunities based on the Silk Road and record the advantages and prospects for each region.

As a result, a regional SWOT table for each region has been drawn. All selected findings for each region, were critically assessed and incorporated in the form of a combined - comparative table, conducting in this way to the WSR National SWOT Analysis of Greece, with the aim to identify at the national level which are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the tourism development prospect based on the WSR in Greece.

**Stage 4:** Presenting the report of the final findings.

Following the above methodology stages, and in line with UNWTO guidelines (WTO 2016), the structure of the report on the findings was formed as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Silk Road Overview
2. Methodological Approach
3. Brief historical overview highlighting Greece's cultural assets connected with the Silk Road.
4. Tourism Development in Greece. The components of WSR Tourism Brand

Chapter 2: The WSR Regional SWOT Analysis of Greece

1. Analysis of the secondary sources findings at the regional level, for each of the 13 Administrative Regions of Greece, focusing on specific key elements:
  - General description of the profile of each region (geographical/ demographic/ economic/social characteristics, history, culture, tourism, growth potential, development comparative advantages).
  - Tourism development emphasizing on Silk Road Heritage of each Region.
  - Special focus on key regional destination-based WSR experiences, connections and linkages through tangible and intangible cultural heritage directly or indirectly related to the Silk Road.
2. Regional SWOT Analysis of each region with information relevant to the Silk Road.

Chapter 3: The WSR National SWOT Analysis of Greece

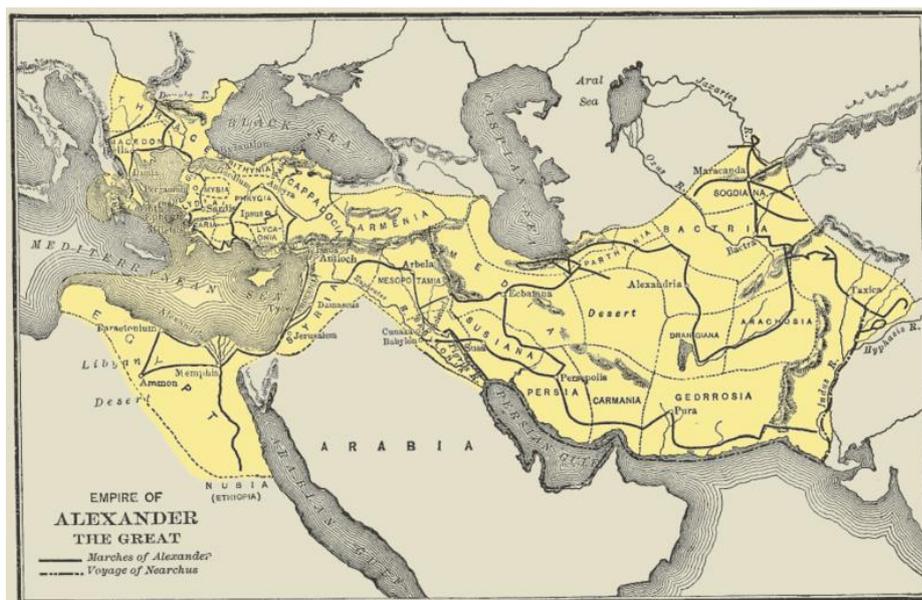
1. The Western Silk Road in Greece. Analysis of the secondary sources findings at the national level,
2. Mapping the Western Silk Road in Greece
3. Analysis of the primary research findings at the national level
4. The WSR National SWOT Analysis of Greece

### 1.3 Brief historical overview highlighting Greece's cultural assets connected with the Silk Road.

According to historical resources and the cultural heritage analysis of Greece, there is a strong common history linking Greece and the Silk Routes through the centuries.

The Silk Road was a network of trade routes, formally established during the Han Dynasty of China, which linked the regions of the ancient world in commerce. The Han opened trade with the west in 130 B.C.E., using the network of Silk Road routes, but in 1453 C.E. the Ottoman Empire closed the routes. On the contrary, it is believed that the route was already several thousand years old by then and as Herodotus has written in his *Histories*, about the speed and efficiency of the Persian messengers: *"There is nothing in the world that travels faster than these Persian couriers. Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor darkness of night prevents these couriers from completing their designated stages with utmost speed"*. Thus, it is revealed that the history of the Silk Road pre-dates the Han Dynasty in practice (Mark 2014).

The Western contact with China dates back to 200 B.C.E. Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) was one of the first Silk Road travelers from the West. While being on the road with his army for around 10 years, he traveled across Central Asia, the Persian Empire and North India (Map 1.1). Through his military conquests he opened maritime routes and enabled trading between the East and the West (WTO 2013). After Alexander the Great conquered the Persians, he established the city of Alexandria Eschate in 339 B.C.E. in the Fergana Valley of Neb (modern Tajikistan). Leaving behind his wounded veterans in the city, Alexander moved on. In time, these Macedonian warriors intermarried with the indigenous populace creating the Greco-Bactrian culture which flourished under the Seleucid Empire following Alexander's death. According to the Greek historian Strabo (63-24 CE) the Greeks *"extended their empire as far as the Seres"* (Seres was the name by which the Greeks and Romans knew China, meaning 'the land where silk came from') (Mark 2014).



Map 1.1. Map of the Empire of Alexander the Great

Source: <http://media.bloomsbury.com/rep/files/13b-empire-of-alexander-the-great.png>

Alexander the Great managed to create an Empire as a uniform economic and cultural world stretching from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Indus River, with a common Greco-Oriental culture. A single trade area was opened to the merchants of each region and all benefited from the release of Persian bullion. The new trade areas opened that today are worldwide known as the famous "Silk Routes" (Marx 2000).

Historically, the silk was introduced in Europe during the Byzantine period, in the years of Emperor Justinian's reign. At that time silk was of tremendous value, equal to gold or gems. Emperors wore only purple silk and silk garments. The art of sericulture remained a secret for almost twenty centuries and the export of cocoons was forbidden. But two monks who returned from a missionary in China in 554 E.C. brought silk cocoons hidden in their sticks and that is how silk was brought to Europe (Hunt 2013).

Over time, the Silk Road routes stretched from China through India, Asia Minor, up throughout Mesopotamia, to Egypt, the African continent, Greece, Rome, and Britain. Silk was the primary commodity or driver of the exchange systems, but in reality there were a great number of goods being moved, over both short and long distances, and through a variety of different mechanisms. Many had a far greater impact than silk, reflecting the spread of technologies (such as gunpowder, paper or cotton production), or were moved in far greater volumes (e.g. salt, tea, copper or iron). Chinese silk was among the most valuable, but there were also included materials such as precious metals and stones, ceramics, perfumes, ornamental woods, and spices in return for cotton and wool textiles, glass, wine, amber, carpets and the celebrated horses (Williams 2014). Through the Silk Road trade various civilizations and cultures were connected along the Silk Route length of more than 12,000 km, which makes it arguably the longest cultural route in the history of humanity. As Mark (2014) mentions "*Even so, by the time of the Roman Emperor Augustus (27 BCE – 14 CE) trade between China and the west was firmly established and silk was the most sought after commodity in Egypt, Greece and Rome*".

#### **1.4 Tourism Development in Greece. The components of WSR Tourism Brand**

Tourism is a critical sector for the economic and social development of Greece, also due to its spatial and environmental dimensions, and currently even more because of the recent economic recession consequences. Within the development planning period 2014-2020, tourism is placed among the main axes of the national development strategy and acknowledged as a prime significant contribution towards the recovery effort of the Greek economy.

In addition, there is intensified necessity for overcoming the problem of intense seasonality in tourism activity and for creating new tourism products and new competitive destinations based on sustainability and cultural heritage.

In this context, tourism development based on the WSR is considered to have considerable potential to enrich and differentiate the tourism offer of traditional tourism destinations in Greece, and also to provide sustainable development prospects for less developed regions. Furthermore, the use of the WSR Brand is expected to add significant value to the national and regional tourism policy, towards the direction of the spatial, temporal and thematic differentiation of the tourism product of Greece.

Connecting the cardinal points on the historical Silk Road, China, Egypt and Rome, Greece remains over time one of the focal strategic passages of the ancient Silk Road and an important hub of humans, goods and civilizations. Greece, widely acknowledged as the birthplace of the Western civilization, should maintain the advantages stemming from its strategic geopolitical location, as the bridge/ crossroad between Western and Eastern civilizations.

Moreover, it is worth underlying that according to the Guide prepared by TripAdvisor Travel Trends for the UNWTO Silk Road Programme-2016, Greece is the 4<sup>th</sup> most researched Silk Road country by global travelers on TripAdvisor in 2015 after Italy, Spain and Japan (UNWTO - TripAdvisor, 2016). Based on TripAdvisor bubble ratings in 2015, Greece scored 4.34 (out of 5).

It is also worth noting, that Greece is firmly in the Top 10 of the countries associated with the Silk Road that travelers have visited or plan to visit in the next five years. This finding is a common trend among travelers located in Asia-Pacific (APAC) and non-APAC countries (UNWTO - TripAdvisor, 2016).

All the aforementioned information highlights that Greece, is an attractive Silk Road destination. However, it seems that Greece has not yet yielded the linkage with the Silk Road, as emerges from the extensive research conducted on primary and secondary sources.

## CHAPTER 2: THE WSR REGIONAL SWOT ANALYSIS OF GREECE

### 2.1 Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace



Map 2.1.1: Location of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace Region in Greece.  
Source: [http://cp.pamth.gov.gr/civil/?page\\_id=1453](http://cp.pamth.gov.gr/civil/?page_id=1453)

#### A. Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace profile analysis

##### 2.1.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

The Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace is one of the thirteen administrative regions of Greece. It consists of the northeastern parts of the country, comprising the eastern part of Greek Macedonia along with Western Thrace, and including the islands of the Thracian Sea Thasos and Samothrace. The Region was established within the 1987 administrative reform, while according to Kallikratis recent administrative reform plan N.3852/2010, the Region now consists of five Regional Units (former prefectures): Evros, Rhodope, Xanthi, Kavala and Drama.

Located on the northeastern border of Greece, the Region is a national border, a border of the EU, and a node of geopolitical importance between Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey. Since Bulgaria's and Romania's EU accession in 2007, the Region plays the role of an "open space" of trading and social activities connecting the Balkan and European areas with Greece. As a result, during the last decade the Region has evolved from a 'geographic frontier' to the North into a crossroad and a 'gateway' of the country and the European Union (ETAM, 2015). The key factors that contributed to this evolution were mainly the enlargement of the EU within neighboring states, as well as the completion of Egnatia Motorway. Furthermore, as a seaport area of the eastern Balkans, the region plays a key role strategically and geopolitically linking European countries and the Balkans with Greece.

### **2.1.2 Geographical and geophysical characteristics**

The natural environment in the Region is characterized by unique biotopes and a rich variety of habitats, hosting a large number of rare species. There are many significant protected reserves: Elati, Dadia and Frakto forests – the only virgin forest in Greece – Porto Lagos lagoon, Evros Delta. The natural environment is protected by the Ramsar Treaty (since four out of the eleven Greek wetlands of international importance are in this area) and by the E.U. initiatives CORINE and NATURA 2000.

The area combines the mountainous scenery of Rhodope Mountains, with the fertile plains and the seas and lagoons in the south. The Rhodope mountain range, the natural border between Greece and Bulgaria, the three rivers, Strimonas, Evros and Nestos, with the latter forming a natural boundary between Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, the forest complex in Drama and the forest of Nestos, are significant biotopes. The Evros and the Nestos Delta and the lake ecosystems are well preserved and are sanctuaries for a large number of different species of breeding or wintering birds. Mineral wealth is of particular importance for the region (Konsolas et al. 2002). The climate is continental with perceptible diversions between summer and winter temperatures.

### **2.1.3 History of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Region**

Thrace in antiquity included what is today Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. Its long history goes back to the 6th millennium BCE (Middle Neolithic). The island of Thassos preserves traces of the Palaeolithic, namely ochre mines and tools. The region established firm relations with the Greek world of the South, through the wave of colonization that appeared around the 8th century BCE. Around 140 A.D. Thrace was subjected to the Roman domination and the area kept its rural character. During the reign of Justinian many fortresses, still visible, were constructed in the region (Kiriakides 1960). During the Byzantine period, there was considerable population growth and economic prosperity.

Since Roman Times the majority of Northern Greece's settlements were located near ancient Via Egnatia, one of the two most important roads leading to the capital Rome. Via Egnatia played a key role to economic and cultural development of the broader area as many travelers came across Via Egnatia with their works, such as manuscripts, icons, smalt, goldsmith's, silversmith's, coppersmith's or embroidery items.

By 1453 A.D. Thrace fell to the Ottoman invasion and until its liberation in 1920 had been under the rule of the Ottomans, Latins and finally the Bulgarians. Large part of the area's historical monuments was destroyed during that period, but fortunately, many remains from the byzantine era are still kept. The rest of Thrace was divided among Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the Balkan Wars and World War I. The large-scale Greek-Turkish population exchanges of 1923 with the Treaty of Lausanne finalized the reversal of Western and Eastern Thrace region's pre-Balkan War demography. The treaty granted the status of a minority to the Muslims in Western Thrace, in exchange for a similar status for the ethnic Greek minority in Istanbul and the Aegean islands of Imvros and Tenedos.

### 2.1.4 Demographic characteristics

The Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (R.E.M.Th.) covers 14,158km<sup>2</sup> corresponding to 10.7% of the total national surface area, while the number of resident population rises to 608,182, or 5.6% of Greece's resident population<sup>4</sup>. 66,8% of the Region's population lives in the seven larger urban centres, Komotini, the Region's administrative seats, two port cities Alexandroupoli and Kavala, and three mainland urban centres Xanthi, Drama and Orestiada. The Region includes two islands, Thassos and Samothrace, both with long history extending thousands of years.

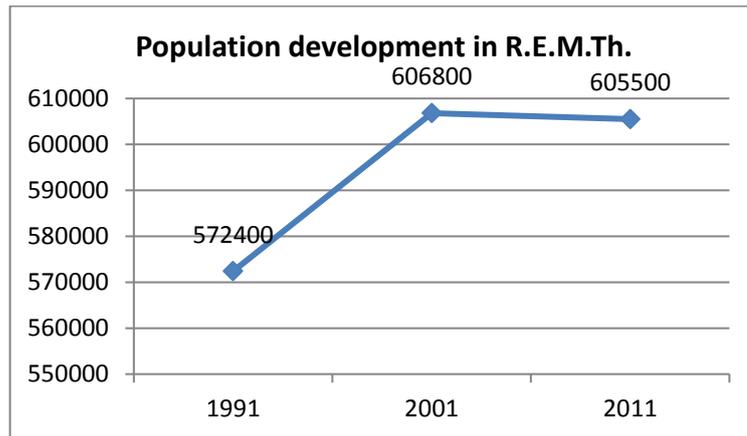


Figure 2.1.1: Population development in R.E.M.Th. (1991-2011). Source: [http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/1515741/GreeceInFigures\\_2016Q3\\_GR.pdf/a5def5de-e7f7-423c-a23b-4e3e677a448c](http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/1515741/GreeceInFigures_2016Q3_GR.pdf/a5def5de-e7f7-423c-a23b-4e3e677a448c)

The Regional Unit of Evros concentrates the major population proportion (24.3% of the total population of the Region) with 147,947 inhabitants, followed by the Regional Unit of Kavala (22.80%) with 138,687 inhabitants. Kavala is the most important economic and development centre of the Region.

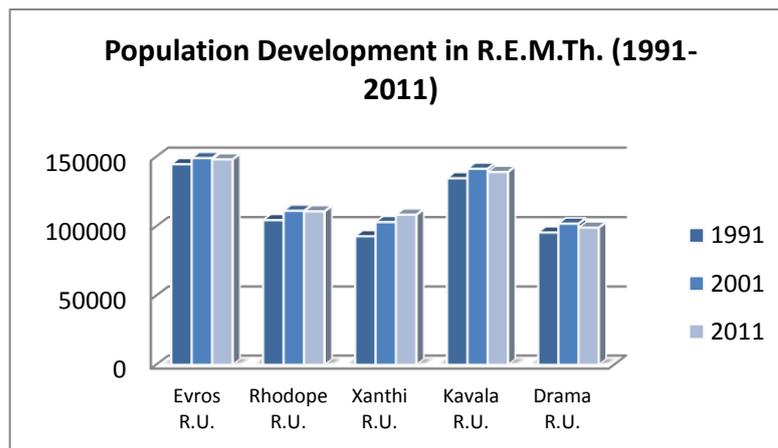


Figure 2.1.2 : Population development in R.E.M.Th. per Regional Unit. Source: [http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/1515741/GreeceInFigures\\_2016Q3\\_GR.pdf/a5def5de-e7f7-423c-a23b-4e3e677a448c](http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/1515741/GreeceInFigures_2016Q3_GR.pdf/a5def5de-e7f7-423c-a23b-4e3e677a448c)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/1515741/GreeceInFigures\\_2016Q3\\_GR.pdf/a5def5de-e7f7-423c-a23b-4e3e677a448c](http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/1515741/GreeceInFigures_2016Q3_GR.pdf/a5def5de-e7f7-423c-a23b-4e3e677a448c)

## 2.1.5 Development profile of the Region

### a. Economic characteristics

While being one of the most industrialised regions of Greece, East Macedonia and Thrace is one of the regions with the highest share of primary (agriculture) sector in the economy, with considerable service sector (which, however, is essentially based on non-traded and public services and tourism). The Region may be characterised as mainly rural, given that the primary sector constitutes its basic productive sector: the percentage share of the primary sector in the gross value added (GVA) of the Region amounts to 6.2% (a percentage which is twice the national average), whereas it participates by approximately 40% in the total exports of the Region (Reid et al., 2013). The economy is based mainly on agriculture and livestock farming, as well as on constructional and industrial activity, trade, commerce, transport, education, and public administration. The services sector dominates the regional economy and in 2013 accounted for 73.8% of the regional GVA, while the secondary sector share was 18.6% and that of the primary one was 7.6%.

#### i. Primary sector

The utilised agricultural area of the region amounts to 4,000km<sup>2</sup>, or 28% of the total area of the Region (Tolias et al., 2015). An important advantage to the economic growth of the region is added by the forests. The arable plains (58% of them are irrigated) are cultivated intensively, producing cotton, corn, tobacco, grains and tomato. The agriculture of asparagus and rice is widespread. Animal husbandry, although not systematic, is based mainly on pastoral goat and sheep breeding (Reid et al., 2013). More specifically:

- The economy of the Regional Unit of Evros depends on agriculture, which mainly consists of grains, pulses, fruits and vegetables, as well as the systematic cultivation of certain plants used in industry such as the sunflower and the sesame. The production of sugar canes supplies the sugar factory in north Evros, where the asparagus plant is systematically cultivated and exported internationally (90% of total production is exported to the international markets, especially Germany) (Kolonas, 2011). Mulberry trees, especially for sericulture, almond trees, apple trees, pear trees and olive trees are also cultivated.
- The Regional Unit of Rhodope produces good quality honey, wine and traditional Greek coffee, and is well known for the syrup sweets and dried fruits and nuts. Cotton, tobacco, wheat, corn, sugar cane, sunflower, cherry, kiwi and vegetables are the basic agricultural products.
- The Regional Unit of Xanthi produces the renowned aromatic tobacco, cotton, wheat, corn, kiwi and vegetables, as well as syrup sweets. Throughout the Mountain of Rhodope range aromatic herbs are easily found (oregano, theme, marjoram, tea, rosemary and sage).
- In the Regional Unit of Kavala, the significant location of the urban centre of Kavala in Kavala bay has historically favoured its development. On the primary sector, people work mainly in agriculture, cultivating tobacco, grains, rice, pulses, kiwi, cotton, grapes and vegetables. There are also olive groves and vineyards. The cultivation of asparagus and rice thrive in the region of Chrysoupolis. The area's

traditional gastronomy products are salted preserves, kourampiedes (shortbread), olive oil, wine, tsipouro, sweet fruit preserves and cheese.

- In the Regional Unit of Drama economy relies mainly on agriculture and more specifically, grains, cotton, tomatoes, tobacco, grapevines, fruits and vegetables. Potatoes of Kato Nevrokopi are the most well known products of the area. The dense forests of the region also contribute to the economy, producing spruce, pine, beech, oak and poplar timber which supply the local industry.

Fishing is also of major importance in the Region. Evros River, the natural border between Greece and Turkey, named after Evros, son of Kassandros, king of Thrace, is one of the biggest rivers of the Balkan Peninsula and many fish farms operate in the Evros Delta. In the Vistonice bay fish is abundant and in the lake of Porto Lagos there are fish farms. Trout from the local rivers make a delicious treat in local restaurants. Furthermore, the Region has one additional comparative advantage: the soil map, which includes data relating to the level of nutrients, the level of heavy metals and other properties of the soils of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace (Reid et al. 2013). The subsoil of the region is rich in iron ore (in Thassos island) and in marble. Timber industry is another important sector for the economy. The sea is rich in fish and the subsoil in mineral wealth (marble, granite, graphite, geothermic field), while it is important to mention that in parts of Rhodope and Evros Regional Unit, gold deposits have been located (Christianou 2009).

## ii. Secondary sector

The secondary sector is dominated by the building sector and processing industries. It constitutes an important sector with respect to Gross Value Added produced and to employment in the Region. The processing sector shows an increase of turnover of 8.26% of gross profit in 2012 and with total exports that amount to almost 60% of total sales (Reid et al. 2013). The main industries are marble production, mining, food processing, tobacco and textile factories. The manufacturing sector has a high concentration of firms in clothing, textiles, food packaging, wood, paper and metal processing<sup>5</sup>, hence of medium to low technology. In addition, some large-technology intensive industries are located in the region, particularly in the sectors of chemicals and the manufacture of machinery and equipment. The extraction and processing of marble, the food and beverages industry and the timber industry are still active and follow the development of the national average.

Main processing activities include cutting and shaping of stones for construction purposes, textile industry and processing of plastic and rubber products, activities with a significant concentration of enterprises. More specifically, the leading sectors in terms of export activity in the Region for 2012 (in export value) are the textile industry and clothing, non-metallic minerals and foodstuffs. However processing activities, mainly textile and tobacco industries, are now on decline due to problems in infrastructure and policy of the global market: as statistical data present, textile industry shows a decrease of 6.7% in 2012 as compared to 2011 and 12.26% as compared to 2008. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that in 2010 there were 29 textile and clothing enterprises operating in the Region (Reid et al. 2013).

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.deldunantul.com/sites/default/files/newsletter\\_neebor\\_2011\\_winter.pdf](http://www.deldunantul.com/sites/default/files/newsletter_neebor_2011_winter.pdf)

Also, the vineyards have significantly developed for the production of wines of appellation, achieving international recognition. There are many wineries producing and exporting wine of high quality, for example in Maroneia and in Drama. In addition to the above, the industry of fertilizers and of phosphoric ammonium sulphate, as well as the industry of tobacco processing, contribute greatly, especially to the economy of Xanthi and Kavala Regional Units.

After the geopolitical changes in Eastern Europe in 1989, a substantial advantage was created for local industries in developing trade and production links with neighboring Balkan countries. There are five operating Industrial Areas in East Macedonia and Thrace (one in each Regional Unit) and three Biotechnical Parks. Also, the International Exhibition Centre of East Macedonia and Thrace is located in the industrial area of Komotini.

### **iii. Tertiary sector**

The tertiary sector equals to 10% of the total economic activity with exports overbalancing imports. The services sector however, apart from the retail trade and tourism, is mainly directed for regional needs and not internationally competitive, presenting limited potential at expanding to neighbouring countries based on innovation and high value added knowledge intensive segments.

There are important academic and research institutions operating in the Region, contributing to the development of the wider area, such as the Democritus University of Thrace<sup>6</sup>, the Technical Education Institution of Kavala<sup>7</sup>, the ATHENA Research Centre - Xanthi Branch, the Institute of Geology and Mineral Exploration (IGME) – Xanthi Branch<sup>8</sup>, the Fisheries Research Institute<sup>9</sup> (CERTH, 2016). Regarding health care facilities, there are General Hospitals in Alexandroupoli (academic hospital, one of the best equipped in the Region), Didymoteicho, Komotini, Xanthi, Kavala and Drama. Moreover, there are also fifteen Health Centres in the Region, Diagnostic medical centres, private clinics and private medical facilities (ETAM, 2015).

### **b. Transport infrastructure**

The transport infrastructure plays a key role in the development of economy and trade in the area. The construction of Egnatia Motorway reduced time travel between the Region's major urban centres and the rest of Greece. Also, the vertical axes linking the Region with Bulgaria provide opportunities for further development and transnational cooperation. National and local roads also provide satisfying interconnection with the wider area, although they need upgrading, especially in mountainous areas. The railway network is connecting Alexandroupoli (Thrace) with Thessaloniki (Central Macedonia).

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<sup>6</sup> Democritus University of Thrace, established in 1973 and named after Greek philosopher Democritus who was born in Abdera, Thrace, has played a defining role in the economy, in strengthening the national and cultural identity of the region of Thrace and the overall image of the wider area. The University is based in Komotini and its' eight Departments are dispersed in all three Regional Units of Thrace.

<sup>7</sup> The Technological Educational Institute of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, based in Kavala, founded in 1976 has three campuses, the main in Kavala and two others in Drama and Didymoteicho (Evros).

<sup>8</sup> The Institute of Geology and Mineral Exploration (IGME) – Xanthi Branch, founded in 1976 is by legislation the State's technical advisor in geoscientific matters

<sup>9</sup> The Fisheries Research Institute located in Kavala, is one of the five specialized research institutes of N.AG.RE.F., responsible to conduct research and to promote technology and knowledge in the fishery sector

The line started operating in 1896, linking Constantinople and Thessaloniki via Adrianopoli and Alexandroupoli. For military reasons, the railway line followed a route that was not seen from the sea (Map 2): Doirani, Serres, Drama, Xanthi, Komotini, Alexandroupolis (Papadimitriou, 2005).



Map 2.1.2: Transport infrastructure in Northern Greece. Source of background map: <http://www.ose.gr/en/25-about-ose/89->

The ports of Kavala, Porto Lagos and Alexandroupolis, as well as the airports "Alexander the Great" in Kavala and "Democritus" in Alexandroupolis, not only serve the traveling passengers, but also the transport of local produce. Kavala international airport "Alexander the Great" and Alexandroupolis international airport "Democritus" are of great importance for the Region, serving traveling passengers and transport of local produce. Both airports began operating as national airports, growing fast and providing services also to neighbouring areas. Unfortunately, in recent years they gradually lost their commercial character, with a decrease in freight traffic, mainly due to the economic crisis (Reid et al. 2013).

The Region of East Macedonia - Thrace is expected to be developed as the "new energy centre" of Greece, in terms of production, transporting and interconnecting with international networks. This is due to planning and implementation of large-scale energy projects: the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), designed to transfer natural gas on ground from Turkey to Albania and then underwater to Italy, oil pipeline Bourgas – Alexandroupoli, gas pipe-line Southstream, high tension networks, hydroelectric projects –and renewable resources such as large Aeolian parks.

The Region is already independent in terms of energy and this has been achieved through the production of environmentally friendly electricity generation, utilising diverse resources such as natural gas, hydro-power, as well as environment-friendly renewable energy sources (e.g. wind power). Also, the area has exploitable deposits of mainly low enthalpy geothermal energy, suitable for domestic heating. The multiplicity of sources, combined with the strategic location of the Region provides many prospects of competitiveness in the field of energy and the opportunity to upgrade its geopolitical position, aiming at attracting international business interest for the realisation of investments.

### 2.1.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage

In the tertiary sector, there are considerable opportunities for the development of tourism due to important natural and cultural resources, the islands of Thassos and Samothrace, Mount Rhodope and north Evros, Nestos and Evros rivers. The rich natural environment combines unique natural beauty of the mountainous areas of Rhodope Mountains, fertile valleys and clean beaches and seas, while appearing Protected Areas - Ramsar sites and Natura 2000 (Papagiannis et al. 2014). Also, the finest local traditional products and natural and cultural assets of the area are an important source of income (Christianou 2009). Urban tourism is also showing significant growth potential, especially since major regeneration projects have been implemented, while there is considerable potential for further growth. Cultural heritage and the multicultural element of Thrace, is of great importance for tourism development.

Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Region is not among the most touristically developed areas of the country, but there are perspectives for further tourism development. The contribution of tourism at the regional GDP was 5% in 2014, very low compared to the ones of traditional tourism destinations (ex. Crete, Aegean and Ionian Islands e.tc.) (Christianou, 2009). The Region accounts for 2.4% of nights spent by residents and non-residents out of the total percentage of nights spent nationally in 2014 (EL.STAT. 2016). Residents and non-residents overnight stay in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace decreased in 2014 by -1.9% compared to 2013, totaling 1,787mil. Stays (EL.STAT. 2016).

In 2013, there were 21,360 beds in 383 accommodation units operating in the Region, 2.3% of total beds in Greece (ETAM, 2015). Hotel capacity is highly concentrated in the coastal zone of Kavala, in Thassos island and in Evros Regional Unit where Samothrace island. There is a strong seasonality in these destinations affecting the overall seasonality of tourism in the Region (Galanopoulos, Metaxas & Toliás 2014). There are fifteen traditional accommodation facilities and fifteen organised camp sites in the Region, where also 7% of the food service operations nationwide (including, restaurants, tavernas, pizzerias, fast food e.tc.) are concentrated (ETAM, 2015).

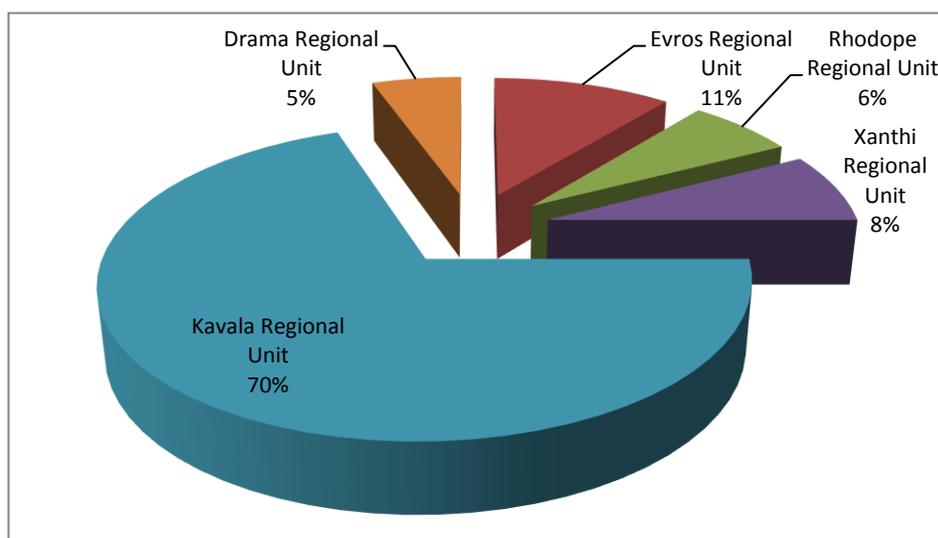


Fig. 2.1.3 Bed distribution in R.E.M.Th per Regional Unit in 2012 Source: ETAM S.A. (2015).

The main tourist activities include cultural tourism (archaeological sites, historical monuments, museums, traditional and neoclassical architecture, local traditions, customs and festivals e.tc.), religious tourism (monasteries, mosques, the Byzantine Mt Papikios on Rhodope Mountains e.tc.), exhibition and conference tourism, ecotourism (Nestos, Rhodope Mountains, Dadia, Evros Delta, Frakto forest e.tc.), therapeutic tourism (mud baths, thermal spa), and agrotourism (farms and guest houses).

### **2.1.7 Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road**

#### **Cultural assets connected with the Silk Road**

A strong historical link of the Region to the Silk Road is the long history of silk production in Soufli, Evros, dating back to Byzantine times. Soufli has been inhabited since the Alexandrian period as indicate the discovered Hellenistic tombs. The town developed and flourished thanks to sericulture. Growing into a trading center with exporting activities throughout Europe, Soufli continued to live almost exclusively on sericulture until the early 1980's.

Soufli is probably the most notable town in the Evros Regional Unit, as far as it concerns the silk industry that flourished there in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The archaeological finds and tombs indicate the existence of the settlement since the Hellenistic period. Beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Soufli became an administrative center of a rich province of almost 60,000 inhabitants, extending on both sides of the Evros valley.

As one of the few population centers in the region, Soufli became an important trading center. The construction of the railway and of the railway station (1872) contributed to its economic development. Furthermore, the discovery of a method to fight against the diseases of cocoons by Louis Pasteur contributed to the fast development of sericulture and gradually, Soufli was recognized as an important trading and craft centre. Big amounts of cocoons were delivered to Istanbul and Bursa and exported to foreign countries, so that the area around Soufli during many decennia was called the “financial lung” of Thrace.



Soufli Silk Stock Exchange market in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Source: [http://history-pages.blogspot.gr/2012/10/blog-post\\_347.html](http://history-pages.blogspot.gr/2012/10/blog-post_347.html)



Soufli silk house in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Source: [http://history-pages.blogspot.gr/2012/10/blog-post\\_347.html](http://history-pages.blogspot.gr/2012/10/blog-post_347.html)

Sericulture is a very complex procedure. In late April or early May, when the mulberry trees began to come into leaf, the sericulturists would buy the eggs from the Sporades. They were incubated in hatcheries. The newly-hatched silkworms, about 2-3mm long,

were collected on mulberry leaves and taken to the krevatia or ‘beds’. The rearing process took 30-40 days and was completed in five stages, alternating with four dormant periods. The kladoma or ‘branching’ follows. The sericulturists placed branches on the rearing beds and the worms crawled onto them. A day or two later, the xekladoma or ‘debranching’ began. To prevent the chrysalises from piercing the cocoons, they were heated in special steam ovens to kill them. The cocoons were then dried and mechanically sorted. The well-formed ones were sent for reeling, or unwinding. The women used the second-grade (soft or damaged) cocoons to produce koukoularika or spun silk (Giannakidou 2016). The first silk mill was built in 1903 by the Azaria brothers and occupied 150 workers (Papastratis, 2015, p.3). Another silk mill is the Tzivre factory, ruins of which are still found in the city. The Silk Museum as well as other cocoon houses (spaces for breeding silkworms) found in Soufli and Evros are characteristic of the area’s traditional architecture<sup>10</sup>. The town’s “koukoulospita” were high-ceiling houses whose upper floors once housed silk worms and their cocoons and their remains reflect the economy of that period.

The Tzivre Silk mill, a significant landmark in Soufli, is one of the most important signs of the industrialized silk production in Thrace, and an architectural treasure of the area. The factory opened its doors in 1909 by the Milan commercial house “Ceriano Fratelli”. In 1920 it was bought by the Jewish cocoon merchants Tzivre brothers and up to 1940 there were 150 workers in the factory. During World War II, all factories of the area stopped operating and after the war, silk production was dramatically reduced. As a result, the Tzivre factory shut down in 1963<sup>11</sup>. In recent years its restoration has started, in order to become an ‘Ecomuseum of preindustrial and Industrial Heritage’.



Workers in the Tzivre Silk factory (1935).  
Source: <https://soufli.wordpress.com/2013/06/17/>



The Tzivre Silk factory nowadays. Source: <http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.article&id=324564>

Soufli is the only city in Greece and Europe to be involved with the silkworm rearing and processing of yarn taken from the cocoon<sup>12</sup>. Silk produced in Soufli is of high quality. Today almost 30 tons of cocoons are produced in Evros, most of them exported, with potential for further development, as the demand for silk products worldwide is rising during the last decade<sup>13</sup>. Three local families run the last remaining silk factories and about 200 individuals are employed in the local industry nowadays, ranging from

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.xanthi.ilsp.gr/cultureportalweb/print.php?article\\_id=505&lang=en&print\\_mode=article](http://www.xanthi.ilsp.gr/cultureportalweb/print.php?article_id=505&lang=en&print_mode=article)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.article&id=324564>

<sup>12</sup> <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2013/02/14/soufli-still-produces-silk-for-europe/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.kathimerini.gr/829883/article/oikonomia/epixeirhseis/megalwnontas-meta3i>

sericulture to selling silk products at stores as well as artisans working on embroideries at home. However, Soufli is known for its wine as well, but the cultivation of mulberry trees reduced the land devoted to vines.

### Archaeological sites related to the Silk Road

Abdera, located in the Xanthi Regional Unit, is an important node of the wider area, due to its rich historical and cultural background. The archaeological site of Abdera, between river Nestos and Vistonida Lake, with its mythical foundation attributed to Heracles, who founded this *Greek polis* on behalf of his friend Abderus (Soustal, 1991). The ruins of the town may still be seen covering small hills and extend from an eastern to a western harbor. The Archaeological site of Abdera was known as 'Land of Beauty and Contemplation' (Mousopoulos 2007), dating from the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods.

During excavations in the wider area layers of sea shells were found, mainly *porphyra*, which was used for the production of Tyrian purple. The processing of this maritime snail was valuable due to its difficulty and the scarcity of these shells, and as a result the use of fabrics dyed with porphyra was a sign of wealth and power. This process is associated with purex purple production in Tunisia, which was a very important industry in Phoenician colonies. The existence of this layer of shells led the archaeologists to the assumption that a porphyry processing laboratory was operating in the area in Roman Times (Mpakirtzis & Triantafillos, 1988). Also, numerous remains of clay pottery and bronze indicate the existence of workshops in the town.

The area was a significant centre of economy and commerce as well as a cultural node. Numerous art crafts, works of stone, clay and bronze, mosaics, jewellery, remains of public and private buildings of unique architecture, temples e.tc. are only some indicators of the rich cultural heritage of Abdera. Furthermore, the existence of two ports and the overland route linking the Aegean coastline with the inner land of Thrace, contributed to the commercial and economic prosperity of Abdera. The area had autonomous coinage revealing the strong economy and commercial trade in the wider region. Abderian coins were found near the Nile Delta, Persepolis, indicating the extent of the city's export trade.



Murex Brandaris. Source: [http://www.ancient.eu/Tyrian\\_Purple/](http://www.ancient.eu/Tyrian_Purple/)

Mandra: The area belonged to the 'Abdera land' and today the village Mandra is located there. Traces of ancient activity were found mainly on the hill Petrolofo and more specifically, there an extensive ancient tuff quarry was excavated, which produced materials found on the walls and many buildings in Abdera (Skarlatidou, 1990:611). This fact also indicates the presence of mineral resources in the area.

Gratsianou: The area is located in the Rhodope Regional Unit. The settlement of Gratsianou appeared during the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century above the village of Gratiini, 1,5km north of Komotini, ruins of which are preserved until nowadays. Excavations in the area revealed ruins of a small church in which were found two leaden vials (the Byzantines called the vials made of lead or clay koutrouvia, and were used by pilgrims to carry myrhh). Also, traces of pottery accessories were found, clearly showing that some pottery operated during the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Mpakirtzis 1979:339).

Maroneia, one of the Municipalities of the Rhodope Regional Unit, is of exceptional significance in the wider area, due to its archaeological site, located 4km north from Maroneia. The first residential trace was found before the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. as a walled settlement near mount Ismaros. There were two small ports and the settlement was on two important routes of commerce, fact that favored the flourishing of trade between Maroneia and the Thracian mainland. Maroneia was one of the most important towns of the Aegean Thrace during antiquity. Its most famous product, the wine, is mentioned as 'maroneitis' or 'maroneios', in the Odyssey and other ancient sources. East of Maroneia an ancient tunnel for gold or silver mining was found (Christianou, 2009a). Maroneia was a major commercial centre of the wider area, due to its location, its autonomous coinage and its wine. In addition to this, the area is known for the ancient theatre of Maroneia, numerous works of sculpture, pottery and paintings.

Ismaros: Ancient evidence refers to a town called Ismaros or Ismara, which together with Maroneia was a town of Kikones. Homer refers to Ismaros as the first station of Odyssey. The area was known for its wine 'ismarikos', as mentioned by many ancient and modern writers.

Vira: The area of Vira is located in the southern Regional Unit of Evros and is one of the historical settlements formed after the establishment of Moni Kosmosotiras. Vira was an important port and strategic node between two basic axes, Via Egnatia (as it was the last station before Evros towards Constantinople) and the transverse route which was parallel to the Evros riverside. Furthermore, significant samples of painting, sculpture and pottery were found, while 500m outside Vira's walls a metabyzantine ceramic furnace has been excavated.

Samothrace Island: Despite the lack of good ports, Samothrace Island in Regional Unit of Evros, held an important place in the maritime communications of Northern Aegean since antiquity, due to its geographical position in the middle of the Thracian Sea. The major part of the island is mountainous and timber, useful for ship construction, playing a significant role for its economy. There are also signs for the existence of minerals, mostly stone used for the construction of jewellery. Samothrace is also known for its rich cultural resources, monuments, architectural landmarks and sculptures. During the Hellenistic era the island flourished artistically, especially in sculpture and statuary, with the masterpiece of the Winged Victory of Samothrace.

Thassos Island: Thassos in Kavala Regional Unit, is an important island in North Aegean, with many potentials of touristic and economic development. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. numerous ceramic laboratories were operating, producing mainly amphorae where the famous Thassian wine was kept and was exported in great quantities to the ancient world. One of these laboratories was found in Fari, and produced luxurious ceramic basins of fine clay and pottery for everyday use.

## Museums

The Art Silk Museum of Soufli is a living thematical museum production and processing of silk in the town of Soufli. It is one of the kind museum about the history of silk and the bonds with the area's history. Housed in a "koukoulospito", the museum showcases a collection of silk-producing machinery and 200-years-old embroideries, among others.



Collection of traditional costumes in the Art Silk Museum. Source:  
<http://emtrace.org/en/museum/building/#jp-carousel-4320>



Art Silk Museum Source:  
<http://www.emtgreece.com/en/museums/art-silk-museum>

The stages of breeding silkworms up to the final point, of silk processing of yarn till and weaving, and of the silk production in total are exhibited. The original exhibits combined with modern technology are housed in the restored 1866 neoclassical building of the Tsiakiri Silk House, which has been active for the last 60 years in the production of silk in Soufli. The building was restored with natural materials, such as iron and wood and represents the local traditional architecture.



Exhibition in the Art of Silk Museum, Soufli. Source:  
<http://www.artofsilkmuseum.gr/?lang=en>



Main collection - Reeling machine in the Art of Silk Museum. Source:  
<http://www.artofsilkmuseum.gr/?lang=en>

Another museum about Silk in Soufli is the Silk Museum, which opened its doors in 1990, housed in the Kourtidis Mansion in Soufli. The mansion was restored in 2007 with genuine materials. The Silk Museum shows the history of natural silk route from China to Europe. It presents all the phases and stages of the pre-industrial process of rearing silkworms (sericulture) and processing of silk (silk manufacturing), within the socio-economic context that made the region an important silk-producing center in Greece (late 19<sup>th</sup> – mid-20<sup>th</sup> century). There are significant exhibitions of unique traditional Soufli costumes and accessories. The Museum organizes educational programs with games and activities for schools and group visits, such as the "Come to weave", where children are taught the sericulture cycle, the process of weaving and dyeing of silk.



Silk costumes in the Silk Museum.  
Source: <http://www.piop.gr/en/diktuo-mouseiwn/Mouseio-Metaxis/>



Silk Museum in Soufli. Source: [http://jti-rhodope.eu/poi.php?poi\\_id=1\\_177&lang=ru](http://jti-rhodope.eu/poi.php?poi_id=1_177&lang=ru)



Silk Museum Different phases of silk manufacturing. Source <http://www.piop.gr/en/diktuo-mouseiwn/Mouseio-Metaxis/to-mouseio.aspx>

The “Gnafala” Folklore Museum of Soufli presents a large collection of traditional costumes and furniture, jewelry, musical instruments, religious and military species, tools, coins e.tc. in an elegant room in Soufli (Machairopoulou, 2006).



Collection of items at the Folklore Museum of Soufli, Gnafala Source: Machairopoulou (2006).

The History and Folklore Museum of Abdera, Xanthi, is housed in a restored neoclassic building, built in 1860. Among the main sections is the section of Textile Art, with carpets, embroidery, local costumes and various products of hand sewing<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.avdera.gr/index.php/parousiash-dimou/mouseia/laografiko-mouseio>



History and Folklore Museum of Abdera, Costume exhibition. Source: [http://www.jti-rhodope.eu/poi.php?poi\\_id=1\\_400&lang=en](http://www.jti-rhodope.eu/poi.php?poi_id=1_400&lang=en)

The Ethnological Museum of Thrace in Alexandroupolis was established to preserve historical memory in the wider geographical region of Thrace. The museum is housed in a stone mansion built in 1899 and is a self-funded project, sponsored partly by the Niarchos Foundation and the Ministry of Culture. The Ethnological Museum of Thrace is a living place of acquaintance with the folk culture of Thrace, linking tradition and knowledge contained in it. Some of the main exhibits are local traditional costumes, tools and handicrafts of Thrace. Among the museum's main sections are clothing in Thrace and dye works and textiles, as the Thracian textile industry played a major part in local cultural and economic life from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Silk, wool, cotton and flax were the main raw materials used. There is a special reference to silk and sericulture, because the town of Soufli became an important silk-producing centre in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the first silk-mill operating in 1903 (Giannakidou 2016).

The Folklore Museum of Komotini, owned by the Educational Association of Komotini, operates since 1962. Exhibitions include objects from the Thracian art and everyday life of the local towns and the countryside. Traditional costumes, embroidery, carvings, copper, wood, clay and silver art crafts, agricultural tools, household items are among the museum's main exhibits. Many of these come from Eastern and Northern Thrace as well as from places of Asia Minor.–The Folklore Museum of the club of the Cappadocians of Evros, inaugurated in 2008, houses cultural centres of the Cappadocians. The design, construction and exhibition of objects made with a representational way to convey to visitors the atmosphere of the life in the villages of Cappadocia. In the Folklore Museum of Orestiada historical and folklore objects from Eastern Thrace, Eastern Rumelia and Western Thrace are exhibited, rural and urban traditional Thracian costumes, ecclesiastical items, tools, musical instruments and household items.

The Cultural Association Folk Museum of Didymoteicho is housed in the neoclassical building of Hatzirvassanis. Among the main exhibits of the original collection are traditional costumes of the region and other clothing, embroideries and woven beddings, traditional jewelry, religious and many other items. There is also a traditional retort for making raki (type of local alcohol drink, popular in Greece and Turkey) and tools of a former printing press. Also remarkable is the "giachana", the traditional sesame grinder for the production of sesame oil. In Feres (ancient Vira, Evros), the Folklore collection of Nikos Gotsis, kept at the house of Nikos Gotsis, comprises a wealth of objects, women's traditional costumes, furniture and appliances, documentary

evidence, such as photographs, public documents and schoolbooks that refer to the inhabitants of Feres who came from Eastern Thrace.

The Folklore Museum of Drama houses a considerable collection of costumes and artefacts of the folk culture of Drama and the wider area. The exhibits include, among others, a number of authentic folk costumes from Drama, the surrounding area, and the rest of Greece, old furniture from urban and rural homes, a barrel-organ, and a multitude of old objects. Also, the ecclesiastical Museum includes, ecclesiastical treasures of priceless spiritual and artistic value. The Collection of the Museum of Papanicolaou Foundation is a unique collection of items gathered for many years by the notary Papanicolaou. The two-storey building houses rare exhibits, such as manuscripts on papyrus, pottery and artifacts from the Byzantine period<sup>15</sup>. One of the museums of the region is the Constantin Carathéodory museum, dedicated to the great Greek mathematician with origins from Vyssa of Evros. According to historical resources, he contributed to the theories of his student Albert Einstein. The Imaret or nowadays, Ecclesiastical Museum of Metropolis Maroneias and Komotini, houses the collection of ecclesiastical objects, covering the period from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century are the evidence of post-Byzantine ecclesiastical art of the area.

The Tobacco Museum of Xanthi since 1992 is housed in a building that has been declared as a historical monument. The Tobacco Museum is expected to highlight the social life of Xanthi and its people, in association with the cultivation, production, processing and trading of tobacco. The Folklore Museum of F.E.X. in Xanthi is housed in Kougioumtzoglou Mansion (first tobacco tradesmen). The Tobacco Museum of Kavala is a depository to the memory of the cultivation and trade of tobacco. The museum demonstrates the processes involved in the cultivation of tobacco and the intricate commercial connections in which Kavala was the center. Tobacco brought a prosperity which can be seen by existence of fine mansions and impressively large warehouses throughout Thrace and Macedonia<sup>16</sup>.

The Municipal Museum of Kavala opened in 1986 in a two-story Neoclassical building in the city centre. On the first floor is housed the Folklore museum with folk costumes (mainly of the Sarakatsani), jewellery, embroidery, tools, porcelain and metal stoves e.tc. Nea Karvali is a village east from Kavala, where the local youth founded in 1981 the House of Culture New Karvali in order to improve conserve the cultural heritage. It displays traditional Cappadocian dresses, tsouhades (rugs decorated with lions and plane leaves) for holidays and weddings, the Cappadocian lyre known as the kemeni, tools and objects (for farming, commerce, quilt-making, pottery), Cappadocian receptacles known as lik-lik that were used as water and wine pitchers.

### **Silk Road Built Heritage**

New Mosque or Yeni Tzam in Komotini was founded in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century by the head of the financial department of the Ottoman Empire during the Reign of Sultan Murad III<sup>17</sup>. It is located in the old market of the city and is considered to be the oldest mosque in the Balkans. The old market of Komotini is an area of cultural interest in the city core and is characteristic of the city's multicultural identity. The Old Town of Xanthi is located

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.emtgreece.com/en>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/index.html>

<sup>17</sup>. <http://www.emtgreece.com/en/mosques/new-temenos-yeni-mosque>

in the north of Xanthi, constituting its historic core and was declared a town of cultural heritage in 1976. Today, it is the largest traditional settlement in north Greece and the best preserved example of communal organisation of the Greeks in late Ottoman period in the Greek mainland.

Since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, Thrace and Macedonia became centre of tobacco cultivation, with Xanthi and Kavala acting as the main commercial hubs of the tobacco trade. Tobacco was exported throughout Europe and to other provinces of the Ottoman Empire. A variety of 'oriental tobacco' known as basma was cultivated. The steady rise in tobacco use and the expansion of the tobacco market led to the creation of a separate professional group in the period of Ottoman rule, the guild of tobacco-merchants (*toutoundzides*). Xanthi produced the 'king of tobaccos' and became the home of the three largest tobacco companies in Greece. The state of the world tobacco market, coupled with events in local history (wars, enemy occupation, and an influx of refugees), meant that the tobacco economy went through periods of growth, decline, and stability (Giannakidou 2016).

The tobacco warehouses of Xanthi constitute a particularly important chapter in the region's history and architectural heritage. Built on the southeast of the Old Town, they formed a distinct district, clearly separated from the central commercial and residential areas. The first one-story tobacco warehouses were built after 1860 with traditional methods and materials based on the local morphological elements. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, bigger tobacco warehouses were built. These buildings are still landmarks of the urban net, play an important role in the continuity and completeness of the urban space and their large scale makes them suitable for new urban uses (Giannopoulou 2009). Today 55 tobacco warehouses survive, of which 25 are abandoned, 25 utilised for other, inferior uses, whilst five house cultural and leisure activities.

### Festivals – Folklore tradition

Of great importance is the Silk Festival in Soufli, taking place in Tzivre silk mill since 2003. It is organised by the local Association of Friends of Silk 'Chrissalida', the Evros Regional Unit and the Municipality of Soufli. During the week of the feast painting and object exhibitions about silk production and seminars take place ('Fashion design and Silk' for students of Technological Institutes and Design Schools nationwide), new designer contests, music, dance and gastronomy events. Its main aims are to promote the local cultural identity of Soufli as an important silk node and attract local and foreign visitors.



Exhibits from 'Fashion design and Silk' contest.  
Source: Fashion design and Silk contest, 2013.



Representation of silkworm breeding and silk processing during Soufli Silk Festival.  
Source: 4<sup>th</sup> Feast of Silk and Culture of Soufli Municipality, 2007.

The traditions and customs of Evros Regional Unit are quite distinctive. the 'Kourta', that is animal shearing, in Samothrace, the 'Tsitsi', in the Municipality of Tycherio, which is related with the appearance of goblins, the custom of 'Cortopoula' in Phylakto, are some of the customs taking place in the region (Machairopoulou, 2006).

There are many festivals and traditional customs taking place in the Regional Unit of Rhodope, where the most important is the festival of 'Eleftheria', an annual series of celebrations dedicated to the liberation of the city and its integration in Greece. Other annual festivals are the National Festival of Pontian Dances, with 400 associations participating, the Beer and Thracian Music Festival, the Student Digital Creation Festival, where entertainment activities about computing and digital technology take place, the Honey festival, the Cherry festival e.tc. The festival of Agios Helias is celebrated in many parts of the region, preserving an old custom known as 'Kourbani' (Christianou, 2009a).

Thousands of visitors flow into the town of Xanthi for the Carnival every year. The annual celebration of the Islamic funeral supper at Iliopetra and the Festival of Spring, Ederlezi, provide opportunities to see the common rituals surviving in different populations and religions, emphasizing on the area's multicultural identity. The Old Town Festival of Xanthi in early September attracts thousands of visitors who enjoy music, dances, exhibitions and local products.

The festival of Philippi is held annually from July to September in the ancient theatres of Philippi and Thassos. The open-air theatre of Nea Karvali, the grape festival in the end of August at the village of Eleochori, the potato festival in Lekani every September, the chestnut festival at Paleochori in October. The custom of Arapides revives every year in the village of Nikissiani at Pangaion, during the feast of St John (Baira, 2007).

Folklore festivals and events in Drama Regional Unit are inspired by the local traditional culture and attract large number of visitors. The days around the arrival of the New Year are celebrated with festivals, dances, songs and performances with Dionysian elements. On the feast of Agios Athanasios at the village of Doxato, traditional horse races are held, in memory of the struggle for liberation in the period of the Ottoman domination (Christianou, 2009a).

### **Gastronomy**

Evros is known for its remarkable gastronomy suggestions, including, trahanas, sour or hot, Babo, usually cooked during Christmas, oumats, a tasty mush made from milk and eggs, ifkalia, light pastry with cheese, ritseli, the traditional spoon sweet, a soup stock of dried figs, eggplant and vegetable marrow. Kavourmas is also well known, consisting of boiled meat pieces that can be also eaten with eggs, especially in Soufli.

Rhodope's gastronomy is a characteristic bond between the different cultures in Rhodope Regional Unit. There are recipes with roots from the Thracian, Pontiac, East Romillia, Cappadokian traditions. Hence, most of the influences in local gastronomy come from the Turkish, Armenian and Roma's or Pomacs' cuisine. Among the most characteristic traditional tastes are the 'sarmas', the 'tas-kebab', the 'babo', all having as raw materials parts of local meat with spices and traditionally cooked during religious feasts. The region is also known for the pies, the filled pastries and the handmade pasta, and many local associations of traditional products at local markets or fairs.

In the local production the famous wines of Maronia and Ismaros are included, the crispy cherries from the foot of the Rhodope mountains, the fresh roasted chick -peas peppered, salted, sweet or caramel dripped, dried fruits, creams, and of course the freshly - roasted in a unique way coffee, are special tasty experiences.

Other popular tastes of the region are sweet or salted pies, local sausages, dishes with peas or beans and pulses. Xanthi is also famous for its pastries and sweets. Syrup pastries, kazan ntipi, tavouk gkiosou (the only pastry with chicken), mouchalebi (crème with syrup made of rose water), seker made of semolina, the popular wrapped sweets with chocolate and nuts, the dried fruits and soutzouk loukoum are some of them.

The Kavala area is also known for its' sweets, and more specifically, for the Kourampiedes of Nea Karvali (butter cookies with powdered sugar) and Loukoumades in Nea Iraklitsa (pastries made of fried dough). But also, significant are the area's local wines, most of them awarded in Greece and internationally, as well as the local Ouzo & Tsipouro of Kavala.

Potatoes of Nevrokopi (border village with Bulgaria) are of excellent quality throughout the Greek territory and it is a protected product for its designation of origin (P.D.O.), as well as beans, high quality meats, cold meat cuts and local cheese. It is worth to try the famous feta (Greek cheese) in Drama and dairy products, meats, cold cut meats, the rich variety of fresh vegetables and the known blueberries with their beneficial therapeutic properties in diabetes<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.pedramas.eu/index.php>

## B. EASTERN MACEDONIA AND THRACE REGION: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Development profile</b> <i>(demography, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic geographical position</li> <li>• Two international airports in Kavala and Alexandroupoli</li> <li>• Two major harbours in Kavala and Alexandroupoli</li> <li>• The railway network in parallel with the main road axes</li> <li>• The Egnatia Motorway axis</li> <li>• The Region concentrates a broad range of economic activities</li> <li>• European and Balkan business and cultural centres</li> <li>• Broad range of economic activities providing growth opportunities</li> <li>• Important universities and research centres</li> <li>• Innovative entrepreneurship activities of R&amp;D organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High unemployment rate</li> <li>• Aging population</li> <li>• Diversities between urban and rural areas</li> <li>• Large economic development intraregional disparities</li> <li>• Economy based on labour-intensive activities in low-tech sectors (agriculture)</li> <li>• Urban concentration – Pronounced depopulation in rural areas</li> <li>• Low freight rate of the airports</li> <li>• The ports are degraded</li> <li>• The quality of the secondary road network is poor and requires significant investments for improvements and upgrading.</li> <li>• Underdeveloped areas with minority population</li> <li>• Low level of education and life-long learning practices</li> <li>• Low level of ICT diffusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> <li>• Proximity with the Balkan markets providing opportunities for further economic development</li> <li>• Recent political developments in the Balkans create new neighboring markets</li> <li>• Innovation public or private funding to create an innovation market growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic crisis</li> <li>• Development obstacles (e.g. delays in infrastructure)</li> <li>• Competition from neighbouring countries</li> <li>• High cost of introducing new technologies and innovation</li> <li>• Not expertised personnel</li> <li>• Low level of facilities and services in remote areas</li> <li>• Rising rate of unemployment</li> <li>• Aging population</li> <li>• Brain drain of highly qualified people</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product</b> <i>Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soufli is a significant pole of silk production</li> <li>• Soufli's brand name as a silk road destination</li> <li>• Economic benefits of Soufli's silk exports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further tourism development</li> <li>• Low level of tourism product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undiscovered links with the history of Silk Road Routes (Soufli, Abdera, Gratsianou)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential economic crisis in other countries, impact upon potential tourist</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of silk design and fashion through Soufli feast worldwide</li> <li>• The most modern silkworm unit in the Balkans is in Rizia, Evros</li> <li>• The benefits of the Tzivre Silk mill restoration to become a museum</li> <li>• One of the main axes of the regional strategic framework is the promotion and creation of a 'silk land' network</li> <li>• The ongoing restoration of historical buildings contributing to the revival of urban areas</li> <li>• Brand name for alternative tourism (Xanthi, Drama e.tc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• diversification due to lack of knowledge-experience</li> <li>• Low level in tourism investments</li> <li>• Mass tourism and intense seasonality in coastal/island destinations</li> <li>• Uneven tourism concentration</li> <li>• Lack of integrated regional planning</li> <li>• Lack in tourism education</li> <li>• Insufficiency in tourism promotion strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism funding opportunities from European, national and regional Programmes</li> <li>• Competitive pricing</li> <li>• Regional Operation Programme (2014-2020) promoting tourism development</li> <li>• New international trends in tourism</li> <li>• Promotion of ICTs in tourism</li> <li>• Investment interest from other countries</li> <li>• Measures of Partnership Agreement 2015-2020 about sericulture and silk production</li> <li>• The silk-producing infrastructure could improve through the utilization of a factory specializing in fiber spinning</li> <li>• Young people turn towards silkworm sector</li> <li>• New educational specialization in silk fashion</li> <li>• Many regions with history in silk and textile production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silk professionals haven't established an inter-professional network</li> </ul>
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance and Protected Areas</li> <li>• Unique natural resources, (e.g. Frakto, the only virgin forest in Greece)</li> <li>• Mineral wealth</li> <li>• Great Biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate development policies (economic development vs environmental protection)</li> <li>• The effects of human</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• R&amp;D initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• Need for new technologies</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bodies and agencies intensely active in protecting and promoting the environment.</li> <li>• Relatively high investments on Renewable Energy Resources (RES)</li> <li>• Great energy resources</li> </ul>	<p>intervention on the environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bureaucracy obstacles in new entrepreneurial activities and start-ups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to diversify tourism offer towards higher-value added and 365 days a year attractions</li> </ul>	
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant tangible &amp; intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk road (mythology, historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture)</li> <li>• Soufli's cocoon houses contribute to the traditional architecture of the area</li> <li>• The Soufli Silk Feast is important for silk cultural heritage promotion</li> <li>• Rich multicultural resources</li> <li>• Various branded local products</li> <li>• Rich tradition in gastronomy, textiles, chemicals and metal sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local products with strong identity</li> <li>• Transportation facilities steam exports</li> <li>• Low productivity rates in some areas of the Region</li> <li>• Low degree of cross sector interconnection</li> <li>• Weak manufacturing units</li> <li>• Low level promotion of the brand of Silk tourism</li> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas are strongly related to the Silk road and can become nodes in a Silk Road route</li> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural development</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> <li>• Existence of infrastructures connected with silk road tourism still operating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many enterprises move to neighbouring areas because of national tax policies</li> <li>• Lack of political initiatives towards integrated revival plans</li> </ul>
<i>Services – Infrastructure – Accessibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility of the area</li> <li>• Reduced time travel to the borders (Turkey and Bulgaria) is of major importance for silk exports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The allocation from Greece's main traditional development axis, P.A.Th.E. motorway (the Patra-Athens-Thessaloniki motorway which is part of the Trans European Transport Network) didn't favor the further development of the area</li> <li>• Delays of trains and degraded infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low cost tourism companies for attracting visitors in the area</li> <li>• Local bus routes connecting Greece with Turkey on daily schedule</li> <li>• Upgrade of railway network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One main road link to the Balkans (from Nymphaea, Rhodope)</li> <li>• Political instability in the broader area also affecting daily trips to Istanbul.</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Central Macedonia Region



Map 3: Location of Central Macedonia Region in Greece. Source: [http://www.serresbiz.com/bic/el/projects/Grundtvig/2012/pictures/kapo2005\\_2\(1\).jpg](http://www.serresbiz.com/bic/el/projects/Grundtvig/2012/pictures/kapo2005_2(1).jpg)

### A. Region of Central Macedonia profile analysis

#### 2.2.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

Central Macedonia Region, situated in the centre of Northern Greece, is bounded by the region of Western Macedonia to the West, the region of Eastern Macedonia – Thrace to the East and by the region of Thessaly and the Aegean Sea to the South. The Region also shares borders with two Balkan countries to the north (F.Y.R.O.M. and Bulgaria). The geographical position of Central Macedonia, Thessaloniki's port, new transport networks (Egnatia, etc.) and the fact that the Region's northern borders are a commercial gate for the Balkans market, have created numerous competitive advantages for the Region to be a gate and services hub for Eastern European countries and a strategical crossroad between Europe and Asia.

According to the recent administrative reform "Kallikratis Plan", the Region of Central Macedonia, one of the thirteen administrative regions of Greece, includes the Regional Units of Thessaloniki, Chalkidiki, Pieria, Imathia, Pella, Serres, Kilkis, and along with East Macedonia and Thrace is supervised by the Decentralized Administration of Macedonia and Thrace. Mount Athos is geographically, but not administratively part of Central Macedonia, as it is an autonomous self-governing state under the sovereignty of Greece. The Region of Central Macedonia includes important urban centres with multiple interactions with the metropolitan center of Thessaloniki. The proximity of the neighboring urban centres of Kilkis, Serres, Katerini, Veroia, Naoussa, Polygyros with Thessaloniki (due to its size, transportation system and infrastructure, services and general geopolitical role in Northern Greece), can act as a catalyst for their further development.

### 2.2.2 Geographical and geophysical characteristics

The Region of Central Macedonia, covering a surface of 19,166 square kilometers, accounting for 14.19% of the country's total, is considered to be the first in size Region of the country (EL.STAT. 2016a). The Region's geomorphology is characterised by a highly mountainous scenery. The mountain areas of Central Macedonia cover 22% of the region. Out of the total number of municipalities and communities (625) of Central Macedonia, 11.8 per cent is located in mountainous areas (74), while 4.6 per cent of the population inhabits in mountainsides. Existing infrastructure of almost all sectors is inadequate in these areas, while services associated with the quality of life are of low level.

The Region of Central Macedonia is situated in one of the most ecologically sensitive areas in the Mediterranean. It includes important trans-border mountain ranges and eco-systems of ecological value and biodiversity. Two of the region's rivers are trans-national (Strymon in the Regional Unit of Serres, and Axios in the Regional Units of Kilkis and Thessaloniki), which flow into almost closed gulfs with natural habitats and extensive coastal areas protected by the RAMSAR Convention. Important lakes are Doirani (Regional Unit of Kilkis) and Kerkini (Regional Unit of Serres). Extensive renewable resources of underground water have been located south of the Paikos Mountain in the zone from Edessa to Veria and in the Serres plain.

On the west coast of the Thermaic gulf lies one of the most important ecosystems in Greece: a wetland complex including the Lagoon of Kalochori, the estuary of Gallikos river, the delta of Axios river as well as its riverbed up to the border with FYROM, the estuary of Loudias river, the delta of Aliakmon river, the wetland of Nea Agathoupoli and the Alyki Kitrous wetlands. These constitute a system of river estuaries, marshes, lagoons and salt flats, an ideal biotope for many species of wild animals and birds.

The area has been included in the Natura 2000 network of European ecological regions and is protected by the Ramsar International Convention on wetlands<sup>19</sup>. The largest part of this protected area has been listed as the National Park of the Delta of Axios – Loudias – Aliakmon, ranging across 33.800 hectares.-The Mygdonia basin occupies an area of 2.12 million hectares. Located behind the hills of Thessaloniki, is surrounded by the mountains Hortiatis and Holomontas The protected area of Koronia – Volvi includes, besides the lakes Koronia and Volvi (the second largest natural lake in Greece), and Rentina gorge, a land area extending east of the lakes to Strymoniko bay.

Olympus, the highest Greek mountain and the second highest mountain in the Balkans, the residence of the twelve ancient gods according to Greek mythology, was the first area which was declared as a National Park in 1938. Olympus is internationally known for its important ecological characteristics and incomparable natural beauty, as well as for its strong relationship with ancient Greek mythology. Olympus has been declared an archaeological and historical place in order to preserve its monumental and historical physiognomy<sup>20</sup>. In 1981 UNESCO declared "Olympus a Biosphere Reserve". The European Community included Olympus in the list of "The Most Important Bird areas of the European Community".

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<sup>19</sup> <http://axiosdelta.gr/en/national-park/protected-area/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.olympusfd.gr/us/Default.asp>

### 2.2.3 History of Central Macedonia Region

Ancient Macedonia spread over the territory of the northeastern part of the Balkan Peninsula. During historical times the fertile plains enabled the development of farming, cultivation of fruit and vegetables and viticulture (grape growing); among the most cultivated cultures were figs, grapes and olives in the coastal zone. Forest resources made Macedonia one of the largest exporters in the Mediterranean of the highest quality wood and resin for the production of ships. Mineral wealth instead made its contribution to the economic growth of the country; there were gold and silver mines near Strymon River on the Mountain Pangaion, at Lake Prasiadious and near Daton.

Macedonia has a very long prehistory. Some of the earliest palaeolithic stone tools in Greece, which date between two and three hundred thousands year before our era, were found here. The cave of Petralona in Chalkidiki, preserved the skull of an archaic Homo Sapiens, the earliest known hominin inhabiting Greece. Recent archaeological research has discovered in the region some of the very earliest settlements of agriculturalists in Greece, dating to before the mid 7th millennium BCE, possibly established by migrants traveling through the Aegean Sea from the Anatolian coast.

The area flourished during the Roman period, when Caesar Galerius established his strategical base in Thessaloniki, building a luxurious palace complex, the Rotunda, the triumphal arch that still can be found in the city centre. The boundaries of Macedonia extended from the east to Nestos River, from the north to the current Velessa (Titov-Veles), from the west to Old Epirus and from the south to Thessaly. The borders of Macedonia changed during the following centuries (Korres, 2013).

Alexander III of Macedon (356 – 323 B.C.), commonly known as Alexander the Great, was a king of the Ancient Greek Kingdom of Macedon and a member of the Argead dynasty. He was born in Pella and his parents were Philip II of Macedon and Olympias. Alexander was educated by the philosopher Aristotle and succeeded his father Philip II, to the throne at the age of twenty. Philip II of Macedon (382–336 B.C.) was born in Pella and was the king of the Ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon from 359 B.C. until his assassination in 336 B.C. (Worthington, 2008).

The funeral of Philip II in 336 BC was performed, as imposed by tradition, in Aigai. In 1977 was excavated at Aigai near modern Vergina, the capital and burial site of the kings of Macedon, and two of the four tombs in the tumulus were undisturbed since antiquity. Moreover, these two, and particularly Tomb II, contained fabulous treasures and objects of great quality and sophistication. Tomb II has been shown to be that of Philip II and in the tomb's antechamber, Philip's Thracian wife is buried with him (Andronikos, 1984).



Statue of Alexander the Great in Thessaloniki. Source:

<http://www.greekguide.com/gr/thessaloniki/statue-of-alexander-the-great/e/290139459310>

Alexander spent most of his ruling years on an unprecedented military campaign through Asia and northeast Africa, and by the age of twenty five he was leader of the Greeks, overlord of Asia Minor, pharaoh of Egypt and 'great king' of Persia. The entire area from Greece in the west, north to the Danube, south into Egypt and as far to the east as the Indian Punjab, was linked together in a vast international network of trade and commerce. This was united by a common Greek language and culture, while the king himself adopted foreign customs in order to rule his millions of ethnically diverse subjects<sup>21</sup>. He was undefeated in battle and is widely considered one of history's most successful military commanders. Seeking to reach the "ends of the world and the Great Outer Sea", he invaded India in 326 B.C., but eventually turned back at the demand of his homesick troops. Alexander died in Babylon in 323 B.C., the city he planned to establish as his capital, without executing a series of planned campaigns that would have begun with an invasion of Arabia.



Map 4: The Macedonian Empire. Source:  
<http://www.ancientmacedonia.com/AlexandertheGreat.html>

The Ottoman occupation began with the extension of the conquests from Nestos river to Macedonia region. In 1383 the first victory of the Ottomans and the fall of the important administrative centre of Serres, was crucial for the occupation of the wider area. All strategic Macedonian centres gradually came under the Ottoman rule (Veria, Monastir, Vodina, Thessaloniki). Thessaloniki fell in 1387 after four years of struggle, but in 1403 was reintegrated to the Byzantine Empire and in 1423 was under the rule of the Latins (Chatzigeorgis, 2013). In 1430 Macedonia was reconquered by the Ottomans.

Up to the Balkan wars, Macedonia was inhabited by a dense mixture of nationalities, including Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Vlachs, Albanians, Turks and other Balkan Muslims, and featured even a large community of Sephardic Jews, who were the dominant community in the region's major city, Thessaloniki. According to available statistics, before the liberation (1912-1913), the population approached 1,205 million inhabitants, of which the Greek-speaking amounted to 370,000 (31%), the Slavophones to 260,000 (21.5 %), Muslims at 475,000 persons (39.5%), while the Jews and the other at 98,000 (8%) (Michailides, 2013).

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/alexander\\_the\\_great.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/alexander_the_great.shtml)

The succeeding cultures in Europe, Asia and Africa appeared by merging the dominant Macedonian factor with the Eastern components to form one successive primary component that can only be described as a Macedonian civilization. For other sectors of the economy, such as trade, there is written information to supplement the archaeological finds. Graves and deposits excavated in the cities yield imported luxury products such as pottery and glass vessels, which were intended for a prosperous public and came from the workshops of Italy and Asia Minor and grave monuments as the Attic sarcophagi. The written sources also confirm the existence of mercantile occupations, such as vendors of drugs and perfumes and slave-traders. As for the artisanal trades, these do not seem to have gone beyond the satisfaction of local demand (Nigdelis, 2007).

#### 2.2.4 Demographic characteristics

In 2011 Central Macedonia Region was the second in population Region nationwide, with 1,953,802 inhabitants covering 17.4% of total population (EL.STAT 2016a). 48.5% of total population of the region is male and 51.5% female population. The population for the metropolitan area or Greater Urban Zone of Thessaloniki, seat of the region and second largest city of Greece, was 1,012,297 inhabitants in 2011 (EL.STAT. 2016a). Being the second largest Greek region, Central Macedonia has struggled to fulfil its potential to develop as a knowledge intensive business structure and profit from its position as a ‘business and cultural’ cross-roads in south-east Europe (Reid et al. 2012). During 1991-2011, population increased by 17.53%, and the total population nationwide increased by 11.05%, while the highest population increase was found in Chalkidiki Regional Unit (36.29%) and the lowest in Emathia Regional Unit (5,13%) (OPCM 2015-2019).

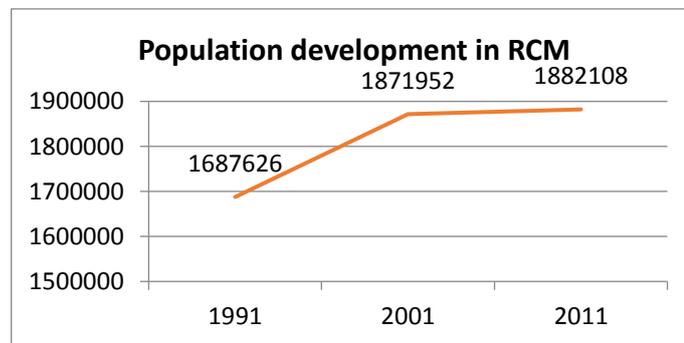


Figure 2.2.3: Population development in R.C.M. (1991-2011). Source: OPCM 2015-2019

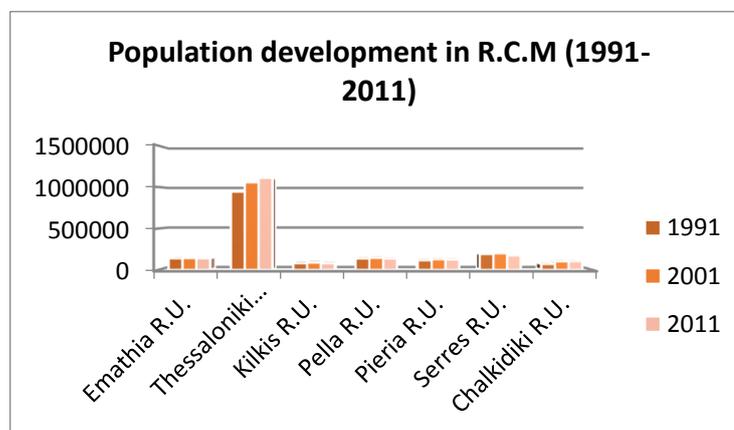


Figure 2.2.4: Population development in R.C.M. per Regional Unit Source: OPCM 2015-2019

## 2.2.5 Development profile of the Region

### a. Economic characteristics

The strategic geographical position of Central Macedonia and the recent modernisation of its transport infrastructures, enable primary and secondary sectors to better integrate with consumer markets in E.U and the Balkans. During the mid 1990s the region experienced high growth rates due to the development of the local economy, driven by strong domestic demand and by public and private investment. For the period 2001 – 2007 average growth of regional GDP was 2.88% compared to 2.21% for EU27 (Reid et al., 2012).

The regional economy is dominated by services accounting for 74.5% of the regional added value in 2009, while the contribution of the sector of industry and construction was of 21% and that of the agricultural sector of 4.5% (Reid et al., 2012). Also, penetration to the new Balkan markets, collaborations, participation to fairs, export activity development, etc. seem beneficial policies for SMEs of Central Macedonia. Moreover, fostering extroversion can cultivate more productivity and value added activities and goods. Attica and Thessaloniki are the main innovation poles in Greece (CERTH 2016).

#### i. Primary sector

In the Region (with the exception of the Greater Thessaloniki Area) the principal occupation is in agriculture, with a wide variety of crops and prospects for growth. Central Macedonia is a key production center of Greek agriculture, including peaches, cotton, tobacco, asparagus and processing products of peaches and tomatoes. Also, the Region encountered all sectors of animal production. Thessaloniki and Chalkidiki are the main growth centers of fishing. The natural conditions are favorable for the development of aquaculture and the area has developed small number of farms.

Forests occupy 26% of the total area of the Region. Forests are degraded so the production in wood is 67% for firewood and 33% for technical and industrial timber. Thessaloniki and Chalkidiki Regional Units are the main centres of fishery, with many small farms. Also, shell growing cultivation is increasingly export oriented.

#### ii. Secondary sector

Central Macedonia Region is characterized by a high proportion of employment in manufacturing. The Region concentrates 21.9% of industrial employment in the country, while 68% is concentrated in Thessaloniki Regional Unit. Thessaloniki Regional Unit is the wealthiest in Macedonia and the fifth wealthiest in the country. The vast majority of the region's enterprises (63.2%) are located in Thessaloniki Regional Unit<sup>22</sup>.

Central Macedonia is one of the dynamic industrial areas of northern Greece. There are four Industrial & Business Estate of National scope (VEPE or ICZs): the industrial development zone of Thessaloniki, the zone of Naoussa-Veroia-Edessa-Giannitsa, and the industrial centres in Serres and Katerini. Chemicals, metal industry, food & beverage, textile & clothing, higher education, ICT, health services, commerce, are the most developed sectors in the region (Reid et al. 2012). Furthermore, a number of new

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<sup>22</sup><https://ec.europa.eu/eures/main.jsp?countryId=GR&acro=lmi&showRegion=true&lang=en&mode=text&regionId=GR4&nuts2Code=GR43&nuts3Code=null&catId=11>

knowledge-intensive sectors like bio-agriculture, bio-medicine and ICT seem to be promising. In addition, food & beverage, chemicals (plastics, polymers, petrochemicals, etc), furniture and metal products are expected to concentrate growth and innovative entrepreneurship.

An important feature of the regional productive system is the dominant role of SMEs, characterised by low levels of organisation and considerable management deficiencies (Kafkalas & Komninos 2003). Manufacturing is well developed in Central Macedonia, representing 23.5% of the gross regional product. The manufacturing sector, concentrated in clothing and footwear, food, furniture and tobacco, is mainly in small production units, located across the Region, where the employment rate of SMEs vary from 60% to 80%.

Textile and clothing is an important sector for the Region in terms of employment, third in export size, linked with the primary production (cotton), characterized by technological opportunities (new materials), but non-technological innovation (design). Strengthening the competitiveness and the transformation of traditional manufacturing sectors is a major strategic goal for Central Macedonia Region. Textile industry is developed in the Regional Units of Thessaloniki, Kilkis and Emathia, whereas Serres, Kilkis, Pella, Pieria and Thessaloniki, present also a specialization in clothing and footwear.

### **iii. Tertiary sector**

With the exception of the Regional Unit of Thessaloniki, the level of services, technical and social infrastructures in the Region is low compared to the national average. The most important services sectors in the region are financial services, transport and communications, tourism and transport.

Higher education institutions play an important role for the region of Central Macedonia due to research activities. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki founded in 1925, is the largest university in Greece and in the Balkans, with eleven Faculties consisting of 36 Departments. In 1990 the Graduate School of Industrial Studies in Thessaloniki was renamed to University of Macedonia Economic and Social Sciences, now having ten Departments. The International Hellenic University (IHU) was established in 2005 in Thessaloniki and is Greece's first public university where programmes are taught exclusively in English. The University already attracts a strong international academic faculty and outstanding international and Greek students. The Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki, specialized on applied sciences, has three campuses and is composed of five faculties and 22 departments. The Technological Educational Institute of Central Macedonia at Serres established in 1979, is a dynamic and rapidly developing Institute consisting of two Faculties and eight Departments.

Health care infrastructure of Central Macedonia is not well developed, except for Thessaloniki, where the respective indicators are high and national standards<sup>23</sup>. According to surveys the region has 23 public hospitals (of which 13 in Thessaloniki), and a significant number of private hospitals (usually branches of large private hospitals located in Athens). There are 5.2 medical beds per 1000 inhabitants (the national

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<sup>23</sup><http://3kps.pepkm.gr/c/portal/>

average is 4.8), and in 2005 the region had nearly 10,000 doctors, comparable to the national average on a per-capita basis. (Avranas & Nioras, 2011).

#### **b. Transport infrastructure**

The region provides easy access to the Balkans through good road and railway networks. Large ports connect to Greek and foreign harbours for easy transfer of goods and people. The Egnatia Motorway is incorporated in the trans-European networks and is linked to eight vertical road axes, which aspire to link Greece with the main European road axes.

The geographical position of the region with regard to the great road axes, the Port and the Airport of Thessaloniki, places the Region in an advantageous position, linking it with the Balkan, EU and Central European countries. The railway network is mainly served by two axes: “Piraeus - Athens - Thessaloniki – Idomeni”, connecting the two major urban centres Athens and Thessaloniki, and “Thessaloniki - Strymon / Promahonas - Alexandroupoli – Ormenio”, 632 km long, incorporated in the Trans-European Networks (CERTH 2016).

The International Macedonia Airport is a most important transport node, connecting the Region with the rest of Greece and other countries. Between 1994 and 2010, Thessaloniki Airport saw a rise in passenger traffic of 76%, from 2.2 million in 1994 to 3.9 million in 2010, while in 2003 and 2008 an increase of 19.1% from 3.5 million to 4.2 million passengers. In 2014, the total number of passengers exceeded five million<sup>24</sup>.

Metro infrastructure in Thessaloniki is also under progress. The first phase of the project consists of 9.6 km of underground line (with twin tunnels) with 13 stations, and a depot at the east end of the line (CERTH 2016). The port of Thessaloniki is the second largest export and transit port in the country and the nearest European Union port to the Balkan countries and the Black Sea zone. It serves around 3,000 coastal, hydrofoils and cargo ships per annum<sup>25</sup>.

The level of telecommunications infrastructure in Central Macedonia is relatively high. The wider area is expected to become an important energy hub of the Balkans. The Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) is designed to transfer natural gas on ground from Turkey to Albania and then underwater to Italy. From a total length of 850 km, 550 km would pass through Northern Greece. This is envisaged to create several new opportunities in construction, manufacturing and the energy sector (Belke et al. 2015).

#### **2.2.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage**

The Region of Central Macedonia is an important tourist attraction node with a rich variety of activities: wide range of coastal areas mainly in Pieria and in Chalkidiki, areas offering opportunities for alternative tourism, such as Lake Kerkini, Vermio, Kaimaktsalan, Edessa, Veria, Naoussa and Mount Olympus, religious tourism poles e.g. Mount Athos that can be combined with the rich byzantine and religious legacy of Thessaloniki. The coastal zone of central Macedonia, mainly of Chalkidiki, Pieria and Thessaloniki, are the main tourist destinations, accounting for 85.8% of total overnight stays of foreigners in the region. Chalkidiki is one of the favorite destinations of the

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.ypa.gr/en/our-airports/kratikos-aerolimenas-8essalonikhs-makedonia-ka8m>

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.helexpo.gr/sites/default/files/tif\\_corporate\\_profile.pdf](http://www.helexpo.gr/sites/default/files/tif_corporate_profile.pdf)

residents of Thessaloniki, located less than an hour away it is considered an ideal escape for summer or weekend vacation. Many visitors from Greece and abroad spend their summer vacations in the area, exploring the picturesque villages and unique beaches. The Region also has a strong advantage on cultural resources from prehistoric to modern times and is worthy to mention that there are 23 listed traditional villages, monuments and buildings.

Central Macedonia Region is the third most visited Region in Greece and, as far as it concerns the occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments, the Region accounts for 11.2% of nights spent by residents and non-residents out of the total percentage of nights spent nationally in 2014. Residents and non-residents overnight stay in Central Macedonia increased in 2014 by 6% compared to 2013, totaling 8,479 mil. stays (EL.STAT., 2016). Business services including the tourist industry seem to have the highest growth potential in Central Macedonia.

The tourist infrastructure of Central Macedonia in terms of hotel capacity represents 10% of the country's potential. In 2016, the Region concentrated 10% of the total hotel facilities in Greece, with 1,195 hotel units and 89,568 beds<sup>26</sup>, where coastal areas with the city of Thessaloniki concentrate 90% of hotel facilities in the Region. There are three main touristic zones in the Region with different characteristics and development potentials: the 'mature' seaside-resort zones (Pieria, Olympus, Strimonas, Sithonia, western Chalkidiki and Cassandra), the urban-metropolitan area of Thessaloniki and the emerging zones of thematic or alternative tourism (Mount Vermio, Veria, naoussa, Edessa etc.) (ENPI CBCMED, 2013). The Regional Unit of Chalkidiki is the most developed tourist destination of the Region and the fourth most visited destination nationwide, concentrating 54.06% of total hotel facilities in beds, with 514 hotel units and 46,051 beds. The Regional Unit of Pieria has 388 hotels and 19,941 beds and Thessaloniki Regional Unit has 140 hotels and 14,353 beds (ENPI CBCMED, 2013).

### **2.2.7 Region of Central Macedonia tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road**

#### **Cultural assets connected with the Silk Road**

Thessaloniki: During Ottoman rule, Thessaloniki continued to be the chief port of Central Macedonia. There were factories producing quality silk and woolens, which were in great demand in the markets of Turkey and at Constantinople. Sericulture was flourishing throughout the environs of Thessaloniki and the silk produced in Thessaloniki rivalled similar products from Bursa (Vacalopoulos, 1973). It is worth mentioning that dyed silk from Bursa was made from terebinth trees, cultivated by inhabitants of Thrace and Macedonia.

The presence of Jews in Thessaloniki was determining for the city's history development. The Jews in Thessaloniki were competent merchants and had also reputation as carpet-makers, producing carpets of a unique character, made of Thessalonican felt and decorated with colourful patterns. They also made blue and green cloth of a serge type for the 40,000 Janissaries of the Turkish Empire, and blue silk peştemals (towels for carrying bath utensils).

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<sup>26</sup> [http://www.grhotels.gr/GR/BussinessInfo/library/DocLib/Regional\\_2016.pdf](http://www.grhotels.gr/GR/BussinessInfo/library/DocLib/Regional_2016.pdf)

Among the industrial heritage complexes of Thessaloniki, there is the silk mill “Helios”, dating from 1931 to 1947, when it housed an innovative for that period, velvet production unit. Its uses were moved after the war, and the complex was classified in 1991 as a ‘protected historical monument’. One of the most important textile units of Thessaloniki’s wider area and nationwide, was the spinning-weaving mill "Yfanet" (Zigomalas 2009). The factory began operating during the Ottoman period by the Kapantzis-Kazazis company, which produced fabrics and after a fire opened again as the Anonymous Ottoman Company of Textiles. In 1925 operated by Athanasios Makris and then it was converted into a public limited company under the name Yfanet. During the 1930’s the last expands of the building were completed by architects Nikopoulos and Kokoropoulos (Ioannides 2015). It fell into decline after a second fire in the early 1950’s. In 1965, YFANET stopped its function, while in 1993 the building and its surrounding area were classified as a "historical monument" (Zigomalas 2009).

Pylaia: Among the recent monuments of the Municipality of Pilea-Chortiatis in Thessaloniki Regional Unit, connected with the economic activities of the inhabitants of Pilea, is the old Silk mill known as Benozilio or Benouzilio. It was built before 1886 and became part of the domain of Allatini, initially used as a ceramic oven. Later, after infrastructure improvements, it operated as a silk mill and then, as spinning – weaving unit. It now consists of three old buildings in an area of almost 1.000sq.m, while the surrounding area is about 6.000sq.m. (Glaveris & Dimitriadis 1999). The original buildings, the chimney and the walls, were classified in 1988 as "historical monuments". It was proposed to be transformed into an open-air folklore museum with facilities for workshops.

The Allatini Mills Industrial Area is a historical monument in Thessaloniki and a characteristic example of industrial complexes. The industrial activity of the Allatini family began with Moses Allatini, who operated a roller mill and pottery, and continued with his sons, who founded the Fratelli Allatini Company. The present-day central building of the Mills was constructed in 1898 according to plans by Vitaliano Poselli after the previous building burnt down. The building complex includes the administration building (old residence), warehouses, refrigeration areas and the roller mill building, surrounded by the boiler room, the machine shop and the chimney of Belgian construction<sup>27</sup>.



The old silk mill Benozilio. Source: <http://hellas.teipir.gr/Thesis/Pylaia/pylayrio/benouzil.htm>

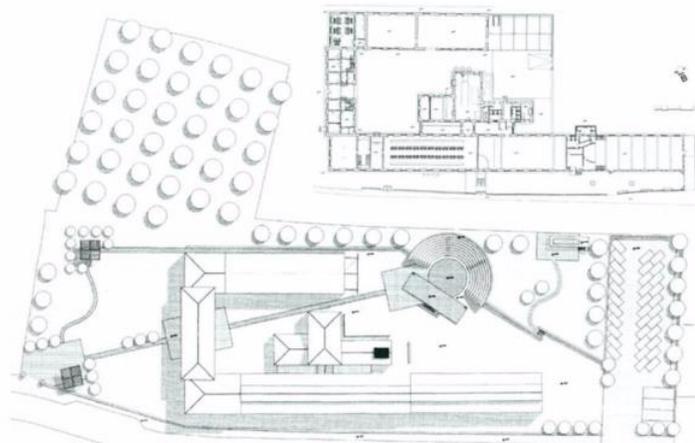
<sup>27</sup> <http://www.thessaloniki.gr/portal/page/portal/EnglishPage/Traveling-to-Thessaloniki/Monuments-Of-Thessaloniki/Jewish-Monuments>

Goumenissa: Goumenissa is the third bigger in size agglomeration of Kilkis Regional Unit. The first references of this settlement are dated from the Trojan War and the invasion of Alexander the Great in Asia. The area's economic development was based mainly on the production of wine and silk. In the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century one of the biggest production firms was established, named Chrissalis. One of the firm's units was operating in Goumenissa and occupied about 450 workers. During the decade 1970-1980 this silk industry operated seasonally, and in 1988 stopped its function<sup>28</sup>.

Recently, events took place in its space, reviving the history of the site and of silk production. Two artist teams performed a theatrical documentary about Chrissalis, in the yard of the industrial building, which opened its doors after 30 years. More specifically, it was a site-specific documentary about the history of silk, the processes of sericulture, silk industrial buildings and the potentials of revival. The participants were not professional actors, but local people, former workers in Chrissalis, researchers, architects and actors, showing the importance of the industry's revival as a historical and cultural resource of the Region.



<http://telitsoblog.blogspot.gr/2016/08/metaxi.theatrical.documentary.html>



Site plan and restoration proposal. Source: Kakaya, C., *et al.*, (2001).

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.praktoreio-macedonia.gr/article/1082/Palies-thumises-kai-afigiseis-apo-ton...-dromotou-metaxiou>

The restoration proposal included the transformation of the complex into a museum of silk and repository of the factory. Other uses could be integrated, such as exhibition areas, multi-purpose halls, restaurant, guest house, shops of local traditional products.

Policastro in Kilgis Regional Unit: During the Ottoman occupation was founded the settlement Karassouli (nowadays Policastro) with administrative character in the area. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, under the Sultan's orders, mulberry trees were planted in the area for silkworm production. The cultivations became more intense, and as a result, many Bulgarians came to the area during the next two centuries, to be occupied in the mulberry cultivations.

Griva: is a small village on the roots of Mount Paiko, 50km east of Kilgis. The residents are occupied mostly in the primary sector and more specifically with the collection of chestnut from the biggest chestnut forest in Greece. The area is also known for its wine and other cultivations such as apples, cherries e.tc. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there were cultivated mulberry trees in the area for silk production. The fabrics produced from this procedure were used for military clothing of the Turkish army.

Sericulture is also strongly connected with the history and economic activities of the Regional Unit of Chalkidiki. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a group of villages in Chalkidiki was known as Hasikochória, or Hásia, which consisted of 15 self-governing communities. It included some particularly good pasturage, and land which produced quantities of high quality wheat, cotton, honey, wax and so on. The inhabitants were also engaged in silk-worm culture, particularly important in the two main towns, Poligiros and Ormilía, which together possessed between 400 and 500 looms (Vacalopoulos, 1973). Also, the monks of Mount Athos busied themselves with agriculture, bee-keeping and sericulture.

Palaiochori: Palaiochori is a small village of Chalkidiki t with great tradition in the craft of weaving. Its history begins before the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. with the establishment of the Chalkideis and other residents coming from Southern Greece in the wider area. The traditional art of weaving and the textiles of Chalkidiki were famous worldwide. The treatment and preparation of the raw material was a complex and tedious work. The traditional textiles of Palaiochori were used for carpets, rugs, silk fabrics and other products. The woven were named after the technique or the origin. Women worked with wool, cotton and silk from silkworm eggs up to the cocoon and the silk thread which was called 'vrochos'<sup>29</sup>.



Weaving museum of Arnaia. Source: <http://www.dimosaristoteli.gr/en/culture/weaving-museum-of-arnaia>

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.dimosaristoteli.gr/gr/culture/weaving-museum-of-arnaia>

Naoussa in Emathia Regional Unit, is situated in the eastern foothills of Vermio Mountains. Naoussa's history is strongly bonded with the textile industry. The economic and social prosperity of the region was identified with the textile factories for over half a century. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, nine textile factories, a pottery factory, an official winery, silk mills, water mills e.tc. were operating, noting an impressive economic and industrial development. The textile industry in the area began in the 1970's with the establishment of the textile factory 'Longou-Tourpali', the first industry in the Balkans with modern standards (Municipality of Naoussa, 2016). It is one of the most important industrial monuments in the area, and today houses the Technology Management Department of University of Macedonia (Fatourou, 2012).



The former Longou-Tourpali complex and nowadays Technology Management Department.

Source: Fatourou, 2012

Edessa, known as the 'city of waters' due to its waterfalls (Edessa Info, 2012), is the capital of Pella Regional Unit and since antiquity benefited from the nearby Via Egnatia and Pindus mountains. Until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its economy was based on textile factories and wine production vicinity, but today it relies on services and tourism. Edessa was liberated in 1912, after almost 500 years under Ottoman rule, and at that time, became a major industrial center in Macedonia. Four large textile factories operated employing the abundant waterfalls as a source of energy and a large segment of the population specialized in silk production, allowing Edessa to enjoy a high standard of living in the interwar period. Edessa during the period of Turkish occupation is in its prime functioning as a commercial and handicraft center (Zarkada 1986). There were cotton ginneries and carpet factories, as well as textile factories operating with water benefiting from the driving force of water. The water exploitation, low wages and the rich local production of high quality raw materials, led to the successful development of the factories. The first water driven textile factories were founded during the period 1874-1912 in Edessa, Naoussa and Veroia. In Edessa, the first textile industry was the yarn factory of G. Tsitsis, co., founded in 1895. The industry gradually became the biggest textile factor nationwide.



Gr. Tsitsis and Co yarn factory. Source: Zarkada, 1986

Other textile factories in Edessa were the factories Estia S.A. (two factories, spinning and spinning weaving mill), dating back in 1907, Kannavourgio S.A. Edessa, Wool factory SE.FE.KO. S.A. Many silk factories also existed, like that of Apostolidis, Jatsos, Pigas, Outas and Themelis Bros, from which almost none has survived (Zarkada 1986).

Nigrita is a town in the southern part of Serres Regional Unit, situated in the wide plain south of the river Strymonas, at the northern foot of Kerdylio Mountains, was founded in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was a prosperous town where cotton, silver and copper were processed. Near Nigrita several sites of ancient settlements of the Hellenistic and Roman times have been found. One of them was perhaps the site of the ancient city Bisaltia.

During the Ottoman period Nigrita was an important economic and trading node of the wider area. The production of agricultural products, (cereals, wine, tobacco and cotton), sericulture, silk fabric industry and the existence of local coinage<sup>30</sup> reveal the size of trade and economic prosperity of the region. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, Nigrita offered opportunities for industrial development, because of its fertile land and the cultivation of cotton and sericulture. Many workers on the coloring of fabrics industry (silk, cotton, wool fabrics) settled in the area and created cooperatives. However, natural silk is no longer widespread in Greece because of the release of synthetic silk and other synthetic fabrics, combined with the lack of national initiatives towards the art of sericulture as a significant opportunity for investments.

### Archaeological sites

Amphipolis is located on a plain in northern Macedonia near Mt. Pangaion and the river Strymon. The city and its sea port, prospered due to its favourable geographic location and the proximity of abundant natural resources, especially gold, silver, and timber. Amphipolis remained a strong city within the Macedonian kingdom, with its own domestic autonomy and having considerable economic and cultural prosperity. Excavations revealed a large part of the walls and some of the sanctuaries and public and private buildings of the city. In 2012 an impressive Hellenistic monument, probably funerary was discovered (Cartwright 2014). The Byzantine acropolis lies on a hill called Koulas, north of the city of Serres (Dadaki 2012).

The ancient city of Olynthus, now carefully restored, preserves a town plan which follows a regular grid (the ancient Hippodamæan system). The city was destroyed by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, in 348, and was never fully rebuilt.

Thessaloniki was the second largest and wealthiest city of the Byzantine Empire. The monuments of the city cover a wide period from the Neolithic to modern era. The Bronze Age and archaic small settlements are still visible in the urban fabric as characteristics mounds, in Ano Toumba, Karabournaki, and Lembet. The Byzantine monuments of the city have been declared historical landmarks and monuments fifteen Early Christian-Byzantine monuments were included in the UNESCO World Heritage List

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.dimosvisaltias.gr/>

in 1988 (Monuments of Thessaloniki, 2016)<sup>31</sup>. The following monuments are only a small part of the rich multicultural heritage of the city and the wider region.

The Gallerian Complex is a monument revealed in the centre of Thessaloniki and is integrated in the modern urban fabric. It contained, the Rotunda (a circular brick building with a dome) built to be a mausoleum for Galerius or a temple and is the second, after the Pantheon of Rome, circular building of the Roman Period preserving its original dome; the Triumphal Arch (Kamara) with figures in relief, which, together with a roofed hall, constituted a monumental gateway to the processional way leading to the Rotunda; the Palace (a four-sided two-storeyed and frescoed structure disposed in the manner of Roman barracks) with a main exit towards the sea; and the Octagon (an octagonal two-storeyed building, richly decorated). The Roman 'forum' (market place complex) of the time of the Antonines and the Severans (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.) was situated on the site where possibly the Hellenistic 'agora' once stood<sup>32</sup>. The city's most famous landmark, and a symbol of Macedonia, the White Tower is the only medieval defensive tower left standing along the seafront, offering a wonderful multimedia introduction to the city's history.

In the region of Derveni, 10km northwest of Thessaloniki, seven tombs (some of them unlooted) of male and female cremations and burials were discovered in 1962 (Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, 2012)<sup>33</sup>, with luxurious metal, clay and glass vases, gold jewellery, iron weapons e.tc. Another discovery of significant importance in Derveni Necropolis, is the Derveni Papyrus which, the oldest known European book, dated between 340-320 B.C. (UNESCO 2014).

Mount Athos is the Orthodox spiritual centre of Greece and the wider religious area since 1054. The 'Holy Mountain' is an autonomous self-governing state under the sovereignty of Greece, subject to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its political aspect and religiously to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople<sup>34</sup>.

## Museums

The Archaeological Museum of Serres is located in the old city centre of Serres and housed in the city's bezistan, a 15<sup>th</sup> century building. This type of building was erected by the Ottoman Turks to serve as a covered market, and there are only two left in Greece now, in Thessaloniki and in Serres. -The Hadzilia Folklore and Ethnological Museum, has six sections: musical instruments, jewellery, weapons and uniforms, sacred vessels, traditional dress, and reconstructions of folk life. The most notable feature is the 200 buckles of all types – priests' buckles large and small, Sarakatsan buckles, Thracian buckles, and buckles from Orini. Also, the Sarakatsan Folklore Museum operates since 1979. Its' aim is to provide information of the Sarakatsani everyday life.

One of the most recent museums of the wider area, is Amphipolis Archaeological Museum. The most important exhibits are figurines and other artifacts from the

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<sup>31</sup> Monuments of Thessaloniki. (2016). Retrieved from City of Thessaloniki: <http://www.thessaloniki.gr/portal/page/portal/EnglishPage/Traveling-to-Thessaloniki/UNESCO-Monuments>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/HellenicMacedonia/en/index.html>

<sup>33</sup> Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, Odysseus Cultural Heritage, (2012). *Necropolis at Derveni*. Available in: [http://odysseus.culture.gr/index\\_en.html](http://odysseus.culture.gr/index_en.html)

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.inathos.gr/>

neolithic sites of the area, gold jewellery from the graves in the Kasta mound, figures and statues, finds from Argilos and Eion, the port of ancient Amphipolis and photographs of the unearthing of the Lion of Amphipolis in 1913 and its restoration<sup>35</sup>. The Macedonian Folklore Museum in Goumenissa is housed in a recent two-storey building and its main aim is to preserve the tradition and culture of the area. The exhibits include Macedonian, Sarakatsan and Thracian costumes, hand-embroidered silks and handwoven woollen bedding, together with domestic furniture, utensils both decorative and utilitarian of the nineteenth century, numerous documents of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



The loom, Folklore Museum of Kilkis. Source: <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/index.html>

The Folklore and Ethnological Museum was founded in 1973 and its collections consist of some 15,000 objects (woven textiles, embroidery, local costumes, tools, weapons, domestic articles, musical instruments, and woodcarving, woodworking, and metalworking equipment). The Museum of Rural & Cultural Heritage in Europos was founded to gather precious mementoes of the long local tradition. Ionians, Thracians, native Macedonians, Vlachs and Pontians donated objects, heirlooms e.t.c. to the museum of historical importance<sup>36</sup>. The Poliyiros Folklore Museum has Authentic costumes from the wider area of Poliyiros are displayed in various corners of the house, as well as agricultural implements used for ploughing, sowing, reaping, threshing, and the olive harvest, and more traditional costumes from the town and the countryside.

The History and Folklore Museum of Arnaia displays artefacts of the popular culture of Arnaia and the surrounding area. There are typical examples of the architectural heritage of Arnaia, and traditional folk instruments, but also, a collection of agricultural implements, bread-making equipment, bee-keeping equipment, carpentry equipment. The Folklore Museum of Petrokerassa has 750 objects exclusively from Petrokerassa, among which, weapons, a large Byzantine oil jar, and the documents granting the village the privilege of hosting a piece of the True Cross on Palm Sunday every year without fail since 1767.

The Naoussa Folklore Museum was founded in 1968. There is a reconstruction of a traditional sitting-room, a domestic loom, clothing, leather trunks with metal studs, an entire loom complete with all its appurtenances, authentic local costumes, authentic

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/index.html>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.enjoykilis.gr/en/>

Macedonian uniforms, weapons, woven textiles, and embroidered wall hangings and floor coverings. The Wine and Vine Museum of Naoussa is an old wine fermentation vat, with wine barrels, demijohns, raki vats, baskets (panniers) for the grape harvest, and other agricultural tools for vine growers. The vineyards and wines of Naoussa are presented through the programme entitled 'The Wine Roads of Naoussa'<sup>37</sup>.

The Nature and Folklore Museum of Loutra, Almopia, is near Aridaia and its exhibition consists of palaeontological findings. There are exhibits relating to the local folk culture, such as a woman's day dress from 1950, musical instruments, implements for spinning, weaving, and knitting, and cooking utensils.



Traditional costume in the Loutra Folklore Museum. Source: <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/index.html>



Traditional wedding dress in Edessa Folklore Museum. Source: <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/index.html>

The Folklore Museum in Edessa displays permanent collections of artefacts of the folk culture of the area, such as, artefacts, implements, photographs relating to agriculture, stockbreeding, weaving (a very impressive entire loom), sericulture, and candlemaking. Sericulture and the silk industry were highly developed in Edessa until the 1960's. There are also local costumes, as worn by townspeople and, mainly, by rural folk from the local mountain villages.

The Yannitsa Folklore Museum was established recently by the Philippos History and Folklore Association with the aim of promoting local history and tradition. It displays artefacts relating to local folk culture, domestic artefacts, and the implements and tools of various rural and urban trades and occupations that are no longer used. There are also showcases displaying authentic men's and women's costumes of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Open-Air Water Museum, which opened early in 2000, aims to acquaint visitors with the history of water-power from the workshops of pre-industrial times to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Folklore Museum in Katerini aims to preserve and promote the cultural wealth of the Black-Sea Greeks. The main part of the museum displays a reconstruction of the main parts of a Pontiac house with women's costumes.

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/index.html>

## Silk Road Built Heritage

The Tobacco Warehouse of the Austrian-Greek Tobacco Company building is located in the city centre of Kilkis. Large companies associated with Kilkis were the Greek-British Commercial, the German Spirer and Renima and the Misirian<sup>38</sup>.

The layout of the monasteries of Mount Athos had an influence as far afield as Russia, and its school of painting influenced the history of Orthodox art (UNESCO, 2016). The monasteries include masterpieces, such as wall drawings, icons, gold objects, illuminated manuscripts, e.tc. Also, the monastic ideal at Mount Athos has preserved traditional human habitations, representative of the agrarian cultures of the Mediterranean. Mount Athos is also a conservatory of vernacular architecture as well as agricultural and craft traditions.

'Chrissalis', Goumenissa. It is an impressive rectangular building of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it served as a silk factory of the company 'Chrisallis ", which was located in Piraeus, for more than half a century. The factory is one of the few examples of silk industries operating in the country and it was classified in 1985 as a protected monument of industrial history<sup>39</sup>. According to testimonies in 1930 the factory had 450 female and only few male workers, while its operation temporarily stopped during the war. In 1956 the facilities were sold to Ilias Michailidis and in 1960 to brothers George and John Athanasiadis. In 1990 the north side was burnt down. It still holds most of its equipment and remains privately owned until now.



Workers of Chrissalis Source:  
<http://www.kilkis24.gr/>



The Silk Industry "Chrissalis" today. Source:  
<http://www.kilkis24.gr/>

"Vermion" Spinnery in Veroia, Emathia Regional Unit, one of the largest spinning mills in Macedonia, represents an early example of industrial complexes in Greece, and provides areas for production, administration and workers housing. It is surrounded by stonewalls and towers that recall fortifications. The typology of the complex exhibits all the features of a traditional building, enriched with characteristics of religious architecture. In the years of its operation, the modernization of equipment, the increase of personnel and production and the natural damage and decay resulted to a number of additions in its interior and to alterations of its original form. Today, although the "Vermion" Spinnery remains inactive, it still retains its architectural value and its role in the history of the broader region (Maryie & Matskani 2011).

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.enjoykilkis.gr/en/architecture-legacy/item/706-tobacco-warehouses>

<sup>39</sup> <http://listedmonuments.culture.gr/monument.php?code=8493>



The 'Vermion' spinnery (1966-1972). Source: Maryie & Matskani, (2011).

### **Festivals – Folklore tradition**

The cultural identity of the Region is reflected in a series of cultural and religious events attracting visitors all year round. The Festival of Bougatsa and Local Products is very popular in the wider area, for promoting traditional local products and the local cultural heritage of the region. It is a celebration dedicated to the legend of Gerakina, a girl who fell in the well and drowned.

'Eleftheria' in Kilkis, is an important custom of the area and various events take place from May to June, including, exhibitions, concerts, sport events, dances by local tradition associations e.tc. The International Puppet and Mime Festival of Kilkis is held every year<sup>40</sup>.

In the village of Colchida, the inhabitants celebrate the memory of St. Fanourios, preparing the homonymous sweet pie. Axioupolitika are cultural and sports events, including traditional dancing performances of the cultural associations, theatre acts, music festivals and conferences. Also, the Gastronomy Festival that is organized by the Chamber of Kilkis aims to promote local products, with many cultural and mainly culinary events.

In 2010, Lonely Planet ranked Thessaloniki as the world's fifth-best party city worldwide, For 2013 National Geographic Magazine included Thessaloniki in its top tourist destinations worldwide. There are numerous and various festivals and events in the city throughout the year, confirming the fact that Thessaloniki is a cultural metropolis. 'Demetria Festival', is a series of events aspiring to transform the city into a large cultural work site.

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.allaboutfestivals.gr/>

Thessaloniki International Film Festival is the top film festival of South Eastern Europe. The Thessaloniki International Fair is annually held by Helexpo and turned 80 in 2015, presents around 850 exhibitors from Greece and around the world and receives over 200.000 visitors.

Since the beginning of its existence, TIF has been an enormously important event for Greece and for the whole neighboring region. The idea of the first Thessaloniki International Trade Fair (TIF) was born in 1925, by Nikolaos Germanos, member of the Greek Parliament<sup>41</sup>. TIF was transferred to its current facilities in 1937. During the '50s and the '60s it attracted 400 Greek exhibitors annually, while foreign exhibitors reached an average of 1,500 per event. In 1967 visitors reached a record breaking number of 1.7 millions<sup>42</sup>.

Aiming to enhance its role as a leading regional exhibition and congress center in the greater Balkan region, TIF-HELEXPO focuses in forging strong partnerships and being actively involved in geographic areas such as Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania, FYROM and Kosovo. It is also worth noting that "Ioannis Vellidis" in TIF area is one of the biggest congress facilities in the Balkans. The most striking element of this year's Fair is its internationalisation, as major foreign markets are giving TIF their vote of confidence through their national participation.

Thessaloniki International Film Festival is the top film festival of South Eastern Europe, the presentation platform for the year's Greek productions, and the primary and oldest festival in the Balkans for the creations of emerging film makers from all over the world (Thessaloniki International Film Festival-Profile, 2014)<sup>43</sup>.

Art Thessaloniki International Contemporary Art Fair invests in the strategically important geographic location of Thessaloniki, its multicultural identity, its rich and long history. The Street Mode Festival is a youth festival reaching 5.000-10.000 spectators each year, since 2009. It is an "all-in-one" street culture festival<sup>44</sup>.

Also, the Municipality of Thessaloniki hosts every year many gastronomic celebrations showcasing the local cuisine, culinary traditions, gourmet trends, and parallel events like talks, presentations, workshops and exhibitions. Thessaloniki Food Festival focuses on the growth of the city's gastronomy.

Many cultural festivals take place in Chalkidiki, mainly in the summer. The top cultural event is the Sea Festival in Nea Moudania, the Sani Festival with music, dance, arts and local tradition and the Cassandra Festival, which covers a wide area in field of arts and culture from music, songs, dance, theatrical performances and cinema with participants from Greece and abroad.

The Carnival in the city of Naoussa, in Meliki on Christmas Eve is the custom of 'Anastenaria', during which people dance on burning coals. 'Tzamalaria' in Arnissa, with local music, a feast with plenty of wine and the procession returns laughing streets of the village, in Aridaia takes place the 'Karatzovitko' Carnival and the Green Festival where visitors can be informed by ecological groups and know viokalliergitikes actions

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<sup>41</sup> <http://tif.helexpo.gr/en/introduction>

<sup>42</sup> [http://www.helexpo.gr/sites/default/files/tif\\_corporate\\_profile.pdf](http://www.helexpo.gr/sites/default/files/tif_corporate_profile.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.filmfestival.gr/default.aspx?lang=en-US&page=586>

<sup>44</sup> <http://events.thessaloniki.gr/en/>

in the region. Pozar Festival is a big celebration in nature with all day activities that end up in evening concerts by leading artists<sup>45</sup>.

The Olympus Festival in Pieria has the widest range of cultural activities in the Balkans. The programme includes Ancient and Modern Greek and international theatre, ballet, concerts, seminars on the archaeological significance of the area<sup>46</sup>, attracting audiences in excess of 40,000 each year. The international Folk Festival organised by the 'Pierian Muses' is one of the most important international folk festivals, attracting dance groups from all over the world.

## Gastronomy

Thessaloniki is a crossroad of flavours, a gastronomic capital. Various religions and customs have added to or subtracted from its ancient gastronomic features. The historical coexistence of the Turkish, Jewish, French and Greek communities resulted in a multitude of dishes, enriching the local cuisine.

Byzantine flavours and techniques have been also incorporated in the local cuisine. The heritage of the Ottoman cuisine and the traditions of Greek refugees from Asia Minor and Istanbul, as well as distant Pontus, are combined with gastronomical customs of the Balkan hinterland, fashioning the distinct gastronomic profile of the city. Its pastry shops (Bougatsatzidika), its patisseries the sesame bread rings of Thessaloniki are very famous worldwide.

Probably the most well-known flavor from Serres is 'bougatsa' (traditional sweet with cream). 'Akanes', is a type of gourmet candy delight (Zeugoulas, 2008). The recipe of Dolma (rice, vegetables and herbs stuffed in vine leaves), with natural rice from the region of Provatas. The local Ouzo (alcoholic beverage) of Serres is very popular because of its quality.

The local cuisine of Kilkis is also multicultural. The Pontian cuisine has the biggest influence in the area's gastronomy, with the famous pontian cheeses and pasta "Ragian", the cheese Doirani, in this region. Goumenissa is the center of the wine production genuine honey, recipes with meats from local free-range animals and fresh fish from Doirani.

Chalkidiki is a landscape with a plethora of products like olive oil, high quality honey. The Greek philosopher Aristotle is widely reported to have praised honey over 2,300 years ago. Local fish and seafood are served at the tavernas in the Chalkidiki fishing ports. The local meat such as sausages with leek, stew and excellent cheeses such as salty mpatsos, kaseri and sheep's yoghurt, are among the most popular flavours.

The red peppers of Aridaia, the famous crunchy cherries of Edessa "Vodenon", peaches and other fruits that are used as sweets. In Mountainous Pella are produced local wines of Pella and raki, as well as, handmade pasta such as couscous, trachana, small-grained beans "papouda", honey, raki, asparagus of Almopia etc.

Pieria's culinary tradition melds gastronomic traditions from the whole of Greece, with a special unique culinary traditions of a fascinating mix of settlers: Vlachs, Pontians, Greeks of Asia Minor, and the Greeks from Sarakatsani. One of the area's specialty food

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.allaboutfestivals.gr/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://pieria-tourism.gr/pydnaen.html>

product from ancient Greece is the pata negra, or black pork. Wild truffles and truffle oil are two other delicacies sourced and manufactured in the area.

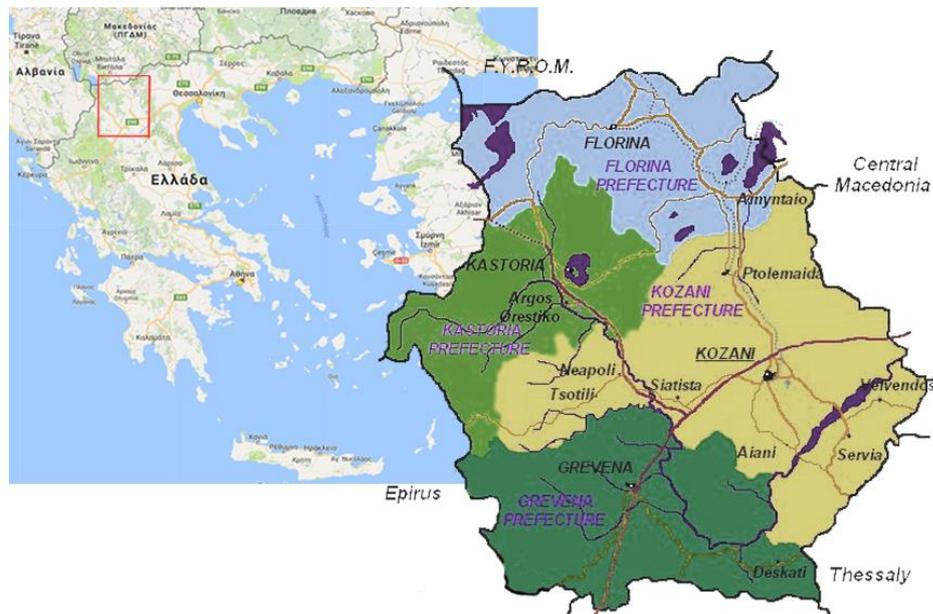
## B. CENTRAL MACEDONIA REGION: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Development profile</b> (<i>demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic geographical position</li> <li>• Five railway links to the Balkans</li> <li>• The second biggest national port in Thessaloniki</li> <li>• The International Airport Makedonia in Thessaloniki The railway network along the main road axes</li> <li>• The Egnatia Motorway axis</li> <li>• Broad range of economical activities providing growth opportunities</li> <li>• European and Balkan business and cultural centre</li> <li>• High percentage in the country's GDP due to exports</li> <li>• Thessaloniki is a major economic pole attracting population from other areas</li> <li>• Large higher education institutions</li> <li>• High educational ratio</li> <li>• Innovative entrepreneurship activities of R&amp;D organisations</li> <li>• Proximity to decision making centers</li> <li>• The International Fair of Thessaloniki as a node of international cooperation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively high unemployment rate</li> <li>• High number of SMEs lacking R&amp;D potential</li> <li>• Large discrepancy of economic development at the intraregional level (Thessaloniki is a major pole).</li> <li>• Specialisation of the secondary sector in traditional economic activities, and low level of technological modernisation of enterprises.</li> <li>• Urban concentration – Pronounced depopulation of rural areas.</li> <li>• The quality of the secondary road network is poor and requires significant investments for improvement and upgrading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> <li>• Proximity with the Balkan markets providing opportunities for further economic development</li> <li>• New knowledge sectors (medicine, biotechnology, ICTs)</li> <li>• Recent political developments in the Balkans create new markets opportunities</li> <li>• Innovation public or private funding to create an innovation market growth</li> <li>• Cooperation between public sector and universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic crisis</li> <li>• Development obstacles (delays in infrastructure)</li> <li>• Competition from neighbouring countries</li> <li>• High cost of introducing new technologies and innovation</li> <li>• Not expertised personnel</li> <li>• Low level of facilities and services in remote areas</li> <li>• Increasing unemployment rate</li> <li>• Aging population</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tourism Development Determinants</b></p>				
<p><b>Tourism Product</b> <i>Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many historical resources related to the silk industry</li> <li>• Chrissalis silk industry restoration and reuse project as a cultural resource and tourist attraction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further developing tourism</li> <li>• Low level of diversification the tourism product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism funding opportunities from European, national and regional Programmes</li> <li>• Competitive pricing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential economic crisis in other countries, impact upon potential tourist</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edessa’s historical character as the second city in silk industry in Greece</li> <li>• Integration of abandoned facilities of Thessaloniki in the industry urban network of the city</li> <li>• The Region is an international cultural node</li> <li>• Religion tourism worldwide destinations</li> <li>• Opportunities for alternative tourism (Pieria, Veroia, et.c.)</li> </ul>	<p>because of lack of knowledge-experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level in tourism investments</li> <li>• Mass tourism and Seasonality in some regions</li> <li>• Uneven tourist concentrations (Chalkidiki and Pella main tourist concentrations)</li> <li>• Lack of integrated planning</li> <li>• Lack in tourism education</li> <li>• Lack in tourism promotion</li> <li>• low tourism development rate in some areas</li> <li>• Many of the silk mills haven’t survive (ex. in Edessa)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Operation Programme (2014-2020) promoting tourism development</li> <li>• Contribution of the media in tourism development</li> <li>• New international trends in tourism</li> <li>• Promotion of ICTs in tourism</li> <li>• Social tourism</li> <li>• Investment interest from other countries</li> <li>• Potentials for thematic tourism</li> <li>• Revival of sericulture in Edessa and potentials of new investments</li> <li>• Historical connections between monasteries and silk production</li> <li>• Lack of funds and cooperation prevents the revival of industry complexes</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Natural resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance and Protected Areas</li> <li>• Great Biodiversity</li> <li>• Bodies and agencies intensely active in protecting and promoting the environment.</li> <li>• Relatively high investments on Renewable Energy Resources (RES)</li> <li>• Great energy resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrong development policies (economic development vs environmental protection) during the last decades</li> <li>• The effects of human intervention on the environment</li> <li>• Bureaucracy obstacles in new entrepreneurial activities and start-ups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• R&amp;D initiatives</li> <li>• Potential to diversify tourism offer towards higher-value added and 365 days a year attractions</li> <li>• Potentials for alternative tourism in the Region and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• No political long-term commitment</li> <li>• Continuous need for new technologies</li> <li>• Low awareness</li> </ul>

			<p>protection of natural resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New cultivations (mulberry trees)</li> </ul>	
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich multicultural resources</li> <li>• Various local products</li> <li>• Branded local products</li> <li>• Rich tradition in gastronomy, textiles, chemicals and metal sectors</li> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments in Unesco list</li> <li>• Significant cultural (mythology, historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture)</li> <li>• Significant tangible &amp; intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk road</li> <li>• Establishment of new activities in silk complexes promoting the history of the monuments and industrial buildings in Greece (Chrissalis documentary theatre)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local products with strong identity</li> <li>• Transportation facilities steam exports</li> <li>• Low productivity rates in some areas of the Region</li> <li>• Low degree of cross sector interconnection</li> <li>• Weak manufacturing units</li> <li>• Low level promotion of the brand of Silk tourism</li> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas are strongly related to the Silk road and can become nodes in a Silk Road route</li> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural development</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> <li>• Existence of infrastructures connected with silk road tourism (ex. Chrissalis industrial area) and potentials of revival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many enterprises move to neighbouring areas because of national tax policies</li> <li>• Integration of neighbouring countries in E.U.</li> <li>• Degradation of local identity</li> <li>• Lack of political initiatives towards integrated revival plans</li> </ul>
<i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced time travel to the borders</li> <li>• Total bed capacity exceeds 100000</li> <li>• Chalkidiki is the most well-established destination, followed by Pieria</li> <li>• Accessibility of the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The port of Thessaloniki is degraded</li> <li>• None of the railway links is considered as major</li> <li>• The airport facilities need upgrade</li> <li>• The ongoing work for the subway in Thessaloniki centre have degraded the economic activity of the nearby shops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low cost tourism companies for attracting visitors in the area</li> <li>• Upgrade of railway network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient railway network</li> <li>• Degradation of road network especially within the urban centres</li> <li>• Two main road links to the Balkans (from Promahon and Evzonoi)</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Western Macedonia Region



Map 5: Location of Western Macedonia in Greece.  
Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western\\_Macedonia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Macedonia)

### A. Region of Western Macedonia profile analysis

#### 2.3.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

The Region of Western Macedonia is situated in north-western Greece, bordering with the regions of Central Macedonia (east), Thessaly (south), Epirus (west), and bounded to the north at the international borders of Greece with the Republic of Macedonia (Bitola region) and Albania (Korçë County). The Region is considered to be the 'gate' of Greece and the European Union on Western Balkans<sup>47</sup>.

The Region of Western Macedonia claimed its current form when the "Kallikratis Programme", regarding New Architecture of Self-governing Entities and Deconcentrated Administration, officially entered into force (Law 3852/2010, Government Gazette 87/06.07.2010). Since then it consists of the Regional Units of Grevena, Kastoria, Kozani and Florina.

#### 2.3.2 Geographical and geophysical information

The Region of Western Macedonia covers an area of 9,471 km<sup>2</sup>, 7.2% of country's total (EL.STAT., 2016)a, the majority of which is covered by arable land, forests and pastures. The Region has a mountainous nature, as 82% of the total surface are mountainous and semi-mountainous areas. It is the only Region without connection with the sea.

The geographical position of Western Macedonia, near the major urban centre of Thessaloniki, has been an obstacle for its further development during recent decades.

<sup>47</sup> Western Macedonia Region, European Union, NSRF 2007-2013. *Configuration of National Development Strategy Guidelines 2014-2020*.

However, there is great potential for development due to its location near the borders with F.Y.R.O.M. and Albania, as well as due to the proximity with major road axes.

Western Macedonia is mainly mountainous, with most of the mountains with height beyond 2,000m. The northeast part is formed by Pindos mountain range, the largest in Greece. Between the mountains lie high basins, like the Vriyiida basin, where are the Prespes lakes, the Orestida basin, with the lake of Kastoria and the Ano Aliakmonas basin with the artificial Ilarionas Lake.

Mount range of Pindos, with its rare scenery and ecological value, includes two national parks: the national park of Vikos – Aaos in Epirus and the park of Valia Kalda in Western Macedonia. Moreover, six protected areas are parts of the Natura 2000 network. The protected area of Northern Pindos, one of the most important areas at both national and European levels, combines natural and man-made environments and geographically unifies the National Forests of Pindos (Valia Kalda) and Vikos-Aaos.

Aliakmonas River, the largest in Greece, is 297km long and a rare wetland habitat and one of the richest water resources in the region. On the riverbanks, there are dense forests of deciduous trees creating a complex ecosystem of unique beauty. Mountain Smolikas includes two natural parks, Valia Kalda and Prespes, and the famous Dragon Cave, offering many attractive natural sights. Moreover, the natural environment of the area is enriched by the waterfalls, rivers, the wetlands near Lake Agra-Nisiou-Vryton - featuring bird-watching installations and a complete information centre – Lake Vegoritida, the Black Forest, the thermal spas and the Ski Centre Voras-Kaimaktsalan, offering an outstanding ecological and aesthetic variety of natural beauty to satisfy the most demanding visitor.

The lake of Kastoria, one of the most beautiful in the Balkans, is directly linked to the character, history and development of the city. It has been classified as “Monument of Natural Beauty” by the Ministry of Culture and it has been integrated in the European Network “Nature 2000”. Orestiada Lake, supplied by several underwater springs, is also a wetland of great importance for both aquatic and predator birds, since this is where they reproduce, feed and winter. It preserves a rich bird fauna – about 200 species – including rare and endangered species, protected by international and national law.

### **2.3.3 History of Western Macedonia Region**

Western Macedonia was inhabited in Prehistory and a number of excavations at the area can confirm that. From at least the 7th millennial BCE (Neolithic period) the area has settlements of people and the remains of their everyday lives. A single stone hand-axe found in Palaiokastros, near Kozani, is among the earliest stone tools in Greece. Early Neolithic sites were recently found in the region and together with those of Central Macedonia, rate among the first agricultural settlements of Europe. The region of Western Macedonia is the only region in Greece where prehistoric lake settlements were founded. Dispilio, by the lake of Kastoria, is a well-known Neolithic settlement of this type, and the open air museum connected to it represents a major attraction for several thousands of visitors yearly. Between Siatista and Palaiokastros, a prehistoric axe of 100,000 years old was found, the second oldest finding in the Greek area, after the cave of Petralona, indicating the existence of settlements in the region (Heurtley, 1939:128)

Since the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., the area played an important role in the so called Peloponnesian War in the northern part of Greece. The mother of Philip II and wife to Amyntas III, Eurydice, is said to have come from Lygkistida, ancient city located in nowadays Regional Unit of Florina<sup>48</sup>. The region was the scene of many historical facts during the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when Samuel created the new Bulgarian state ruling from Prespa at first and then from Ohrid.

Naoussa, Edessa, Kastoria, and Ohrid fell under the Ottoman rule. The inhabitants of the ancient town of Naoussa, do not appear to have put any resistance to the Ottoman forces, but rather to have scattered throughout the surrounding forests in their search for refuge, due to anarchy in the area. Many new settlements were founded that period such as Nympeo, Pisoderi, Flambouro, Lechovo, Drosopigi, inhabited by people from Epirus, most of them being stone builders.

Sericulture and mulberry cultivation were largely developed in many areas during the Ottoman rule. Ottomans ordered planting mulberry trees for sericulture, as silk was a luxurious textile for their clothing. In the early years of the Turkish occupation, monasticism was flourishing in the lake Prespa; the ascetic caves and monasteries of Porfyra, Eleousa, Analipsi and Metamorfossi bear witness to this. In monasteries monks were engaged in silk production and manufacturing of priest's covers made of silk (Vacalopoulos, 1973).

The area was situated on the crossroads of major trade routes and as a result, became a hub for trade between Macedonia and Thessaly, as well as with Istanbul, Austria and Hungary. For this reason, the area highlighted famous *kiratzides* (carriers) who arrived from Durres, Venice, Budapest, Vienna, Leipzig, the Wallachia up to Moscow. This trade brought prosperity to the region during the 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century. The area was degraded when these routes were abandoned due to the establishment of new transport infrastructures (railway, road), and the vanish of external markets (Austria-Hungary), and as a result, the area became a distant Greek province without vital economic activities (Pitas, 2005).

The region played an important role in the numerous uprisings against the Turks. In 1865 "the Society of Friends" (Filiki Heteria) was founded by inhabitants from Nympeo, that fought against the Ottoman rulers of the region, initiating teachers, priests, tradesmen and peasants to the Society. During the years of the Macedonian War, it was fighters from this area who lead the struggle against the Bulgarians.

The area played a substantial role during the Balkan Wars (1912-13), with the Epirus front. There, the Greek army was initially heavily outnumbered, but due to the passive attitude of the Ottomans succeeded in conquering Preveza and pushing north to the direction of Ioannina. The combined armies of the Balkan states overcame the numerically inferior and strategically disadvantaged Ottoman armies and achieved rapid success (World Heritage Encyclopedia). During World War II, the area was under Italian occupation hence the Italian zone was later taken over by the Germans. Apart from East Macedonia and Thrace, which was given to Bulgaria by Nazi Germany in 1941, the Bulgarian government also attempted to gain influence in German-held Central and West Macedonia.

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.ditikimakedonia-region.com/>

### 2.3.4 Demographic characteristics

The population of Western Macedonia was 283,689 in 2011, being one of the smallest Regions of Greece. Because of its mountainous geomorphology, the Region has low population density, 30 per km<sup>2</sup> as compared to the country's 79.7 relevant figure (EL.STAT. 2016a), the lowest density of 2.6% of the country's total (Reid, et al. 2012). This is reflected in the population distribution, where the majority of the population (56%) lives in rural areas and more specifically, almost 50% of the Region's population is concentrated in Kozani Regional Unit. In 2011, as in 2001, the Regional Unit of Kozani ranked first in terms of population, followed by the Regional Units of Florina, Kastoria and Grevena.

Regarding population growth, the position of Western Macedonia decreased in the ranking of the country's Regions, during 1991-2011, as it was one of the four regions that experienced a limited population increase in the 1990s and a relatively large population reduction in the 2000s (-4.14%)<sup>49</sup>. Depopulation has been noted mainly in Grevena Regional Unit, where there are also higher ageing population rates.

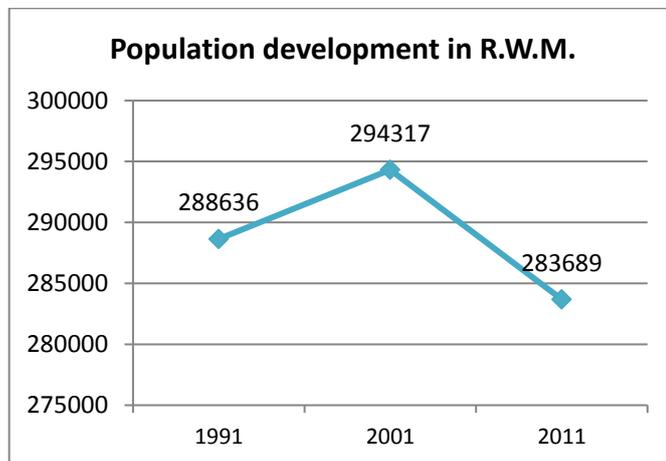


Figure 2.3.5: Population development in R.W.M. (1991-2011). Source: [http://observatory.egnatia.gr/factsheets/fs\\_2013/SET09\\_factsheet\\_2013.pdf](http://observatory.egnatia.gr/factsheets/fs_2013/SET09_factsheet_2013.pdf)

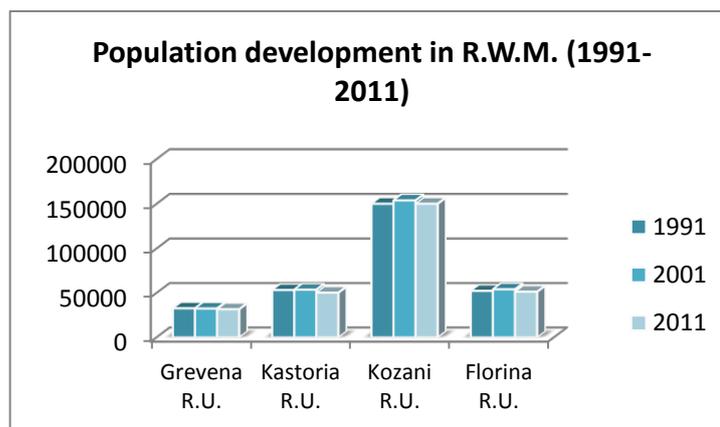


Figure 2.3.6: Population development in R.W.M. per Regional Unit. Source: [http://observatory.egnatia.gr/factsheets/fs\\_2013/SET09\\_factsheet\\_2013.pdf](http://observatory.egnatia.gr/factsheets/fs_2013/SET09_factsheet_2013.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> [http://observatory.egnatia.gr/factsheets/fs\\_2013/SET09\\_factsheet\\_2013.pdf](http://observatory.egnatia.gr/factsheets/fs_2013/SET09_factsheet_2013.pdf)

### 2.3.5 Development profile of the Region

#### a. Economic characteristics

Regarding the socio-economic characteristics, before the onset of the economic crisis, the Region recorded the fourth highest per capita GDP nationwide, generating 2.5% of the national GDP, with a GDP/capita of €20,300 in 2009 representing 86% of the EU27 average (Reid et al., 2012) At the same time, it presents high unemployment rates over time. At intra-regional level the differences vary in terms of GDP per capita, with Kozani and Florina presenting performance higher than the average of the country<sup>50</sup>. Despite the economic crisis, sectors such as mining, electricity but also manufacturing and agriculture, maintain an important place in regional labor market. Western Macedonia exports a large part of its products to third countries and new emerging and dynamic economies, in Southeast Europe, North African markets, the Middle East and Asia.

##### i. Primary sector

A significant part of the population is involved in the primary sector. The share of the primary sector has declined to only 4.6% of the regional added value in 2009 (compared to 7.4% in 2000) (Reid et al., 2012). The biggest regional employer is the growing of crops, market gardening and horticulture. The main cultivations of the Region include grain, tobacco, corn, rice, potatoes, tomatoes, cotton, sugar beet, strawberries, watermelons, melons, and orchards and vineyards producing grapes and olives. Many fruit bearing trees also thrive such as kiwi trees, peach trees, apple trees, cherry trees, plum trees, as well as chestnut trees, hazel trees, walnut trees and almond trees. The cattle bred are goats, sheep, pigs, oxen, rabbits, chickens and other kinds of poultry. There are also specific units which breed wild pigs and ostriches. Important quantities of milk and meat are produced from cattle breeding.

##### ii. Secondary sector

The secondary sector is very important for the regional economy, mainly due to the mining activities, agglomeration of lignite and production and distribution of electric power. At the European level, the output of mining activities comes second only to Germany (and close to that of Poland) (Belke et al., 2015). The strengths that the exploitation of lignite offered until today to the Region and the whole country are unquestionable, but at the same time serious economic and environmental problems occurred<sup>51</sup>. The most important manufacturing activities in the Region include: food products, wood and metal products, footwear, clothing and textile industry, also weaving and printing activities.

The fur-leather sector is of great significance for the Region. Historically, the region has been a centre for the processing and making-up of furs. This is still a very dynamic branch despite the current crisis and competition. Fur manufacturing shows growing trends, due to the resilient global demand despite economic crisis. Its various important advantages include long tradition, specialization, knowledge on trade and markets. However there are also disadvantages mainly due to the instability in raw materials' prices. The industry is 100% export, since fur products are sold to foreign markets and

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<sup>50</sup> Western Macedonia Region, European Union, NSRF 2007-2013. *Configuration of National Development Strategy Guidelines 2014-2020*.

<sup>51</sup> <http://proforbiomed.eu/project/partners/region-western-macedonia>

to tourists visiting the area. The main market is Russia, and the growing Arab centers like Dubai, because of the Russian tourists visiting there. Demand for Greek fur also exists by China, and the quality of the product makes it competitive<sup>52</sup>. It is worth noticing that Greek fur production reflects 5-7% of world leather production.

Two industrial zones operate in Western Macedonia, in Florina and Kozani. The region is home to cluster of firms in traditional sectors, including renowned regional products such as marble, saffron (Crocus or Krokos Kozanis), fruits, local wines, furs and specialised arts and crafts (Reid et al. 2012) Employment in secondary sector is very high in the Region (28,1%), the highest employment percentage in the secondary sector on national level<sup>53</sup>. It is also important to mention that, leather and fur, rubber and plastic, paper products, security systems, cattle feed, etc. are also local industries. Manufacturing while growing in importance, is concentrated in sectors facing strong international competition, notably, wood-working, furniture production and fur trading (clustered in the towns of Kastoria and Siatista).

### iii. Tertiary sector

The tertiary sector accounted for 45.4% of the regional added value in 2009, and the industry & construction sector 50% (Reid et al. 2012). In the services sector, retail and wholesale trade, tourism and public administration services are the most important in terms of value added, while health and financial sectors are gradually growing in importance.

The provision of services has developed into one of the most significant activities particularly in urban areas. A substantial number of people are employed in civil and private services, computers and the Internet sector, mobile telecommunication, transport, security offices, financial businesses, fitness centers e.tc. The R&D services are at a rather low level: only 3.5% of the country's total research foundations are situated in the Region.

In 2002, the University of Western Macedonia was founded in Florina, with three Faculties consisting of six Departments. The Technological Educational Institute of Western Macedonia, established in 1976, is the largest educational institution in the region and it has four Faculties. Health services are beyond reach for citizens living in remote mountainous locations. The Region could provide support for the private sector to deploy affordable telemedicine or home-care platforms, for specific areas (Reid et al. 2012).

The Region produces 45% of the national electricity demand. It is worth noting that during 2010-2012, the thermal and hydroelectric units of the Region produced 52%-55% of the total electricity production in the interconnected system. This huge industry requires several support and maintenance services, offered by SMEs, to cover specialised needs of the production sites. The Region would provide incentives to attract the ICT related SMEs, able to improve the employment profile of the Region.

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<sup>52</sup> Western Macedonia Region, European Union, NSRF 2007-2013. *Configuration of National Development Strategy Guidelines 2014-2020*.

<sup>53</sup> [http://observatory.egnatia.gr/factsheets/fs\\_2012/SET14\\_factsheet\\_2012.pdf](http://observatory.egnatia.gr/factsheets/fs_2012/SET14_factsheet_2012.pdf)

## **b. Transport infrastructure**

Western Macedonia has extensive public transport infrastructures with a national, inter-regional and regional road network, public bus and train services. Infrastructure investments (e.g. Egnatia road) have greatly improved the road network and regional accessibility. The Region is served by about 750km national road network as well as provincial and community roads. The Egnatia motorway (Trans – European Network) that crosses the Region, along with its two vertical National Roads, form a network that improves transport conditions in the Region and alter its “isolation” image, mainly due to its mountainous landscape. The railway network, is considered as insufficient, while the two regional airports in Kozani and Kastoria have low passenger volumes. The telecommunication network has been improved over the last decade, providing the regional population with modern services and facilities.

### **2.3.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage**

Tourism represents a small part of the regional economic activity. However, it should be underpinned, that the Region has numerous areas of natural beauty and unexploited archaeological and religious sites, capable of attracting a significant number of visitors and developing alternative types of tourism (climbing, skiing, horse riding, bird watching e.tc.).

According to the statistics provided from the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, the Region of Western Macedonia in 2016 presents a total accommodation capacity of 5,993 beds and 127 accommodation units, ranking last among the Greek Regions<sup>54</sup>. Regarding the revenues from tourist expenditure for 2013, the Region ranked last, with a participation of just 0.57%. Furthermore, it is considered to be the least attractive tourist destination in the country, with only 0.17 non-resident nights per inhabitant (2013)<sup>55</sup>. As far as it concerns the occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments, the Region accounts for 0.4% of nights spent by residents and non-residents nationally spent in 2014 (EL.STAT., 2016). Residents and non-residents overnight stay in Western Macedonia decreased in 2014 by 4.4% compared to 2013 (EL.STAT., 2016).

According to Eurostat for the period 2009-2011, the tourism industry in the Region shows a decline as far as it concerns the number of active tourism enterprises, as a result of economic crisis and regional weaknesses in the field of tourism. Among the main factors hindering tourism development are the low level of tourism knowledge and experience, the low level of quality in tourism products and services and the lack of tourism infrastructure especially in mountainous areas.

### **2.3.7 Western Macedonia Region tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road**

#### **Cultural assets connected with the Silk Road**

Kastoria, the capital city of Kastoria Regional Unit, is well known for fur processing and trade, established as the center of fur processing. Fur processing is dating back in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but became known two centuries later, when Kastorian furriers began to

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<sup>54</sup> [http://www.grhotels.gr/GR/BusinessInfo/library/DocLib/Regional\\_2016.pdf](http://www.grhotels.gr/GR/BusinessInfo/library/DocLib/Regional_2016.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> Western Macedonia Region, European Union, NSRF 2007-2013. *Configuration of National Development Strategy Guidelines 2014-2020*.

import the raw materials from abroad, process it by hand, produce furs and export them across Europe. The fur industry in Kastoria reached its peak at the end of the World War II and especially after 1960. For decades, fur has been the main export product, especially to Russian and European markets, while every year an international showcase of fur takes place in the city. Nowadays, the fur industry functions according to the international rules, using raw materials from farms with strict operation standards. It is worthy to mention that the fur industry is responsible for 30% of total world fur products (Valaoras & Tziovaras 2003).

From historical evidence about the commercial transactions between Venice and the Macedonian cities of Siatista and Kastoria, it is known that merchants (retail-merchants), operated throughout Western Macedonia, Albania and Serbia, going as far as Bulgaria and Wallachia in the pursuit of goods to be bought or exchanged with others of foreign provenance. They used to carry the local products (i.e. silk, wool, coarse blankets and rugs, serges, cochineal, wax, leather, etc.) to the port of Durazzo, and import thence clothes, worsteds, satins, ecclesiastical books and other items, which they disposed of themselves or through their agents in the commercial centres of the northern provinces of European Turkey, or else at the numerous trade-fairs which constituted such interesting foci of economic life (Vacalopoulos, 1973).

The history of Kozani, capital city of Kozani Regional Unit, is long and the beginnings of the settlement date back to the Iron Age. During the reign of Philip II of Macedonia, the area belonged to Upper Macedonia. In the Byzantine era, Kozani's growth was substantial and the heritage of this period can still be found until nowadays. During the Ottoman period Kozani attracted many Christians and in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, managed to flourish economically through the commercial relations with central Europe. Kozani's products were various and unique, among which were white and red fabrics, silk, red saffron, leather fabrics, cotton, furs, wine and carpets and were exported to many European countries.

As it has been recorded, the northern Silk Road caravan route brought to China many goods such as dates, saffron powder and pistachio nuts from Persia<sup>56</sup>. The Greek "Crocus" (saffron) grows in the area of Kozani (one of the four places producing saffron worldwide). It is known from Homer for its aromatic, colour and therapeutic attributes<sup>57</sup>. Saffron arrived three centuries ago in Kozani's Region, where it began to grow in the area of Krokos of the municipality of Elimeia. Greek Crocus is of high quality and Protected Designation of Origin-certified saffron is grown and marketed as Krokos Kozanis. Today, it is used in medicine, cosmetics, food, beverage industry, confectionery and pasta industries e.tc.<sup>58</sup>. Greek saffron is regarded as some as the best in the world used for medicinal as well as flavouring purposes.

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<sup>56</sup> [http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/Silk\\_route](http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/Silk_route)

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.mfa.gr/cyprus/en/about-greece/food-and-gastronomy/taste-of-greece.html>

<sup>58</sup> <http://visitwestmacedonia.gr/en/>



Production of Krokos Kozanis. Source: <http://culinarybackstreets.com/cities-category/athens/2014/cb-road-18/>

Siatista between 1600 and 1800 shared the economic prosperity enjoyed by all the towns and cities of Western Macedonia. Merchants of Siatista transported to Central Europe (especially to Austria, Hungary and Germany), hides, furs, red-thread, saffron and raw cotton. In return they imported silk and woollen textiles, vessels of fine glass and porcelain, large mirrors with gilt carved-wood frames, etc.(Vacalopoulos, 1973).

The fur industry is also linked to the history of Siatista. In 1600, the first furs were manufactured in Siatista and exported to the markets of Central Europe (among them Italy, Austria, Hungary and others). There are also other products manufactured in Siatista today, which combine fur with other materials such as leather or cloth. In addition, several complex processes are also used, such as the trimming of furs or dyeing in several bright colors. Although new technologies are introduced in the fur production process, the secret of fur making is transferred only from generation to generation, keeping the area's tradition. Today, there are 950 businesses in Siatista exclusively involved in fur-making. It is estimated that the foreign exchange of Siatista and Kastoria from exports amounts to 50 million dollars a year<sup>59</sup>.

Servia: During the Ottoman rule, Servia was an important town in the wider area. The Servia castle was built on a small hill and included 100 houses belonging to poor Greeks. The castle is unique and includes the remains of churches, residences and walls, as well as the byzantine church of St. Dimitrios with exceptional wall paintings of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Vines were cultivated on the surrounding mountains. In the lower city were six Muslim 'districts', and eight mixed Greek and Jewish, comprising in all 1800 stone-built houses with gardens full of vines and mulberry-trees. Servia was famous for its beautiful face-cloths decorated with silk embroidery, and for its fine-quality 'burnouses', bath-robos with silk fringes and the whitest of soft sheets (Vacalopoulos, 1973).

Sericulture seems to have thrived traditionally at Servia and according to Evliya Çelebi (1611-1682), explorer who travelled through the territory of the Ottoman Empire and neighboring lands, some travelers quite rightly called the city 'Little Bursa' (Bursa was famous for being the largest centre of silk trade in the Byzantine and later the Ottoman empires, during the period of the Silk Road) (Vacalopoulos, 1973). The women and girls

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<sup>59</sup> <http://furfair.gr/news/34th-international-fur-fair-kastoria>

of the area were engaged in sericulture. In the numerous monasteries of the region, the monks were occupied with the sericulture and silk processing. It is worth noticing that the nuns of the neighbouring patriarchal nunnery of Ayion Theodoron devoted themselves to sericulture, being under an obligation to send to the Patriarchate, every year during Holy Week, twelve priest's head-dress-covers made of silk (Vacalopoulos, 1973).

Tranovaltos: To the southwest of Kozani, the villages of the Municipality of Kamvounia, Mikrovaltos and Tranovaltos are located. The area is endowed with a substratum rich in marble deposits, from which the renowned white marble of Tranovaltos is produced<sup>60</sup>. The systematic exploitation and continuously increasing demand has created an intense exporting activity.

### Museums

The Folklore and Natural History Museum in Kozani houses representations of rural traditional costumes of Western Macedonia and of rooms from old town houses in Kozani<sup>61</sup>. The Anthropological and Folklore Museum of Ptolemaida houses exhibits which at present include local costumes from Western Macedonia, household utensils, agricultural implements, ornamental objects, tools of various trades, old coins, needlework, and embroidered and woven fabrics.

The Kastoria Costume Museum aims to introduce the public to the traditional dress of the Kastoria area, all the costumes on display coming from the city and the surrounding countryside. Specific items include the 'dzoube', a women's day dress in pale blue; the anderi, a brown-striped women's day dress; formal women's wear; the male anderi without a gilet but with a fez; and a service uniform of silken fabric.

The Folklore Museum of Kastanofito was founded in 1994 by the Kastanofito Cultural Association. Among its exhibits are genuine traditional women costumes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, woven textiles, embroidery, objects of everyday use and agriculture e.tc.



A loom and traditional costumes in the Kastanofito museum. Source: <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/index.html>

The Folklore Museum of Aristotle Association in Florina displays the collection of artefacts of local folk culture. The section clothing, with the traditional costumes of refugee women, and many local costumes for young and older people; weaving, with looms, distaffs, spindles, e.tc.; agricultural occupations; household utensils, e.tc. The

<sup>60</sup> <http://visitwestmacedonia.gr/en/>

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/index.html>

Florina Culture Club was founded in 1980 in the former 'Diethnes Hotel', an eclectic building in the city centre. Its exhibitions include traditional everyday wear from the Florina area, looms, weaving implements, agricultural implements (for ploughing, reaping, threshing, and subsidiary activities), objects for everyday use and a collection of medicine and herbs. The Folklore Museum of Lehovo, Florina, started operating in 1976, gathering all historical local evidence saved after the village was burnt down. Among its exhibits are ecclesiastic objects and priests' head-dress covers, embroidery and woven products, costumes and various objects of everyday life.

### **Festivals- Folklore tradition**

"Fanos" and the parade of "Carnavalos" are the Carnival celebrations in Kozani. The "Horsemen of Siatista", is a custom celebrated after spending the night of the Assumption in the monastery of Mary Virgin of Mikrokastro is an all-day feast. Chestnut celebration takes place in the Kozani Regional Unit, where the famous sweet chestnuts in Voio have a field day in early November. The 'Momogeroi' is a custom from the Pontic tradition with roots in the Ottoman occupation.

In Grevena, the 3-day National Day of Mushroom Festival takes place along the banks of river Venetian. In Kastoria, the so called "*Ragoutsaria*" carnivals, are a revival of the ancient Dionysian rites. Also, the Balkan Music Festival is held in Kastoria<sup>62</sup>. In the summer the celebration of Klidonas coincides with the celebration of Saint John, and "*Orestia*" is an interbalkan chorus festival in Argos Orestiko, where the fur exhibition is also organised in April. The River Party, a music festival, takes place at the banks of Aliakmonas River in Nestorio and attracts numerous young people. The top cultural and artistic event of the Regional unit is the Prespa Festival called "Prespeia", with the Cultural Organization of Prespa organising the festival. The Feast of Pepper is dedicated to the cultivation of red plant, and the Fish Festival takes place in Limnochori.

### **Gastronomy**

The visitor can find numerous traditional products. There are many traditional dishes, such as, "*Gaprakia*" the main dish during Christmas, "*Tsoukalakia*", a kind of stew, the "*Mpoumpari*", a rare delicacy and the so-called "*Tsitsilato*", lamb cooked with herbs and spinach. Local cuisine also includes exceptional dishes made with mushrooms, meat, cheese and organic products. The homemade products like jams and spoon sweets, as well as the local drinks such as raki, are famous throughout the region. The area is well known for its homemade pies, stuffed with onion, eggplant, leek, nettle, spinach or minced meat, the small rounded pies called "*Kichia*". The cheese products of Kozani are considered to be unique for their quality and taste. People in Western Macedonia have worked on the domestic production of wine and the famous "*tsipouro*" appetizer drink since the old days.

The world famous legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas) are cultivated in the area for centuries. The mild climate of the region highly contributes in making cultivated sweet, crispy apples. Feta cheese (PDO), kasseri (hard cheese), kefalotyri and kefalograviera are of the most important traditional dairy products of the area. The climate and soil also favor viticulture. Greek and foreign markets acknowledge the excellent wine and tsipouro quality of Kastoria. The chestnut and walnut trees offer their nutritious fruits.

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<sup>62</sup> <http://www.allaboutfestivals.gr/>

The Lake of Kastoria offers the most delicious dishes, with caps, crucian carps, pikes, rudds and chubs.

Since ancient times there are references to the natural carbonated waters of the area. The "Sour Water" of Florina with leading the community of Xino Nero is worldwide known. Prespa beans are very tasty and considered among the best in the world. Florina is also known for its red peppers, which, after the long trip from South America (Brazil) in Europe by Christopher Columbus in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, arrived in the West Macedonia region.

Siatista is famous for its wines, and especially for the traditional "liasto", made from partially sun-dried grapes, whose unique flavour is the product of the region's particular soil and climate conditions<sup>63</sup>.

The area of Amintaio in Florina Regional Unit, is internationally known for viticulture, an eminently traditional productive activity of the residents, spoon sweets, jams and tomato paste from local fruit and vegetables. The main wine-growing zone of the Municipality lies between the lower banks of lake Petron, producing white and rose wines, and Vegoritida lake, with the highest altitude in drained soils and slopes, being suitable for the production of red wines. The inbetween region produces all types of wine. All these unique characteristics and the quality of the products result in the designation of the area as Zone Appellation Origin of Superior Quality Wine of Amyntaio. The main variety of the zone is Xinomauro and it is recognized as O.P.A.P. of Amyntaio, because of climatic conditions, matures late just as the varieties grown in regions of Central and Western Europe.

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<sup>63</sup> <http://visitwestmacedonia.gr/en/>

## B. WESTERN MACEDONIA REGION: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Development profile</b> (<i>demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic geographical position</li> <li>• Railway link to the Balkans</li> <li>• The two airports in Kastoria and Kozani</li> <li>• The railway network along the main road axes</li> <li>• The Egnatia axis</li> <li>• Broad range of economic activities providing growth opportunities</li> <li>• National Energy core</li> <li>• Turn towards RES</li> <li>• Natural endowments</li> <li>• Increase of educational level</li> <li>• Quasi equal economic development of the areas based mainly on primary and secondary sector</li> <li>• Tradition in trade especially in the Balkans</li> <li>• Greek fur production reaches 5-7% of total fur production worldwide</li> <li>• Apart from Russia, new markets from Arab countries and China are interested in Greek fur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively high unemployment rate</li> <li>• High number of SMEs lacking R&amp;D potential</li> <li>• Low level of R&amp;D investments</li> <li>• Lack of technological innovation support services</li> <li>• Most firms are small and family run</li> <li>• Traditional structure of the economy</li> <li>• Urban concentration – Pronounced depopulation of rural areas.</li> <li>• None of the railway links is considered as major</li> <li>• The two airports of Kozani and Kastoria can't bring tourists to the area</li> <li>• The quality of the secondary road network is poor and requires significant investments for upgrading</li> <li>• Some areas still have low accessibility</li> <li>• Unequal population distribution due to mountainous topography</li> <li>• Relative lack of cooperation between public sector and research institutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> <li>• Proximity with the Balkan markets providing opportunities for further economic development</li> <li>• Recent political developments in the Balkans create new neighboring markets</li> <li>• Innovation public or private funding to create an innovation market growth</li> <li>• Enterprise modernisation in the fur sector through technology transfer and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic crisis</li> <li>• Development obstacles (delays in infrastructure)</li> <li>• Competition from neighbouring countries</li> <li>• High cost of introducing new technologies and innovation</li> <li>• Not expertised personnel</li> <li>• Low level of facilities and services in remote areas</li> <li>• Increasing unemployment</li> <li>• Aging population</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proximity with Central Macedonia and Thessaloniki, was an obstacle towards further development of the region</li> <li>• The allocation from Greece's main traditional growth axis , P.A.Th.E. motorway (the Patra-Athens-Thessaloniki motorway which is part of the Trans European Transport Network) didn't favor the further development of the area</li> </ul>		
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product</b> <i>Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialisation in fur production</li> <li>• Brand name products (Krokos Kozanis, fur of Kastoria)</li> <li>• Turn to alternative tourism (winter tourism, eco tourism)</li> <li>• The area has been protected from mass tourism and great concentrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further tourism development</li> <li>• Low level of the tourism product diversification due to lack of knowledge-experience</li> <li>• Low level in tourism investments</li> <li>• Low ranking regarding tourism sector</li> <li>• Lack of integrated regional planning</li> <li>• Lack in tourism education</li> <li>• Insufficiency in tourism promotion strategy</li> <li>• Lack of initiatives for alternative tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undiscovered links with the history of Silk Road Routes (Siatista, Serbia)</li> <li>• Opportunities for tourism funding from European, national and regional Programmes</li> <li>• Regional Operation Programme (2014-2020) promoting tourism development</li> <li>• International trends in tourism</li> <li>• Promotion of ICTs in tourism</li> <li>• Support new low-impact forms of tourism</li> <li>• The common history of religion tourism and silk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential economic crisis in other countries, impact upon potential tourist</li> <li>• Expansion crisis to other countries – potential tourist</li> <li>• Long term shrinkage of primary sector</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National and European strategies concentrate in tourism development</li> </ul>	
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance and Protected Areas</li> <li>• Great Biodiversity</li> <li>• Bodies and agencies intensely active in protecting and promoting the environment.</li> <li>• Relatively high investments on Renewable Energy Resources (RES)</li> <li>• Great energy resources</li> <li>• The mountainous scenery is ideal for alternative tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate development policies (economic development vs environmental protection) during the last decades</li> <li>• The effects of human intervention on natural environment</li> <li>• Bureaucracy obstacles in new entrepreneurial activities and start-ups</li> <li>• Air pollution due to the power plants</li> <li>• Water and soil pollution due to industrial waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• R&amp;D initiatives</li> <li>• Potential to diversify tourism offer towards higher-value added and 365 days a year attractions</li> <li>• The rich environmental resources give numerous opportunities for further alternative tourism</li> <li>• Protect ecosystems and integrating them into alternative tourism networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• No political long-term commitment</li> <li>• Continuous need for new technologies</li> <li>• Low awareness</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant tangible &amp; intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk road (mythology, historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture)</li> <li>• Various branded local products</li> <li>• Branded local products</li> <li>• Rich tradition in gastronomy, textiles, chemicals and metal sectors</li> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments in Unesco list</li> <li>• Significant cultural (mythology, historical sites, architectural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local products with strong identity</li> <li>• Low productivity rates in some areas of the Region</li> <li>• Low degree of cross sector interconnection</li> <li>• Weak manufacturing units</li> <li>• Low level promotion of the brand of Silk tourism</li> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas are strongly related to the Silk road and can become nodes in a Silk Road route</li> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural development</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> <li>• Existence of infrastructures connected with silk road tourism and potentials of revival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many enterprises move to neighbouring areas because of national tax policies</li> <li>• Integration of neighbouring countries in E.U.</li> <li>• Degradation of local identity</li> <li>• Lack of political initiatives towards integrated revival plans</li> </ul>

	<p>heritage and modern culture)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas with history in textiles (Kastoria, Kozani)</li> </ul>			
<p><i>Services – Infrastructure – Accessibility</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory telecommunication network</li> <li>• Transportation facilities steam exports</li> <li>• Specialisation in energy production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low interconnection with other regions</li> <li>• Insufficient railway network</li> <li>• Lack of satisfactory road connections especially in mountainous areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an organising and planning framework for available tourism services</li> <li>• Use of new technologies to disseminate information</li> <li>• The construction of new links improving road accessibility especially to areas of economic interest (tourist destinations, areas of cultural and natural interest)</li> <li>• Upgrade of railway network</li> <li>• Potentials of healthcare facilities upgrade through telemedicine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of transit centres in the Region</li> <li>• Healthcare and educational facilities are directly depended on Central Macedonia’s infrastructure</li> </ul>

## 2.4 Region of Thessaly



Map 2.4.6: Location of Thessaly Region. Source: [http://7gym-laris.lar.sch.gr/english/thes\\_eng.htm](http://7gym-laris.lar.sch.gr/english/thes_eng.htm)

### A. Region of Thessaly profile analysis

#### 2.4.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

Thessaly lies in central Greece and borders the regions of Macedonia on the north, Epirus on the west, Central Greece on the south and the Aegean Sea on the east. It also includes the Sporades islands. The region is divided into five Regional Units: Larisa, Karditsa, Magnisia, Sporades Islands, and Trikala, that comprise 25 Municipalities. Key cities include the capital Larisa, Volos, Karditsa, and Trikala.

#### 2.4.2 Geographical and geophysical information

Thessaly (Thessalia) is well delineated by topographical boundaries: Khásia and Cambunian mountains to the north, Óthrys massif to the south, Pindus Mountains to the west, Olympus massif to the northeast, and the coastal ranges of Óssa and Pelion to the southeast. It has a higher percentage of flatland than any other district in Greece.

The climate is Mediterranean continental; the winter is cold and summer hot, with a large temperature difference between the two seasons. One of the characteristics of the climate of the plain of Thessaly is frequent summer rainstorms. These frequent rains amplify the fertility of the plain, often called the breadbasket of Greece. The entire plain is surrounded by the mountains Pindus, Othrys, Ossa, and Agrafa; among them flows the Pinios River which drains into the Aegean, after passing through the Thessalic Tempi.

Mountains (Olympos, Pilio), rivers (Pinnios and its tributaries), the popular Plastira Lake, Tempi valley, the unique Meteora, the beaches of Larissa and Magnisia and the well known islands of Sporades complex are among the rare natural landmarks in the area. Combined with important historic monuments, archaeological areas, Byzantine monasteries and churches as well as traditional settlements and ski resorts these landmarks explain why Thessaly is <sup>64</sup>a popular holiday destination. (ENPE 2014).

### 2.4.3 History of Thessaly Region

Human presence in Thessaly goes back to the Palaeolithic Period. Organized, permanent settlements of the Neolithic appear here by the mid of the 7th millennium BCE.

Ancient Thessaly was governed by oligarchic wealthy families, who were mostly landowners. Significant remains of settlements from the Neolithic Period were found at Sesklo and Dimini, both excavated at the beginning of the 20th century (<http://odysseus.culture.gr/>). It was from ancient Iolkos where, according to the legend, the Argonauts began their trip. Recent excavations around the site of Neolithic Dimini have identified an extensive Mycenaean settlement, identified as the legendary Iolkos. During the Persian invasion in 480 B.C. because they didn't find any resistance, the Persians used the region as their winter base. Macedonian rule was replaced by Roman rule in 196 B.C. Many military operations took place in Thessaly during the Roman "civil" wars. As soon as Diocletian reorganized the Roman State, Thessaly and Magnesia became a separate province. Christianity appeared in Thessaly during the 1st century A.D.

Since the 4th century A.D. and onwards the region had been suffering many enemy attacks by the Goths, Ostrogoths, Slavs, Bulgarians, Normans and Vlachs. From 1205 to 1222, Thessaly was under the dominance of Franks, and in 1222 it became part of the Despotate of Epirus. In the period of Serbian Dominance around 1348, the monastic life flourished at Meteora, nowadays a worth visiting tourist attraction (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/455>).

During the Byzantine period, the area was part of the Byzantine empire and as a result it beard many invasions and raids from the Goths, Bulgarians, Huns and Slavic people, between 4th and 11th century BC. However, the whole area preserved its good economic situation, due to the agricultural production. In the early 14th century, the Albanians and Serbians arrive in Thessaly and stay until 1396, the year when the first monasteries of Meteora were built (<http://www.greeka.com/>).

The Ottoman occupation in Thessaly started in 1392-1393 and led to an extensive islamisation and feudalism in Thessaly. The liberation came in 1881. In 1910 a big agricultural reform started in Thessaly and as a result agriculture had a great development. During the 2nd World War the German-Italian occupation caused severe problems. After, mountain villages were deserted and their inhabitants moved to urban centres, Larissa and Volos. Nowadays, in the major cities of Thessaly there are large industrial zones, active trade, considerable agricultural, animal and milk production and a continuously growing touristic activity at Pelion, Northern Sporades islands, Meteora, Tempi, Pertouli and Lake Plastira (<http://www.uth.gr/en/>).

#### 2.4.4 Demographic Characteristics

Thessaly is the third largest region in Greece in terms of population. Thessaly has a population of 732,762 inhabitants (EL.STAT. 2011), 6.57% of total Greece population. Thessaly population density was 52.2 p/km<sup>2</sup>. A 2.8% decrease in the population since 2001 was noted. The population break-down is 44% urban, 40% agrarian, and 16% semi-urban. The metropolitan area of Larissa, the capital of Thessaly, is home to more than 230,000 people, making it the biggest city of the region. The alluvial soils of the Pineios Basin and its tributaries make Thessaly a vital agricultural area, particularly for the production of grain, as well as an area with notable livestock units, especially cattle and sheep.

Table 2.4.1: Resident Population by gender and by Region

Description	Totals			Percent share	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Greece, Total</b>	<b>10.816.286</b>	<b>5.303.223</b>	<b>5.513.063</b>	<b>49,0</b>	<b>51,0</b>
Region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace	608.182	299.643	308.539	49,3	50,7
Region of Central Macedonia	1.882.108	912.693	969.415	48,5	51,5
Region of Western Macedonia	283.689	141.779	141.910	50,0	50,0
Region of Epirus	336.856	165.775	171.081	49,02	50,08
<b>Region of Thessaly</b>	<b>732.762</b>	<b>362.194</b>	<b>370.568</b>	<b>49,4</b>	<b>50,6</b>
Region of Central Greece	547.390	277.475	269.915	50,7	49,3
Region of Ionian Islands	207.855	102.400	105.455	49,3	50,7
Region of Western Greece	679.796	339.310	340.486	49,9	50,1
Region of Peloponissos	577.903	291.777	286.126	50,5	49,5
Region of Attiki	3.828.434	1.845.663	1.982.771	48,2	51,8
Region of Northern Aegean	199.231	99.984	99.247	50,2	49,8
Region of Southern Aegean	309.015	155.865	153.150	50,4	49,6
Region of Crete	623.065	308.665	314.400	49,5	50,5

Source: EL.STAT 2011, Population and Housing Census, ([www.statistics.gr](http://www.statistics.gr))

#### 2.4.5 Development profile of the Region

##### a. Economic characteristics

Thessaly had a regional GDP per capita (in PPS) of €14,600 in 2010, 65% of the EU27 average. More specific, the Regional Units of Thessaly present the following situation in terms of GDP per capita (in PPS) in 2010: Larissa €15,500, 69% of the EU27 average, Karditsa €10,000, 45% of the EU27 average, Magnisia €17,200, 76% of the EU27 average, Trikala €12,600 in 2010, 56% of the EU27 average (Eurostat, 2013).

Thessaly is the most intensely cultivated and productive agricultural plain region in Greece with an area of about 4000 km<sup>2</sup>. The main crops cultivated in the plain area are cotton, wheat and maize whereas apple, apricot, cherry, olive trees and grapes are cultivated at the foothills of the eastern mountains (Loukas & Vasiliades 2004). In manufacture there is a kind of dualism, with many sub-SME with low competitiveness, but also with a growing number of relatively large and dynamic enterprises that have a substantial role in regional growth. The service sector is not modernized (Economou, 2017). Thessaly is the leading cattle-raising area of Greece, and Vlach shepherds shift large flocks of sheep and goats seasonally between higher and lower elevations. The

nearly landlocked Gulf of Pagasaitikos provides the natural harbour of Volos for shipping of agricultural products and chromium.

Based on data of ELSTAT the value of total exports of Thessaly moved from € 833 mil in 2008 to € 1 086 million in 2012 showing an average annual increase of 6.8%. The main export markets of Thessaly is the European Union countries (36% of the value of exports in 2012), with decreasing trends. In 2012 large export growth was recorded to the markets of Turkey, Libya and China. The food industry maintains the first position with an average annual increase of 4.8% in the period 2008-2012 and exports amounting to € 396 mil. in 2012 (36.5% of Thessaly exports). The main exports are processed vegetables & fruits (€ 172.8 million., or 16% in 2012), dairy (€ 124.1 mil. or 11%) and cereals (€ 23,45 or 2% ). Cotton is the second most exportable product of Thessaly at € 163,45 mil. in 2012 or 15% of exports, representing an average annual increase of 20.4% over the years 2008-2012, a sign of shrinkage of the domestic textile industry (ESPA Thessaly2015).

#### **b. Transport infrastructure**

Transport networks (road, rail), combined with the airport of Anchialos create sufficient conditions for the movement of people and goods to the major metropolitan centers of the country (Athens, Thessaloniki) and Balkan hinterland. Highways such as E75, and the main railway from Athens to Thessaloniki are crossing Thessaly. The region is linked to the rest of Europe through the International Airport of Central Greece, located in Nea Anchialos, at small distance from Volos and Larisa. Regional interurban buses and trains (OSE) connect Volos, Larissa and Kalampaka with the rest of Greece. Finally, the port of Volos is an important transport node, for commercial freight and passenger travel. (ESPA Thessaly 2015)



Source: <http://www.comitatus.net/greekthessaly.html>

The Region is endowed with the University of Thessaly (<http://www.uth.gr/>) founded in 1984, with departments in Volos, Larissa, Karditsa and Trikala, the Technological Institute (<http://www.teilar.gr/>) established in 1983 consisting of five Schools, the Institute for Research and Technology Thessaly (IRETETH) (<http://ireteth.certh.gr/>), a

non-profit research and technological development organization, since 2013 one of the five Institutes of the Center for Research and Technology – Hellas (CERTH). Finally, the department of Greek Agricultural Organization "Dimitra" is a basic research and technological development organization for the region.

#### **2.4.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage**

Thessaly, a region of sheer beauty with mountains, rivers, beaches, Plastira Lake, Tempi valley, and last but not least the unique Meteora, is a unique natural and spiritual site in Greece. Archeological areas, Byzantine monasteries and churches, traditional settlements and ski resorts complete the fascinating natural beauty of Thessaly and make it a popular holiday destination. Soaring like a sleepless guardian above the city of Volos, Mt Pelion is gorgeous throughout the year. Set against an idyllic backdrop of olive groves that shimmer in the sunlight, dense forests and lush fruit orchards, the 24 stone-built villages are the true gems of Pelion.

The traditional train of Pelion that connects Milies with Ano Lechona, legendary "Moutzouris", is the perfect way to see part of the mountain and some other traditional villages. Volos, the city of the Argonauts, is famous for the local appetizer drink tsipouro taverna (tsipouradika): almost 600 of them bear the gastronomic unique identity of the city, the unrivalled landmark of Volos. A few kilometers to the West, lie the archaeological sites of Sesklo (the most ancient settlement of Europe, dating back to 6.000 BC) and Dimini. Both of them are very important prehistoric settlements of the Balkan Peninsula and the Aegean

Meteora rocky complex of twenty four Byzantine monasteries clinging to the tops of the tall grey rock shafts for over six hundred years, challenging and inviting pilgrims and visitors from Greece and worldwide. Larissa, the capital of Thessaly, with old mansions with yards and gardens in bloom is located in the middle of Thessaly plain. Karditsa, the capital of Karditsa Regional Unit, is built on the banks of a tributary of Pinios River, a modern town with well laid-out streets, surrounded by picturesque traditional villages scattered on the peaks of the Agrafa mountain range. Spas at Smokovo and Kaista as well as many antiquities and Byzantine monuments built on the site of Homeric Trikki, Trikala today, crossed by river Litheos. The ruins of the most ancient sanctuary of Asclepius are here.

Kalambaka, renown for its Byzantine churches, is built at the foothills of Meteora. Nearby Pagasiticos gulf embraces Mt Pelion, the mythological land of the Centaurs. With beech covered peaks, streams running down the slopes, villages rooted among the chestnut and olive trees. Makrinitza, Portaria, Milies, Vizitsa, Tsagarada, Zagora are picturesque villages with traditional architecture: magnificent large old stone houses with wall decorations and slate roofs. Volos, the capital and economic centre of the region, is located along the Pagasiticos gulf, with verdant surroundings e.g Iolkos, the hide-out of Jason and the Argonauts. To the west are the neolithic settlements of Seklo and Diminio. Splendid blue waters lap at beautiful beaches and local specialities complete the region's unique natural scenery (<http://www.grecian.net/ellada/en/>).

## 2.4.7 Region of Thessaly tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road

### Cultural assets connected related the Silk Road

In the beginning of the fifteenth century the whole region of Thessaly was occupied by the Turks. Then a lot of Greeks from the area of Thessaly moved to Mount Pelion for security. Villages were being developed around the monasteries. The development of the pelioritic villages was a result of the privileges that the Turks had conceded to them. The region of Pelion was self-administrated and belonged to Valide-Hanum, Sultan's mother. Sultan Mahmut visited Pelion for hunting (in one of his visits to the city of Larissa) and got surprised by its beauty, offering the region as a present to his mother. The taxes that the villages of Pelion had to pay to the Turks were much lower compared to other parts of Greece. Significant consequence of this situation was Pilio's economic development. The local products of handicrafts of that times were silk, olives and figs. Later they were producing shoes and other kinds of clothing. As the commerce was organised through agencies in Constantinople, Smyrne and Moldavia, the products were being exported by ships, constructed in Mitzela and Trikeri, or on horses to Vienna and Budapest. The inhabitants of Pelion became leaders of the economic revival of occupied Greece. They were becoming rich not only economically but also spiritually, while they were coming in touch with the intellectual trends of Europe.

The result was a very important school and a rich library that were established in Zagora<sup>65</sup>. Rigas Feraios, a strong proponent for the emerging independence of the Greek nation, studied there. Milies, also, had an innovative school equipped with organs of physics and chemistry and a famous library, that still exists. Daniel Filippides and Anthimos Gazis, representatives of representative intellectual at that period, were coming from Milies. Together with Gregorios Constatas, Kallinikos III (Patriarch of Constantinople) and Filippos Ioannou, they played an important role in the economic, political and intellectual activity of Pelion during the period of Ottoman occupation. During that time, in Zagora mercantile silk yarns and woolen fabrics flourished, while Makrynitsa developed trade and tanning.

Hejeebu (2013) in "The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200–1850", points out: "It has been claimed that after 1750 – 60, urban craft enterprises were often stagnated or even declined, but that the slack was taken up by rural industries. This tendency may have been more marked in some regions than in others, but it certainly did occur in the cotton-growing, spinning, and weaving industries of Thessaly. Here the poverty of the sharecropper villages in the plains, where dues to landlords were heavy, induced the cultivators to grow cotton, spin some of it during the agriculturally slack season, and sell cotton wool and yarn at low prices to inhabitants of the uplands who dyed and wove these materials into cloth. Production processes were controlled by local dignitaries who were also merchants, sometimes with contacts both to Istanbul and to foreign markets. In Thessaly as elsewhere, cotton and silk fabrics were manufactures under much the same commercial arrangements..."

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<sup>65</sup> <http://www.gopelion.com/pelion/historyofpelion/>

Makrynista village in Mt Pelion, built like amphitheatre along the mountainside, is called the "eagle's nest" of Pelion, with impressive restored listed mansions<sup>66</sup>. The village was founded between 1204 and 1215 and its residents' trading activities around the Balkans were based on their silk-worm production and tanneries. Portaria was an important village during the the Ottoman period, famous for its silk products such as handkerchiefs, sashes or silk thread. Portaria was so prosperous that the French trade consul Barthelemy moved there. Many important donators and benefactors for Greece were born and raised in Portaria. Memories of former glories survive in Portaria restored buildings, such as the magnificent mansions which were once the propriety of Zoulias, Athanassakis and Kantartzis. There is also the little 19th century three-aisled basilica of Agios Nikolaos with interesting exterior reliefs. Like the entire region of Pelion, Portaria is rich in waters and because of that is full of watercourses and waterfalls giving particular embellishing to the village.<sup>67</sup>

In Kissavos Mountain, during the 18th and 19th centuries, silk was the major activity. Agia, a town of 3,000 inhabitants, is perched on Mount Ossa's slopes (Kissavos), at an elevation of 200m. It has been inhabited since ancient times. In the early period of Ottoman rule, the town flourished thanks to the threde and silk trade. Agia Village and its neighbours enjoyed a milder form of taxation than some other parts of Greece since Suleiman the Magnificent had given the district to one of his daughters in the mid-15th century. The beneficiaries did not squirrel away their profits but spent them on grand houses and churches<sup>68</sup>. The town's churches are worth visiting: Agios Antonios church, built in 1856, with excellent murals and wood engraved iconostasis, Agios Panteleimonas monastery with its murals, the Chapel of Agioi Apostoloi, dating from 1756. The town also boasts several exemples of local architecture, the most important of which the Hadjikosta Tower and Ano Poli quarter. The town's archaeological museum and historical archive, is housed in the Alexouli Mansion.

Metaxochori (older name Retsiani), located near Agia (1.5 km), at a distance of 36 km. far away from Larissa at an altitude of 300 m., is a traditional village, known for the production silk. In Metaxohori (Silk Village in Greek), virtually every household raised silk worms, while others grew cotton. They spun the fibres into fine thread, sometimes using madder to dye them, a gorgeous red that was almost as coveted as the royal purple of yore. Buyers representing the most important textile manufacturers came from all over the Ottoman Empire and Central Europe, filling local purses to the brim with silver. The inhabitants grow crops mainly apples and cherries. Tombstones from the Roman and Hellenistic period have been found in the area. It said that Kosmas of Aetolia spoke to the residents in 1765 (according to a note in ecclesiastical book village) and place it in position "Keramidi" sprang up between the rock a tree, the "Gkavtzia". In early June cherry festival with folk music, dances, exhibitions painting, photography and agricultural production are conducted. Notable are the Temples and old mansions that surround the village. Today the village is known as the "village of artists" because many well known Greek artists live here.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> <http://www.hipgreece.com/pelion.html>

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.greeka.com/thessaly/pelion/pelion-villages/pelion-portaria.htm>

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.helleniccomserve.com/kissavosthefruitfulmountain.html>

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.larissa-beach.gr/en/paralia-larissas/grafika-xoria/metaxochori>

Tyrnavos, 17 km northwest of Larissa, is a town with a strong tradition. The city was founded during the 12th century near the river Titarissios and, according to tradition, its name originates from the word "tourna", meaning bass fish of the river. Tyrnavos enjoyed great development and reached its peak during the 18th century due to the advanced industry of red-dyed textiles and the making of silks and cotton materials "alatzades" (textiles used for making naval outfits). Today, Tyrnavos is dynamically developing, although it remains an agricultural town, producing grapes, peaches and pears and it's known across the country for its high-quality wines and tasty tsipouro.<sup>70</sup> The Winemaking Cooperative of Tyrnavos was the first to succeed in bottling tsipouro which is notoriously difficult to standardize. In addition, Tyrnavos is also believed to have created ouzo. It is said that the distilled spirit which would reach Marseilles together with the dyes and silks was pronounced by the locals "uzo".<sup>71</sup>

### Silk Road Build Heritage

The restored Silk Factory in Volos<sup>72</sup> flourished in the start of the century, continued its operation until 1992. Centrally located, it comprises buildings of 2.750 sq. m. in a site of 4.000 sq. m. and was bought by the Municipality of Nea Ionia with the support of the Ministry of Environment, Planning and Public Works, Employment Support and Vocational Training Centre, together with incubators for new businesses. Restoration of the old Silk Factory includes: A cinema–theatre and meeting hall, a small museum devoted to silk processing, restaurants and recreation facilities.



Silk Factory in Volos <http://www.pontos-news.gr/article/130456/metaxoyrgeio-etmektzogloy-istoria-kai-kosmima-toy-voloy>

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.thessalyairport.gr/en/larisa.html>

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.larissaimperial.com/explore-thessaly/excursions.html>

<sup>72</sup> [http://internet-science.eu/sites/eins/files/uploads/sgouris\\_introduction\\_to\\_volos.pdf](http://internet-science.eu/sites/eins/files/uploads/sgouris_introduction_to_volos.pdf)



Buildings of Kokoslidon and Metaxourgeio.  
[http://anolehonia.blogspot.gr/2014/12/blog-post\\_12.html](http://anolehonia.blogspot.gr/2014/12/blog-post_12.html)



Metaxourgio Kokosli today, Ano Lehonia-Pelion

## Museums

A number of museums around the area offer to the public an insight to the local history, cultural heritage and traditions. The Athanassakeion Archaeological Museum in Volos hosts important collections dating from the Prehistoric to Roman times, the Folklore Museum of Almyros to present aspects of local traditions, the Museum of Folklore Art in Makrinitza with a fine collection of household objects, books, clothing, tools, flags and guns; the Kitsos Makris Folklore Centre to exhibit photographs, studies, murals, paintings, etc; the Rigas Ferreos School or Greek museum in Zagora to represent the oldest school of Pelion, the Silk Museum, roofed under an old silk factory in Volos. The city of Volos is the artistic centre of the area housing art Galleries, one housed at the City Hall and the George De Chirico Art Centre. The neoclassic Railway Station of Volos along with a marble statue of Athena, and the Old Library in Milies featuring books referring to historical events during the Greek revolution against the Turks.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> <http://conferencesgreece.gr/Magnesia.asp?id=44>

## B. REGION OF THESSALY: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Development profile</b> <i>(demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thessaly is a focal point between Northern Greece and Southern Greece</li> <li>• Presence of regional academic research capacities with specialization relevant to regional economy</li> <li>• Quasi equal economic development of the areas based mainly on primary and secondary sector</li> <li>• Promotion and support for business networking</li> <li>• Important universities and research centers</li> <li>• Innovative entrepreneurship activities of R&amp;D organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant disparities between rural and urban areas</li> <li>• Internal migration from rural areas to urban centers</li> <li>• Acute demographic problem lies in the mountainous, hilly and remote areas of the region</li> <li>• Regional discrepancies (GDP, infrastructure, population)</li> <li>• High unemployment rate</li> <li>• Traditional structure of the economy, dominated by small low-tech companies (agriculture)</li> <li>• Weak entrepreneurial and innovation culture in business sector</li> <li>• Large economic development intraregional disparities</li> <li>• Low level of education and life-long learning practices</li> <li>• Low level of ICT diffusion</li> <li>• Low public investments in R&amp;D</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technological Restructuring of Production Structure</li> <li>• Enhancement of competitiveness of agriculture and tourism and increased focus on quality (e.g. green products) based on scientific specialization</li> <li>• Increase coordination of national and regional policies to support ICT diffusion</li> <li>• Improve support to upgrading of SMEs technological capacity</li> <li>• Innovation public or private funding to create an innovation market growth</li> <li>• Cooperation between public sector and universities and R&amp;D centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent international financial crisis</li> <li>• Significant decline in industrial employment in industrial areas</li> <li>• Competition from low-cost economies</li> <li>• Brain drain of highly qualified people</li> <li>• Aging population</li> <li>• High cost of introducing new technologies and innovation</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product</b> <i>Silk Road's unique natural and</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places with brand name in textile production (Volos, Agia, Metaxochori)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further tourism development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism funding opportunities from European, national and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential economic crisis in other countries, impact</li> </ul>

<i>cultural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural and historical value</li> <li>• Silk factory of Volos is a significant pole of silk production</li> <li>• Many historical resources related to the silk industry</li> <li>• Opportunities for alternative tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level of tourism product diversification due to lack of knowledge-experience</li> <li>• Low level in tourism investments</li> <li>• Mass tourism and Seasonality in some regions</li> <li>• The development of tourism in the region remain unevenly distributed in space and strongly seasonal (Skiathos)</li> <li>• Lack in tourism education</li> <li>• Lack in tourism promotion</li> </ul>	<p>regional Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive pricing</li> <li>• New international trends in tourism</li> <li>• Promotion of ICTs in tourism</li> </ul>	<p>upon potential tourist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further tourism development in silk domain</li> </ul>
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Thessaly plain is the largest plain in the country</li> <li>• Worthwhile mineral resources such as chromite, sulfide ore, asbestos, ilmenite and last, discovered lignite deposits</li> <li>• Alternative tourism (lakes, sea, mountains)</li> <li>• Coastal and mountainous region</li> <li>• Great diversity of scenery</li> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance</li> <li>• Great Biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effects of human intervention on the environment</li> <li>• Newer forms of fishing (fish farms) have no particular development</li> <li>• Inadequate development policies (economic development vs environmental protection)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• R&amp;D initiatives</li> <li>• Potentials for alternative tourism in the Region and protection of natural resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• Burden on natural ecosystems cause industrial areas</li> <li>• Need for new technologies</li> <li>• No political long-term commitment</li> <li>• Low awareness</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural heritage (mythology &amp; legends, historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture, historic stone bridges, local traditions, architectural masterpieces)</li> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local products with strong identity</li> <li>• Low degree of cross sector interconnection</li> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural development</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of political initiatives towards integrated revival plans</li> <li>• The effects of human intervention on the environment</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich tradition in gastronomy</li> </ul>		main national strategic planning targets	
<i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International airport of Nea Anchialos</li> <li>• Railway connect metropolitan centers of the country (Athens, Thessaloniki) and Balkan hinterland</li> <li>• Highways such as E75 crossing Thessaly</li> <li>• Regional interurban buses</li> <li>• The port of Volos is an important transport node, for commercial freight and passenger travel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility of the area</li> <li>• The quality of the road network is poor and requires significant investments for improvements and upgrading.</li> <li>• Some areas still have low accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade of railway network</li> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broken provincial roads</li> <li>• Insufficient drainage networks</li> <li>• Insufficient railway network</li> <li>• Degradation of road network especially within the urban centres</li> <li>• Development obstacles (e.g. delays in infrastructure)</li> </ul>

## 2.5 Region of Epirus



Map 2.5.7: Location of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace Region in Greece.

### A. Region of Epirus profile analysis

#### 2.5.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

The Region of Epirus, located in the northwest of Greece, covers an area of 9,203 km<sup>2</sup> of which 74.2% is mountainous, and borders with Albania in the North. Epirus is one of the 13 regions of the country and includes four Regional Units (ex prefectures): Arta, Ioannina, Preveza, and Thesprotia, and 18 Municipalities (Hellenic Republic Region of Epirus). Key cities include the capital Ioannina, Arta, Preveza, and the port city of Igoumenitsa.

#### 2.5.2 Geographical and geophysical information

Epirus is largely made up of great limestone ridges oriented northwest-southeast and north-south; they reach up to 8,600 feet (2,600 m) in height and fall off more steeply to the west. These ridges, generally parallel the coast, are so steep that the valley land between them is mostly suitable only for pasture. Much of Epirus lies on the windward side of Pindus Mountains and hence receives the prevailing winds off the Ionian Sea, resulting in more rainfall than any other region of mainland Greece (Encyclopædia Britannica 2011).

Mountain areas are prevalent in the Region (74.2%), offering an abundance of rivers, lakes and lagoons, extensive forests and unique flora and fauna. The mountainous areas are dominated by Pindus Mountain massive, where the homonymous National Park is found, one of the rare biotopes of the brown bear all over Europe. The flora in Epirus is one of the richest in Greece, due to its diversity and presence of rare species. (Green Mountain, 2013). The Region includes a considerable number of nature protected areas: 31 Natura 2000 and one Ramsar site, wetlands of international importance. The coastal biotopes (Delta of Kalamas and Aheron, Kalodiki marsh and Amvrakikos Gulf) host rare species of birds like the silver pelican.

### 2.5.3 History of Epirus Region

**Prehistoric and ancient times:** Epirus was first inhabited in the Paleolithic times. Epirus is the only region in Greece where we have a dense network of palaeolithic sites, and we can hypothesize the movement of people in the landscape. There are evidence of settlements from Neolithic and Bronze Age times. A number of remains from the Late Bronze Age times were also found. Similar burial chambers used by the Mycenaean civilization, suggest that the founders of Mycenae may have come from Epirus. Epirus remained culturally backward during this time, but Mycenaean remains have been found at two religious shrines: the Oracle of the Dead on the Acheron River, familiar to the heroes of Homer's *Odyssey*, and the Oracle of Zeus at Dodona, to whom Achilles prayed in *Iliad*. After Mycenaean civilization declined, Epirus was the location for Dorian invasions (1100 -1000 BC. The original inhabitants were driven southwards of the Dorians and since then, in historical times three Greek-speaking ethnic groups emerged, Thesproti of southwestern Epirus, Molossi of central Epirus, and Chaones of northwestern Epirus. These ethnic groups became the locals of Epirus living in small villages. Epirus was considered to be at the periphery of the ancient Greek world, but at the same time was home to the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, the oldest ancient Greek oracle, and the most prestigious one after Delphi. In the 3rd century BC, Epirus was a confederate state with its own representatives. During the war between the Macedonians and Rome, Epirus kept a neutral course but in the 3rd Macedonian War (171-168 BC) the Moloseoi fought with the Macedonians, while Chaones and Thesproti took the side of the Romans (Encyclopædia Britannica 2011).

**Epirus under King Pyrrhus:** In 370 BC, the efforts of Aeacidae to expand the Mollosian state gained impetus from the marriage of Philip II of Macedon to their princess, Olympias. In 334, while Alexander the Great, son of Philip and Olympias, crossed into Asia, his uncle, the Molossian ruler Alexander, invaded south Italy, where he was eventually checked by Rome and killed in battle in 331. Upon the death of Alexander the Molossian, the Epirote tribes formed a coalition on an equal basis, but with the Molossian king in command of their military forces. The greatest Molossian king of this coalition was Pyrrhus (319-272). He and his son Alexander II ruled as far south as Acarnania and to central Albania in the north ([www.greeka.com](http://www.greeka.com)). The military adventures of Pyrrhus overstrained his state's military resources, but they also brought great prosperity to Epirus. He built a magnificent stone theatre at Dodona and a new suburb at Ambracia (now Arta), which he made his capital. This was the most important and prosperous period in the history of Epirus. After the Aeacid monarchy ended in 232, the Epirote alliance was transformed from a coalition of tribes into a federal state, the Epirote League, with a parliament (synedrion) (Encyclopædia Britannica 2011).

**Byzantine and Ottoman times:** According to historical evidence, with the Roman conquest, Epirus was no longer independent. In 146 BC, it became a Roman province with the name Palea Epirus (Old Epirus), and 150,000 of its inhabitants were enslaved. Central Epirus did not recover until the Byzantine period, but the coastal areas continued to prosper as part of a Roman province. The littoral zone became an important trading center and the construction of road network enhanced the economy of the area.

Epirus was part of the Byzantine Empire and after the fall of Constantinople from the Crusades in 1204, Michael Komninos took over Epirus and founded the independent stare of Epirus, with Arta as its capital. In 1318, Serbs and Albanians overran the area. In

1359, the independent state was under the Byzantine rule but not for long. During the Turkish occupation, Epirus suffered from deforestation forcing its inhabitants to abandon their houses and move in other areas. However, some towns were still under Venetian rule until the end of 15th century. Epirus became the launching area for many outbreaks. From 17th century and on many traders from Ioannina, Metsovo and Zagoria contributed to the cultural development of the area with the construction of many schools and libraries (Encyclopædia Britannica 2011, [www.greeka.com](http://www.greeka.com)). In fact, Epirus has been one of the places greatly associated with the Neoclassical Enlightenment.

**Modern times:** In 1821, with the burst of the Greek revolution, Epirotes had an active role, within and outside the borders of Epirus. By the end of the Greek revolution in 1913, Epirus was united with the newly Greek state, leaving minorities on both sides of the Greek-Albanian borders. In 1939 Italy annexed Albania but in 1940, after attempting to invade Greece, was pushed out of Greek Epirus by the Greek army and lost much of northern Epirus until the German attack on Greece. The German occupation followed (1940-44) until the Allies restored the Greek-Albanian frontier. During the 20th century, the remoteness that once protected the area undermined its continued vigour. The ravages of World War II and the subsequent civil war, along with poor communications in traditional livelihoods, spurred massive emigration. By the 1970s, many Epirot villages were in an advanced state of physical and social decline (Regional Guide of Epirus, Encyclopædia Britannica 2011, [www.greeka.com](http://www.greeka.com)).

#### 2.5.4 Demographic Characteristics

Located in Northwest Greece, Epirus is a mountainous, sparsely populated (39.4 inh/km<sup>2</sup>) and relatively isolated region. With 336,856 inhabitants, is amounting to 3.3% of the total population of Greece (ELSTAT 2011).

Table 2.5.1: Resident Population by gender and by Region

Description	Totals			Percent share	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Greece, Total</b>	<b>10.816.286</b>	<b>5.303.223</b>	<b>5.513.063</b>	<b>49,0</b>	<b>51,0</b>
Region of East. Mac-Thrace	608.182	299.643	308.539	49,3	50,7
Region of Cent. Makedonia	1.882.108	912.693	969.415	48,5	51,5
Region of West. Makedonia	283.689	141.779	141.910	50,0	50,0
<b>Region of Epirus</b>	<b>336.856</b>	<b>165.775</b>	<b>171.081</b>	<b>49,02</b>	<b>50,08</b>
Region of Thessaly	732.762	362.194	370.568	49,4	50,6
Region of Central Greece	547.390	277.475	269.915	50,7	49,3
Region of Ionian Islands	207.855	102.400	105.455	49,3	50,7
Region of Western Greece	679.796	339.310	340.486	49,9	50,1
Region of Peloponissos	577.903	291.777	286.126	50,5	49,5
Region of Attiki	3.828.434	1.845.663	1.982.771	48,2	51,8
Region of Northern Aegean	199.231	99.984	99.247	50,2	49,8
Region of Southern Aegean	309.015	155.865	153.150	50,4	49,6
Region of Crete	623.065	308.665	314.400	49,5	50,5

Source: ELSTAT 2011 Population and Housing Census, ([www.statistics.gr](http://www.statistics.gr))

The region has suffered from emigration and there are significant disparities between rural and urban areas. The regional capital, Ioannina, accounts for nearly one third of the population.

## **2.5.5 Development profile of the Region**

### **a. Economic characteristics**

Epirus is the poorest Greek region with a regional GDP per capita (in PPS) of €13,700 in 2010, 61% of the EU27 average. The gross domestic product per capita represents the 81.88% of the corresponding country's average (2003). In general, most of the basic economic indices for the Region are lower than those of the corresponding national average. The region has been hardly hit by the recent economic crisis: unemployment rose to 16.7% in 2011 up from 9.9% in 2008. The educational level is relatively low: only 23.3% of the population aged 25-64 completed tertiary education (25.4% in Greece, 26.8% in EU27). This is allied to a low and declining level of lifelong learning (similar to the national trend), with only 2.5% of adults aged 25-64 participating in education and training (Greece 2.9%, EU27 9.4%) (Reid et al. 2012).

#### **i. Primary sector**

Poor-quality soils, faulty farming practices, and fragmented landholdings have kept the region's agricultural productivity low. Of the total area, 14% is agriculture land, 52% is covered by grassland, 26% is forest and 3% represents the surface waters, while built up areas and other uses account for the remainder of the land. Sheep and goats are raised, and corn (maize) is the chief crop. Olives and oranges are also cultivated, and tobacco is grown around Ioannina. There is also some dairying and fishing while wheat and vegetables are imported.

The primary sector employs 22.15% of the region's workforce. Although traditionally a rural economy, the importance of the agricultural sector has declined to only 6.3% of regional GDP over the past decade, with a slight upturn in 2008 and 2009. While the rugged landscape makes agriculture difficult, sheep and goat herding are important and Epirus provides more than 45% of meat to the Greek market and is home to a number of major dairy brands, producing feta and other regional cheese.

#### **ii. Secondary sector**

Epirus has few resources and industries, and its population has been depleted by emigration. The secondary sector is less developed compared to the rest of the country and employs only 19.73% of the region's workforce. There are two industrial zones (Ioannina – Preveza) and the Manufacturing Park (near Igoumenitsa). The population is concentrated in the area around Ioannina, which has the largest number of manufacturing establishments. The manufacturing sector is dominated by traditional industries with a majority of small family-run firms, with limited export capacity. The most dynamic regional industries are the dairy products and other food products industries that are vertically integrated (Reid et al. 2012: 4).

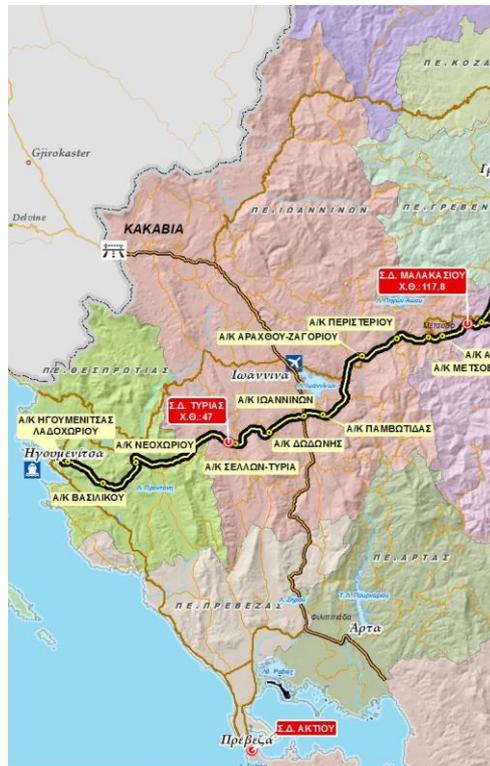
### iii. Tertiary sector

The tertiary sector employs 53.30% of the economically active population and is dominated by the tourism industry. The services sector dominates the economy, accounting for 74.3% of the regional GDP. The main regional services are transport, financial services, tourism, health, education and trade (Reid et al. 2012). The renewable energy sources sector, particularly wind and hydro-power, is growing in importance.

Other important services sectors are those of transport, real estate and other business services and education and health services. (Kramer 2011: 33-34). Regarding social infrastructure, the region is fairly well equipped with education and health services including the University and the University Hospital of Ioannina.

### b. Transport infrastructure

The mountainous geomorphology of Epirus and its geographic position contributed to the Region's long-term isolation and slow development growth. However, the implementation of major EU co-financed infrastructure projects such as, the Egnatia motorway, the western road axis, the new harbor of Igoumenitsa (the "gate" to the west) and the Aktion sub marine tunnel, have created more favorable conditions for the development of the Region that serves as a focal point between Italy, Northern Greece and the Balkan Countries. (ENPE 2014). New development axes are being established parallel to the above mentioned road axes, converting Epirus to a focal point between Italy, Northern Greece and Balkan countries. There are two airports servicing the region (Ioannina, Aktion) and a rail network is under planning.



Map 2.5.2 Epirus Road Network. Source: <http://www.egnatia.eu/>

### 2.5.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage

The tourism sector and trade are the most prominent services sectors in the region with significant growth potential. Epirus with its untouched mountainous mass of Pindos, its great virgin forests, the Dragon Lakes (the mythical mountain lakes) and the untamed slopes, provides a plethora of activities (mountaineering, climbing, ski, hiking, mountain biking etc.) in a scenery of unique beauty, while the rivers offer activities such as kayak, rafting, canoeing etc. Arachtos especially, is considered as one of the most beautiful and challenging rivers for kayaking, while Voidomatis runs through the impressive Vikos Gorge. All of this co-exists in harmony with the archaeological sites, castles, monasteries, churches and traditional villages.

Zagorochoria, a group of 46 villages located all over the slopes of the mountains, form an attractive area for tourism. In close proximity, Vikos Canyon is the second deepest in the world, with an ecosystem of 1.700 plants and 182 animals. Across the historic stone bridges or Epirus, legends and local traditions leave their mark on the architectural masterpieces of superb craftsmanship. Visitors are welcome to explore Dodoni, the place where the famous oracle used to be in ancient times, pay a visit at the famous Theater of Dodoni, the largest in antiquity and finally taste some of the most delicious feta, the cheese par excellence of Greece. Also, visit the castle town of Ioannina which is a uniquely preserved historic landmark, the oldest Byzantine fortress in Greece with significant influence over the history of the town which grew around it (<http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/mainland>).

Epirus is a spectacular mountain region: The winter precipitation, the highest in mainland Greece, ensures that forests are shaggy and the rivers foaming. An isolation enforced by both mountains and climate – in antiquity, this was considered the limit of the civilised world and few ruins have been unearthed – fostered the growth of medieval semi-autonomous villages built by traders and craftsmen returning from abroad. Local stone and wood were transformed into imposing houses, with uniformly grey street cobbles, walls and roof slates blending harmoniously with the environment.

Epirus is home to many monuments of all periods: Ancient, Roman, Byzantine and post-Byzantine. The traditional settlements, especially on the mountainous areas of Zagori and Tzoumerka, are remarkable due to the architectural style of stone-made buildings (ENPE 2014). The impressive stone bridges bring memories of travelers of the past who were traveling to other parts of Europe and the Balkans. Both the natural and the built environment create the basis for the tourism development prospects of Epirus.

Since the early 1980s archeological initiatives and financial incentives have led to the restoration of many buildings in mountainous communities, so that entire villages are now preserved as traditional architectural settlements, nature-friendly, high-quality tourism with accommodation in restored houses – has been successfully promoted, particularly in the gateway villages of the National Park of Zagori (Epirus travel guide).

## 2.5.7 Region of Epirus tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road

### Cultural assets connected related the Silk Road

The most important craft-based and industrial sectors of the 18th century were weaving, the silk industry, tanning and shipbuilding, located both in the mountainous regions and on the coast (ESCUTIS: 304). Although demographics for Epirotic towns are meagre and fragmentary, certain information that the sources provide about the occupations of the residents allows us to follow their financial and social development. From the beginning of the 14th century Ioannina is mentioned in the golden bull issued by the emperor Andronicus the 2nd as a “town different in size from many others” that “is full of residents, flourishes and is admired by all for its wealth and property”. From the same source it can be inferred that the residents of Ioannina were good at trading, transporting goods to all the regions of the empire.

A century later, at the “Chronicle of the Tokko’s”, which describes the events that occurred during the last years of the Despotate, there are references to the guilds that played an important role in the life of Ioannina: “in the town of Ioannina there were tailors, cobblers”. The Turkish conquest did not stop the development of the town which continued at a slow but steady pace until 1611 when the failure of the movement organized by Dionysius the Philosopher led to the Christians being driven out of the castle. The town expanded and developed gradually into one of the most important financial and cultural centers of the north-western Greek region.

The Turkish traveller, Evliya Celebi, who passed through Epirus in 1670, mentions that there were well built houses and shops, among them tailor’s shops and jewellery shops. Silk textiles and crafts were imported from the ports of the Ionian and the Adriatic Seas and the residents were known for their good manners, honesty, eloquence and energy. The same picture of a flourishing town, a town with “wealthy merchants” was also given by the French doctor, Spon, in his travel book which was published in 1679, while similar descriptions are given in travel guides of the 18th and 19th centuries (ESCUTIS: 312).

Zagori: The villages of Zagori that cling to the sides of Mount Pindos, and to which access was difficult to prevent invasion, a high standard of living was developed during the years of Turkish occupation. According to information available regarding their costumes, it was a bourgeois style, originally oriental but later western in character. It was worn in 46 villages with some variations (GAFS).



Traditional Dress Zagori, Epirus. Made of striped silk decorated with embroidery of silk and gold laces, 19th century. Source: National Historical Museum, [http://www.nhmuseum.gr/en/fakelos-syllogon/antikeimena/26473\\_en/](http://www.nhmuseum.gr/en/fakelos-syllogon/antikeimena/26473_en/)



Zipouni (waistcoat) Zagori, Epirus. Made of silk and decorated with embroidery of silk green laces, 19th century. Source: National Historical Museum, [http://www.nhmuseum.gr/en/fakelos-syllogon/antikeimena/13417\\_en/](http://www.nhmuseum.gr/en/fakelos-syllogon/antikeimena/13417_en/)

Konitsa, an old Epirot market town, was renowned throughout the area for the commercial activities of its inhabitants. Many of them emigrated, bringing back money on their return as well as more modern life-styles. Quite early the women began to cover their traditional blouses with long bourgeois style dresses, but retained their typical Epirot *sigounia* and *flokates*. A sleeveless woven wool pinafore dress, gathered at the waist and embroidered round the hem, was worn as a petticoat for extra warmth. The material for the main dress, which was sewn by tailors, was generally oriental silk, but it could be a fine bought woolen cloth or cotton-silk mixture with stripes, and later velvet. The bodice, cuffs and hem were also trimmed with velvet bands. The *sigouni* was stitched and embroidered in red and gold by local tailors. The apron is made of silk, with colorful silk decoration. One or two rows of gold coins adorned the bodice. They tied a dark-colored silk or woolen scarf with a crocheted trim around the head. On chilly days, the women wore a *flokata*, which was sewn from a thick black woven cloth and likewise embroidered by a tailor, using strips of red felt and silk ribbons (GAFS).

### **The woman of Epirus of domestic and non-domestic labour**

Panagiotis Aravantinos (1857), referring to women of Ioannina and their occupations in the middle of 19th century points out: “women of lower status were and still are skillful in sewing and embroidering crafts, which are used in the area or in the provinces. Few women occupy themselves with weaving, while they have started dealing with silk-weaving, making products of high quality which are used by local people, since among all ornamental products used by the families in Ioannina silk clothes are the most important”. Three decades later, Seraphim Xenopoulos (1884) refers to the women of Arta: “women of lower status, being diligent, are very skillful in sewing and embroidering, occupying themselves with weaving too, and village women, in particular, have already occupied themselves with silk-weaving too.” (Oikonomou & Stylios, 2008). Through this accounts, a kind of social variation becomes evident. Epirus women of lower social status seem to be the ones mostly occupied with the craft of weaving as a means of making a living.



Women of Artá were experts in embroidery and sewing (photos from the collection of the Folklore Museum of Peta in Artá). Source: Oikonomou & Stylios

During the German Occupation, handicraft, woven clothes made with sweat on the loom by women of Epirus, in many cases guaranteed a living to whole families. “You could see women loaded with heavy clothes (rugs, blankets), roaming the villages of the plain to sell them and buy a little corn or a bottle of olive oil.” (Skoutelas 2002)

When work on the loom got out of the narrow limits of domestic craft and was used professionally, as a means of livelihood for the family, it became more tiring, arduous and demanding. Time, changing conditions and the industrialization of production, lead to the foundation of schools (state or private) of weaving, handicraft, housekeeping and carpet-making in Epirus, which trained young girls in arts that began to lose their prior appeal and prestige (Oikonomou & Stylios, 2008).

In order to preserve the long lived, but threatened, tradition of carpet-making and at the same time offer a supplement to the income of rural families, carpet-making schools were founded under the auspice of the state organization EOMMEX (Hellenic Organisation of Small Medium Sized Enterprises and Handicraft), initially in Delvinaki in Ioannina in 1964, and Megalochari in Artá. Since then, many villages in Epirus acquired schools which immediately guaranteed to women an income, much needed for the survival of rural families of Epirus. After a thriving period they began to decline and there are only a few left today. The number of women working in these schools is declining day by day. (Oikonomou & Stylios 2008) Female weavers working in the traditional sectors of productive economy, such as textile industry, carpet industry and silk industry not long ago, “used to shed light on the roads of wool, cotton, silk and civilization, before they began to disappear” (Kipouros 2004:56, Oikonomou & Stylios, 2008).



Women workers in the wool carpet industry of Filippiada in Preveza. Source: Oikonomou & Stylios, 2008

Nowadays, handmade works of art of Epirus women have been passed on from generation to generation, bequeathed by great grandmothers, grandmothers, or even mothers, and are treasured as invaluable objects in most houses in Epirus. (Oikonomou & Stylios 2008)

Pindus: The mobility of mountain people led to specialization in trade and transport. Vlachs are the most dramatic examples, with their occasionally international commercial operations. Pindus merchants developed routes extending into Austria and beyond many amassed small fortunes. Humbler and far more common were the myriad pretty trades who hawked metal wares and exotic goods like coffee along the mountain tracks. The mountain way of life in Pindus rested in part on commerce, especially for the Vlachs (McNeill 2003: 251). Also, surviving records indicate trade between Arta and the rest of the Adriatic world, chiefly in grain and salt, items produced locally in the plain and Gulf of Arta (McNeill 2003: 95).

In Pindus Mountain, silk production first appeared in the seventeenth century when war cut Ottoman centers off from suppliers in Iraq. It expanded to the nineteenth century, driven by European demand, and reached 25000 okes per year in Zagori alone in the days of Ali Pasha. Koukouli, a Zagori village, takes its name from the silkworm cocoon. Silk was not strictly a traditional craft necessary to get by, but an adaptation to strained circumstances in the nineteenth century. It was always for market, never for home consumption. Silk production was one delicate job that mountain villages came to specialize in during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Silkworms are very particular about temperature, humidity and a host of other conditions. The mulberry tree, whose leaves provide the silkworm's food, prefers well-drained soil and elevations between 500 and 1000 meters (although it grows at 1500 meters in southern Spain). Both the silkworm and the mulberry tree found circumstances in the Mediterranean uplands to their liking (McNeill 2003: 123).

By the 1860s-1870s villagers had to summon their courage and their ingenuity in order to survive straitened circumstances. Brigandage increased, facilitated by the new borders (1881) that made Thessaly Greek and Epirus Turkish. Overseas emigration, never before important in the history of Epirus, began to matter by the 1880s. Before undertaking these rather drastic measures, villagers presumably tried to cultivate every unused patch of land and tried to sell every manufacture. The village of Koukouli, for instance came to specialize in the production of raw silk at the middle of the century. But economic conditions in Epirus remained unpromising as public order left much to be desired. In effect those youths who sought a living in brigandage made it more difficult for others who sought theirs in commerce and crafts (McNeill 2003).

Kalarrytes together with Syrrako, are two traditional mountain communities at the foot of Mt. Peristeri (or Lakmon), at 1,200 metres above sea level. Built by expert stone masons, they appear to compete in terms of history and natural beauty. Their glorious past and the financial prosperity they have known in past centuries unfolds on the narrow cobblestone streets. The elaborate architecture where stone is the key building material, the mansions with the arched entrances, the slab roof tiles, the stone bridges, the sculpted stone fountains, the beautiful churches, the villages' central squares and the treasure of folk art items kept in the Syrrako Folk Art Museum all constitute irrefutable evidence of the area's thriving financial state.

Kalarrytes people are renowned silver and gold smiths – it is worth noting that this is Sotiris Voulgaris' place of origin, the founder of BVLGARI, the famous Greek jewellery house. They are also well-known tailors, tradesmen and stock farmers who have brought credit to their village in the 18th and 19th century big Mediterranean markets. As a result of the flourishing trade education came for the locals, at a time when literacy was the privilege of the few in the rest of Greece. The settlement flourished especially in the 18th century due to trade (textiles, silk from Thessaly, raw skins) and handicrafts with silver and gold. The residents of Kallarytes were trading within Greece and abroad. The commercial items of Kallarytes included: rawhide, skouti (thick fabric for clothing), cotton from Macedonia and Thessaly, lagotomara candle, prinokokki, acorn, silk from Agia mainly in Naples. Imported products were fez, crimson (red natural pigment), plush textiles, tirtiria (threads of gold or gilded silver uniforms for decoration) and colonial products (<http://www.kalarrytes.gr/>).

## B. REGION OF EPIRUS: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Development profile</b> <i>(demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Epirus is a focal point between Italy, Northern Greece and Balkan countries</li> <li>• Quasi equal economic development of the areas based mainly on primary and secondary sector</li> <li>• Promotion and support for business networking</li> <li>• Important universities and research centers</li> <li>• Innovative entrepreneurship activities of R&amp;D organizations</li> <li>• Tradition in trade especially in the Adriatic Region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poorest region of Greece</li> <li>• Emigration</li> <li>• Significant disparities between rural and urban areas</li> <li>• High unemployment rate</li> <li>• Aging population</li> <li>• Traditional structure of the economy, dominated by small low-tech companies (agriculture)</li> <li>• Weak entrepreneurial and innovation culture in business sector</li> <li>• Large economic development intraregional disparities</li> <li>• Low level of education and life-long learning practices</li> <li>• Low level of ICT diffusion</li> <li>• Low public investments in R&amp;D</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancement of competitiveness in agriculture and tourism, focus on quality (e.g. green products) based on scientific specialization</li> <li>• Increase coordination of national and regional policies to support ICT diffusion</li> <li>• Improve support to upgrade SMEs technological capacity</li> <li>• Potential for expanding renewable energy</li> <li>• Proximity to Balkan markets providing opportunities for further economic development</li> <li>• Recent political developments in Balkans create new neighboring markets</li> <li>• Public or private funding to create an innovation market growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent international financial crisis</li> <li>• Competition from low-cost economies</li> <li>• Brain drain of highly qualified people</li> <li>• Competition from neighbouring countries</li> <li>• Rising rate of unemployment</li> <li>• Aging population</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product</b> <i>Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural and historical value</li> <li>• Traditional dresses and waistcoat made of silk fabric</li> <li>• Historical specialization in trade from 18th century (textiles,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further tourism development</li> <li>• Low level of tourism product diversification due to lack of knowledge-experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism funding opportunities from European, national and regional Programmes</li> <li>• Competitive pricing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential economic crisis in other countries, impact upon potential tourist</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• silk, raw skins etc)</li> <li>• Syrrako Folk Art Museum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level in tourism investments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New international trends in tourism</li> <li>• Promotion of ICTs in tourism</li> </ul>	
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative tourism (winter tourism, eco tourism)</li> <li>• Coastal and mountainous region, Great diversity of scenery</li> <li>• Cluster building in tourism and traditional local products</li> <li>• Rich and relatively well-protected natural and aquatic resources</li> <li>• Vikos Canyon is the second deepest in the world</li> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance</li> <li>• Great Biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effects of human intervention on the environment</li> <li>• Inadequate development policies (economic development vs environmental protection)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• R&amp;D initiatives</li> <li>• Potentials for alternative tourism in the Region and protection of natural resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• Need for new technologies</li> <li>• No political long-term commitment</li> <li>• Low awareness</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural heritage (mythology &amp; legends, historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture, historic stone bridges, local traditions, architectural masterpieces)</li> <li>• Rich multicultural resources</li> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments</li> <li>• Various branded local products (feta, silversmith)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local products with strong identity</li> <li>• Low degree of cross sector interconnection</li> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural development</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of political initiatives towards integrated revival plans</li> <li>• The effects of human intervention on the environment</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich tradition in gastronomy</li> </ul>			
<p><i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two airports servicing the region (Ioannina, Aktion)</li> <li>• The railway network in parallel with the main road axes</li> <li>• Region as a focal point between Italy, Northern Greece and Balkan Countries</li> <li>• The new harbor of Igoumenitsa (the “gate” to the west) and the Aktion submarine</li> <li>• Egnatia Motorway axis</li> <li>• Rail network under construction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility of the area</li> <li>• The quality of the road network is poor and requires significant investments for improvements and upgrading.</li> <li>• Some areas still have low accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harbor connecting Greece with Adriatic on daily schedule</li> <li>• Upgrade of railway network</li> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broken provincial roads</li> <li>• Insufficient drainage networks</li> <li>• Insufficient railway network</li> <li>• Degradation of road network especially within the urban centres</li> <li>• Development obstacles (e.g. delays in infrastructure)</li> </ul>

## 2.6 Region of Ionian Islands



Map 2.6.1: Location of Ionian Islands Region

<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/grionian.htm>

### A. Region of Ionian Islands profile analysis

#### 2.6.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

The region is located in the Ionian Sea, off the west mainland coast, comprising a group of islands. Traditionally called the Heptanese, i.e. "the Seven Islands", the region actually includes a rich cluster of 70 large and smaller islands. Italy is their western border and Albania their northern one. The region covers a total extent of 2.307 km<sup>2</sup> and 2% of total extent of the country. It consists of 7 municipalities and is divided into five Regional Units: Zante, Ithaka, Corfu, Chefalonia and Lefkada, with seven island Municipalities.

#### 2.6.2 Geographical and geophysical information

The Ionian Islands have more than 50 beaches awarded with a blue flag for cleanliness and quality of service. Some have received awards for their natural beauty. Myrtos in Chefalonia, the Shipwreck in Zakynthos, Porto Katsiki in Lefkada, Glyfada in Corfu, Voutoumi in Antipaxos are included annually in the choices of all acknowledged tourist guides. The natural environment of the Ionian Islands holds extraordinary interest. The sea turtle *Caretta – Caretta*, the Mediterranean seal *Monachus – Monachus* and the adorable dolphins meet in the Ionian Sea.

#### 2.6.3 History of Ionian Islands Region

The name of the island "Lefkada" routed from the name "Lefkas Petra" or "Lefkas Akra", an ancient name of today's Leukata, the southern cape of the island<sup>74</sup>. Humanity in Lefkada can be traced back to the Paleolithic era. The ancient city of Nirikos, 7th century B.C., which was discovered in Kalligoni at Koulmos, was the island's first capital. According to mythology and the writings of Homer, the island was named after Zakynthos<sup>75</sup> who was grandson of Zeus and Helectra and the son of Dardanos who founded Troy.

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.lefkada.gr/pages.asp?pageid=28&langid=2>

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.e-zakynthos.com/zante.zakynthos.history.php>

The name Zakynthos - as it ends in 'nthos' shows that it is pre-mycenean or Pelasgian in origin. Zakynthos was born on Phrygia and he sailed to Zakynthos in 1500 BC, where he occupied the island and gave it his name. Most historians agree on the fact that the island was inhabited for the first time in 1500 BC.

There are really a lot of myths associated with the mighty reign of Kefalonia, Kefallinia or Cephallenia<sup>76</sup>. As said Apollodoro from Athens, the first king of Kefalonia was Thapius, son of Poseidon and king of Micenean people. Many scholars believe that the origin of Kefalonia's name comes from Cephalus, and the name of the inhabitants, Kefalotes, comes from "Cephales". This word has its origins probably in the mountains of Kefalonia island or because Kefalonia is the largest of the Ionian Islands.

Ithaca<sup>77</sup>, the island home of Odysseus, is one of the most popular islands in Greece. Not only in the present, but also in antiquity and mythology. Homer in his epics has left a legacy to foreign and Greek scholars, who have debated and worked years with this project. In addition to Homer, older writers such as Akousilaos, said that Ithakos, Niritos and Polyktor were the three sons of King Pterelaos who was from Jupiter. The wife of Ulysses, Penelope, was the daughter of king Icarus and Polykastis. The Iliad and Odyssey of Homer certainly could not be written in a condensed version. These two works of great historical significance, have made the history of Ithaki known world wide.

Corfu<sup>78</sup> is identified by most archaeologists with the mythical island of Phaeacians. It was here, according to those that accept the identification of Scheria with Corfu, that Homer placed the penult station where a necked castaway the ingenious Odysseus arrived after days of straggle with the sea-waves. Mythology delivered the current emblem of city to the present-day Corfiots. The "Apidalos Naus" (Unhelmed Ship) remains the symbol of the naval virtuosity of Phaeacians. The island of Corfu was inhabited in the Palaeolithic Era.

The history of Ionian Islands is almost the same. They passed through several dominations starting from Romans, Normans, Venetians, Turkish, Russians, French and English before becoming part of Greece. In 1797, Napoleon Bonaparte abolished the Venetian State and Campo Formio's Treaty transferred to France the sovereignty of the Seven Islands and the Venetian possessions on the opposite coast of Epiros. The Russo-Turkish alliance was formed to counteract Napoleon's expansionary plans in the East. The allied forces begun to capture the islands (1799-1807) exploiting the resentment of the inhabitants of the Ionian Islands against the Republican French. He abolished the Septinsular Republic and turned the islands into provinces of the French Empire. Sir Thomas Maitland, governor of Malta, the second son of Lord Lauderdale, was appointed by the British first Lord High Commissioner of the island of Corfu (1816-1826) and was called to impose the terms of the Treaty of Paris (1815) by which the "United States of the Ionian Islands" were independent and free states, but under foreigner (British) protection. The first Constitution that the Lord High Commissioner himself drew up was undemocratic and very shortly caused resentments.

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<sup>76</sup> <http://www.kefalonia-island.gr/history.php>

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.ithaki.gr/Site/en/8-History%20of%20the%20City>

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.corfu.gr/web/guest/travelguide-corfu/history>

On May 21st 1864, after several intensive diplomatic consultations, Corfu and the rest of the Ionian Islands were united with Greece. The Ionian Parliament of the XIII period had previously taken the decision, which was ratified by the British government. The Union was facilitated by the election in the throne of Greece of a Danish prince as King Georgios I of Greece (a figure trusted by the British) and from that time onwards the Ionian Islands shared the same fate as the rest of Greece.

#### 2.6.4 Demographic Characteristics

According to Hellenic Statistics Authority, the region of Ionian Islands consists of 207.855 inhabitants of which 105.455 are female and 102.400 are male (EL.STAT. 2011).

Table 2.6.1: Resident Population by gender and by Region

Description	Totals			Percent share	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Greece, Total	10.816.286	5.303.223	5.513.063	49,0	51,0
Region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace	608.182	299.643	308.539	49,3	50,7
Region of Central Macedonia	1.882.108	912.693	969.415	48,5	51,5
Region of Western Macedonia	283.689	141.779	141.910	50,0	50,0
Region of Epirus	336.856	165.775	171.081	49,02	50,08
Region of Thessaly	732.762	362.194	370.568	49,4	50,6
Region of Central Greece	547.390	277.475	269.915	50,7	49,3
<b>Region of Ionian Islands</b>	<b>207.855</b>	<b>102.400</b>	<b>105.455</b>	<b>49,3</b>	<b>50,7</b>
Region of Western Greece	679.796	339.310	340.486	49,9	50,1
Region of Peloponissos	577.903	291.777	286.126	50,5	49,5
Region of Attiki	3.828.434	1.845.663	1.982.771	48,2	51,8
Region of Northern Aegean	199.231	99.984	99.247	50,2	49,8
Region of Southern Aegean	309.015	155.865	153.150	50,4	49,6
Region of Crete	623.065	308.665	314.400	49,5	50,5

Source: EL.STAT 2011, Population and Housing Census, (www.statistics.gr)

#### 2.6.5 Development profile of the Region

##### a. Economic characteristics

The Ionian Islands is an insular, tourist region with the features of a sparsely populated zone. Their primary and secondary sectors have a low contribution in the regional GDP; the tertiary sector contributes by 66% since the Ionian Islands are a popular tourist destination. Unemployment rates are high but because of seasonal opportunities in the tourism industry, the long-standing unemployment rate is much lower.

Education system consists of 175 kindergartens and primary schools, 91 gymnasium and lyceum<sup>79</sup>, 4 adult learning centers and two Universities. Regarding Health Services infrastructure, the region has 5 general hospitals, 2 primary aid health centers and 2 regional health centers<sup>80</sup>.

#### **b. Transport infrastructure**

Every island is connected by boat from the ports of Patras, Piraeus and Igoumenitsa throughout the year plus having interconnection between the islands facilitating island hopping during summer times and access to local and tax authorities for locals throughout the year. Almost every island can be reached by air since airports and/or heliports are in operation throughout the year. Public transportation, taxi service, local car and/or moto rental services within each island are also available throughout the year.

#### **2.6.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage**

The region offers the visitor with 929 different types of accommodation from simple B&B to luxurious hotels providing 47.866 rooms and 47.866 beds. More specific, Ionian Islands offer 27 units (5 star), 116 units (4 star), 222 units (3 star), 488 units (2 star), 76 units (1 star). Ionian Islands are the 5th most visited Region in Greece and accounts for 10,6% of nights spent by residents and non-residents out of the total percentage of nights spent nationally in 2014 (EL.STAT., 2016) Residents and non-residents overnight stay in Crete increased in 2014 by 2,5% compared to 2013, totaling 8.012 mil. stays. Within the Region of Ionian Islands other forms of activities are also offered such as Wind and Kite Surf, Sailing, Diving, Cycling and Mountain Bike, Parapente, Walking rides and Aeronautics<sup>81</sup>.

#### **2.6.7 Region of Ionian Islands tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road**

##### **Cultural assets related to the Silk Road**

The Romans used Corfu as a resort. After the fall of Constantinople to the Franks, during the Fourth Crusade (1204), the Ionian Islands were separated from the Byzantine Empire and passed into the hands of Italian, Catalan and French adventurers in quick succession. In 1386, the islanders appealed to Venice as the only power that could offer protection. Venetian rule was to last for 411 years, ending in 1797<sup>82</sup>. For the Serene Republic of Venice, Corfu was a prized possession, along with Koroni and Methoni in the Peloponnese, Handax (Heraklio), Rhodes and Paphos on Cyprus, key stops on the route to the Indies, the famous Silk Road. Every year merchant ships would arrive in Venice bearing spices, silks, perfumes and cotton from the far shores of India, Persia and China, stopping in Corfu to take on supplies. By the end of the 16th century, Corfu town had become a port of major strategic importance and thanks to the exemplary fortifications designed by the Italian architect Sanmichelli, it was among the best protected harbour towns in the Mediterranean.

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<sup>79</sup> <http://62.217.127.123/pde/>

<sup>80</sup> [http://www.dypede.gr/index.asp?a\\_id=225](http://www.dypede.gr/index.asp?a_id=225)

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.lefkada.gr/pages.asp?pageid=12&langid=2>

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.greekgastronomyguide.gr/en/corfu/place-history/>

Nonetheless, it is clear that Corfu's strategic location was the most important factor in its occupation by Venice. Situated at the crossroads of a variety of trade routes, the island controlled the sea lanes leading from the Adriatic to both basins of the Mediterranean (Gertwagen 2007).

### **Archaeological sites**

In Lefkada, the castle of Aghia Mavra and Nirikos (Ancient Lefkas), Nikiana and Apollonia areas and Castle of Kalamos, "Kastromonastiro" are of notable archaeological and historical importance. In Kefalonia, the Castles of Assos and Aghios Georghios, the Mycenaean Tomb of Poros, the Roman cemetery of Fiskardo, ancient Acropolis of Sami, the ruins at Skala and Cyclopean walls. In Ithaki, Aetos site, Ancient Alalcomai, the Spring of Aretousa, Homers School, the Monastery of Katharon, Monastery of Taxiarchi, Cave of the Nymphs, Polis Cave and Early Helladic Settlement. In Paxi, the fortress of Agios Nikolaos and the Paleo-Christian church of Agia Marina. In Corfu, the ancient city (Paleopoli) evolved in the archaic years between two natural harbors, Alkinoos and Ellaiko. Archeological sites are scattered all over peninsula Kanoni.

### **Museums & Galleries**

In Lefkas, Lefkada Archaeological Museum, Folkloric Museum of the Music and Literature Group "Orpheus" "Pantazis Kontomixis", Ecclesiastic Museum of the Faneromeni Convent, "Kontomichio Folkloric Museum" in Kavalos village, Folkloric Museum of Lefkadite Canvas Works "Maria koutsohero", in Karya village and Phonograph Museum are the most reputable.

In Zante, two best known museums are Zakynthos Museum of Byzantine & Post-Byzantine Art and Solomos & Kalvos Museum, both located in capital Zante town. On the outskirts of Zante Town, in Bohali, is the Naval Museum reputed for the best collection of Byzantine vessels worldwide.

In Kefalonia, Archaeological Museum of Argostoli, Museum of History and Folklore, Environment and Naval Museum in Fiskardo, Ecclesiastical Museum of Andrea Apostle, Museum of Natural History, Library and Museum Iakovatios.

In Ithaki, the Stavros Museum, Vathy Museum, Cultural Centre of Ithaki and Folklore and Cultural Museum. In Paxi, Museum of Paxos.

In Corfu, Archaeological Museum, Mon repos Palaiopoli museum, Byzantine Museum, Museum of Asian Art, Kapodistriasis Museum, Solomos Museum, Museum of Ceramic Art, Museum of banknotes, Municipal Gallery, Old and New Fortresses and Palace of Saints Michael & George.

### **Festivals**

In Lefkas, the International Folklore Festival for peace, friendship, fraternity and solidarity, with folklore forms of art, dance and music. The festivals of Speech and Art one of the oldest cultural institutions of Greece, the lentil festival in Aghios Donatos, wine festivals, feasts of sardine and chess nights.

In Zakynthos, the majority of festivals are related to local Saints celebrations. St. John Baptist, St. Haralambos, St. Dionysios Day and the Backgammon and Chess Festival.

In Kefalonia, the festival of Argostoli, the annexation of the Ionian islands and Kefalonia to the Greek state, St. John Tzannata, National festival of choral singing, Resurrection of the Holy Cross, Anniversary of the National World War II in Argostoli and Lixouri.

In Ithaki, Ag. Apostoli in Frikes village, Ag. Marina in Exogi village, e Wine Festival in Peachori, the eve of the Virgin in Anogi village and the Panagia in Platrithia village. Lastly, in Corfu the Carnival of Corfu has a big resemblance to the Carnival of Venice, the Makrades Festival, the festival in Kassiopi and the Canoni, Paleokastritsa Festival, the Agios Ioannis Fire jumping (Triklino) and the Benitses Sardine festival.

## B. REGION OF IONIAN ISLANDS: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Development profile</b> <i>(demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every island is accessible by boat</li> <li>• Airports in several of the islands in the region</li> <li>• Higher education institutions</li> <li>• Innovative entrepreneurship activities of R&amp;D organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively high unemployment rate</li> <li>• High number of SMEs lacking R&amp;D potential</li> <li>• Large discrepancy of economic development at the intraregional level</li> <li>• Specialisation of the secondary sector in traditional economic activities, and low level of technological modernisation of enterprises.</li> <li>• Urban concentration – Pronounced depopulation of rural areas.</li> <li>• Low level of education and HR expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> <li>• New knowledge sectors (ICTs etc)</li> <li>• Innovation public or private funding to create an innovation market growth</li> <li>• Cooperation between public sector and universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic crisis</li> <li>• Development obstacles (delays in infrastructure)</li> <li>• High cost of introducing new technologies and innovation</li> <li>• Not expertised personnel</li> <li>• Low level of facilities and services in remote areas</li> <li>• Increasing unemployment rate</li> <li>• Aging population</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many historical resources related to the silk industry</li> <li>• The Region is an international cultural node</li> <li>• Religion tourism destinations</li> <li>• Opportunities for alternative tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further developing tourism</li> <li>• Low level of diversification the tourism product because of lack of knowledge-experience</li> <li>• Low level in tourism investments</li> <li>• Mass tourism and Seasonality in some regions</li> <li>• Uneven tourist concentrations</li> <li>• Lack of integrated planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism funding opportunities from European, national and regional Programmes</li> <li>• Regional Operation Programme (2014-2020) promoting tourism development</li> <li>• Contribution of the media in tourism development</li> <li>• New international trends in tourism</li> <li>• Promotion of ICTs in tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential economic crisis in other countries, impact upon potential tourist</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack in tourism education</li> <li>• Lack in tourism promotion</li> <li>• low tourism development rate in some areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social tourism</li> <li>• Investment interest from other countries</li> <li>• Potentials for thematic tourism</li> <li>• Historical connections between monasteries and silk production</li> <li>• Lack of funds and cooperation prevents the revival of industry complexes</li> </ul>	
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance and Protected Areas</li> <li>• Great Biodiversity</li> <li>• Bodies and agencies intensely active in protecting and promoting the environment.</li> <li>• Relatively high investments on Renewable Energy Resources (RES)</li> <li>• Great energy resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrong development policies (economic development vs environmental protection) during the last decades</li> <li>• The effects of human intervention on the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• Potential to diversify tourism offer towards higher-value added and 365 days a year attractions</li> <li>• Potentials for alternative tourism in the Region and protection of natural resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• No political long-term commitment</li> <li>• Continuous need for new technologies</li> <li>• Low awareness</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich multicultural resources</li> <li>• Various local products</li> <li>• Branded local products</li> <li>• Rich tradition in gastronomy</li> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments in Unesco list</li> <li>• Significant cultural (mythology, historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture)</li> <li>• Significant tangible &amp; intangible cultural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local products with strong identity</li> <li>• Low productivity rates in some areas of the Region</li> <li>• Low degree of cross sector interconnection</li> <li>• Weak manufacturing units</li> <li>• Low level promotion of the brand of Silk tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas are strongly related to the Silk road and can become nodes in a Silk Road route</li> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural development</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of local identity</li> <li>• Lack of political initiatives towards integrated revival plans</li> </ul>

	heritage related to the Silk road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> <li>• Limited use of the Cultural Stock for strengthening regional identity and enriching tourist product</li> </ul>		
<i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total bed capacity exceeds 100000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ports are not considered as key players in the region with no upgrade</li> <li>• The airport facilities need upgrade</li> <li>• Qualitative deficiencies in social infrastructure (education - health).</li> <li>• Accessibility of the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade and operation ports</li> <li>• Upgrade of airport facilities</li> <li>• Improvements in transportation links with the rest of Greece/Europe in order to contain the “psychology of isolation” that may deprive businesses active in the region from reaching their true potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of road network especially within the urban centres</li> </ul>

## 2.7 Region of Western Greece



Map 2.7.8: Location of Western Greece.  
Source: <http://www.iliaoikonomia.gr/45087-html>

### A. Region of Western Greece profile analysis

#### 2.7.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

The Region of Western Greece stretches from the northwest part of the Peloponnesus to the western tip of the Greek mainland. It is one of the 13 Regions of Greece, separated in 3 Regional Units: Aitoloakarnania, Achaia, Elia and 19 Municipalities and covers an area of 11.350 square kilometers (8.6% of the total area of Greece).<sup>83</sup>

#### 2.7.2 Geographical and geophysical information

Western Greece is a mountainous region with rich natural and cultural landmarks, sharing extensive coastal areas along the Ionian Sea, the Gulf of Amvrakia and Corinth. For the most part the terrain is mountainous (45.3%) or hilly (25.6%), while only 29.1% consists of plains. All three Regional Units have extensive coastal areas along the Ionian Sea and the Gulfs of Amvrakia, Patras and Korinthos.

The region accommodates many, different and significantly sensitive ecosystems. A noticeable fact is that in Western Greece are four out of the eleven wetlands of international importance that exist in Greece and have also joined in the Ramsar (Lagoon of Messologi, Amvrakikos Gulf and Lake Kotychi).

#### 2.7.3 History of Western Greece Region

The ancient traveler and writer Pausanias, who visited Achaia in 174 A. D., informs us: "Currently, the land between Helia and Sikyonia along the bay that extends eastward is called Achaia<sup>84</sup>, because it is inhabited by the people of Achaioi, while in earlier years it was called Aigialos and those who possessed it were called Aigialeis after the king of

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.cherplan.eu/the-project/partners/Region-of-Western-Greece>

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.visit-achaia.gr/en/about-achaia/historical-info>

Sikyonia, as it stands today, Aigialeas." The development of the area was rapid and connected to the centers of the Mycenaean Civilization and especially with Mycenae.

However, the organization of the Achaic economy was evident at the beginning of the Classical period (479 – 323 B.C.) when the circulation of the first silver coins took place, cut in the town of Aiges in about 480 B.C. During the first Byzantine period, the development of Achaia was hindered due to the invasion of the Goths (395 B.C.), the religious conflict between the Christians and the pagans, and the great earthquake in 551 A.D that shook many areas of the Empire. The fall of Konstantinoupolis in 1204 was similar to what happened to the rest of Greece as well as to Achaia which was conquered by Goulielm Sablittes on account of the conqueror of Thessaloniki, Vonifatios Momferattos.

Konstantinos Palaiologos, the last Byzantine emperor, reconquered Achaia in 1430, but in 1460 Mohamed II put Achaia under the Ottoman rule. The Byzantine domination in the Peloponnese offered a lot to the Italian Renaissance (Plithon Gemistos – Vissarion) but it was only a break in the slavery that lasted so many years, that is from 1430 to 1460, when the Othman Turks conquered Achaia under the rule of Mohamed Porthitis the Second. In 1687, the Ottomans were forced to give way to the Enetians who conquered the Peloponnese under the leadership of Fr. Morozini and remained there until 1715. The reappearance of the Turks in the area took place in 1715 and lasted for 113 years, that is until 1828. Apart from the Greek Revolution of 1821, another significant event was the interest of the Russian Empire in Greece, expressed through the Orlofika events, that is the Revolution of 1770.

The region of Ilia - Olympia<sup>85</sup> has a rich history. The geographical position and natural wealth of the region has contributed to the flourishing of culture and commerce. Archaeological finds, dating from the prehistoric period, were discovered in the region. Nevertheless, the greatest peak of Ilia-Olympia dates in the 8th century BC, due to the glow of the sanctuary of Olympia, the reputation of which was massive. During the Macedonian period, Ilia (Ancient Ilida) suffered from much political instability, especially after the death of Alexander the Great.

The Roman period was no less turbulent. The constant changes in the throne of the empire affected the life of the region. In 1204 AD French and Venetian Crusaders, claiming the release of the Holy Lands, conquered most of the country and the region went to the sovereignty of the Franks. Since 1263 AD another turbulent period began, as Franks and Byzantines battled for the conquest of land. In 1453, the fall of Constantinople resulted in the installation of the Ottomans in Greece.

#### **2.7.4 Demographic Characteristics**

According to the 2011 census, the population of the Region of Western Greece is about 680,190. This makes it the fourth most populated Region of Greece, with 7% of the country's total population. Key cities are the capital Patras, as well as Pyrgos, Messologi and Agrinio.

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<sup>85</sup> <http://www.olympiaholiday.gr/ilia/tourism/articles/article.jsp?context=1504&categoryid=8936>

Table 2.7.1: Resident Population by gender and by Region

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Region of Western Macedonia	283.689	141.779	141.910	50,0	50,0
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Region of Central Greece	547.390	277.475	269.915	50,7	49,3
Region of Ionian Islands	207.855	102.400	105.455	49,3	50,7
<b>Region of Western Greece</b>	<b>679.796</b>	<b>339.310</b>	<b>340.486</b>	<b>49,9</b>	<b>50,1</b>
Region of Peloponissos	577.903	291.777	286.126	50,5	49,5
Region of Attiki	3.828.434	1.845.663	1.982.771	48,2	51,8
Region of Northern Aegean	199.231	99.984	99.247	50,2	49,8
Region of Southern Aegean	309.015	155.865	153.150	50,4	49,6
Region of Crete	623.065	308.665	314.400	49,5	50,5

Source: EL.STAT 2011, Population and Housing Census, (www.statistics.gr)

## 2.7.5 Development profile of the Region

### a. Economic characteristics

The 679,796 inhabitants of Western Greece participate in the country's GDP approx. by 5.12%. The port of Patras is the country's main gateway to Western Europe. Main economic activities include agriculture and tourism.

The region has significant investment potential. Entrepreneurship is linked with scientific research and technological development by local academic and research institutions with a pioneering contribution in modern telecommunications infrastructure, ICT and Life Sciences. Western Greece is a center of international interest in the energy sector (petroleum and wind energy).

Education system consists of 630 kindergartens and primary schools, 275 gymnasium and lyceum<sup>86</sup>, 3 adult learning centers and two Universities. Regarding Health Services infrastructure, the region has 11 general hospitals, 2 primary aid health centers and 5 regional health centers<sup>87</sup>.

<sup>86</sup> <http://pdede.sch.gr/new/>

<sup>87</sup> [http://www.dypede.gr/index.asp?a\\_id=225](http://www.dypede.gr/index.asp?a_id=225)

## **b. Transport infrastructure**

Today the Region of Western Greece is a modern communications and transport (six harbors) that connects Greece to the rest of Europe. The busy port of Patras is not only the Region's capital but also the country's main gateway to Western Europe. Rich in R&D infrastructure with main industrial sectors and main technology strength.

### **2.7.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage**

The region offers the visitor with 267 different types of accommodation from simple B&B to luxurious hotels providing 9.633 rooms with 18.725 beds. More specific, Western Greece offers 4 units (5 star), 39 units (4 star), 94 units (3 star), 105 units (2 star), 25 units (1 star). Western Greece is the 9th most visited Region in Greece and, as far as it concerns the occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments, the Region accounts for 2.2% of nights spent by residents and non-residents out of the total percentage of nights spent nationally in 2014. Residents and non-residents overnight stay in Crete increased in 2014 by 8.3% compared to 2013, totaling 1.681 mil. stays (EL.STAT., 2016).

### **2.7.7 Region of Western Greece tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road**

#### **Cultural assets related to the Silk Road**

Small centers of manufacturing were developed all over the country: Andros, which produced *sundus*, samite, and other silk products that were carried by the Genoese all over the western Mediterranean; Patras and Euboea and Thessalonike as well. These were silks produced in private workshops (Laiou, 2007). Towards the end of the 6th century A.D. Achaia reemerged in the development scene as a result of silk production that helped the economy and spread to other Byzantine regions. Because the production was much greater in Achaia and the whole of the Peloponnese, it was renamed into Morias or Moreas, a name that comes from the Greek word "*mouries*" i.e. mulberry trees which were used in the reproduction of silkworms. Silk production, however, was stopped by the turmoil caused by the Slavs, who exploited the diminishing of the native population caused by the terrible disease of 746 or 747 A.D. that seized the deserted settlements and then, when they were asked to leave, they revolted in 783 AD. Despite all the turbulence, the production of silk was not hindered and rendered Patras a significant centre of silk production and export.

#### **Historical Attractions / Archaeological sites**

In the Prefecture of Achaia, there are scattered remnants of the ancient world, challenging the admiration of visitors. The most important ones are: Ancient Aigeira, Ancient Keryneia, Ancient Eliki, Archaeological Monuments of Aigion, Castle of Rion, Patras Antiquities, Wall of Dymaioi, Gyftokastro, Achaic Leondio, Ancient Farrai, Ancient Tritaia, Ancient Lousoi, Ancient Kleitor, Ancient Psosis and Ancient Paos. Notable as well, are the Roman Bridge and the Roman Aquaduct of Patras, the Byzantine – Frank Castle, the Roman Stadium, the Roman Conservatory, the Mycenaean Cemetery and the Dymaion Wall. In Ileia, Chlemoutsi Castle, the Castle of Katakolon (Pontikokastro), the Municipal Market, Apollo Theater, the Kardamas Old School, the "Morios" Community fountain of Ilia, the Kafkalida Lighthouse and the Beacon of Katakolo, Lampeia (Divri) Primary School, the Railroad Train Station of Pyrgos, the Agridio Primary School and the Pierre de Coubertin Monument. In Aetoloakarnania, the Garden of

Heroes (Kipos ton Iroon), Alykes, Agios Nikolaos of Varasova, Ancient Plevrona, Ancient Kalydona, Ancient Thermo , the Stratos Archaeological Site, the Oiniades Ancient Theatre, the Makyneia Ancient Theatre, Ancient Paleros and castles (Vlochos, Nafpaktos, Antirrio, Vonitsa).

### **Museums**

In Patras, the New Archeological Museum of Patras , the Patras Museum of Folk and Traditional Arts, the Historical and Ethnological Museum of Patras, the Patras Press Museum, the Municipal Gallery of Patras, the Botanical Museum of University of Patras, the Zoological Museum of University of Patras, the Museum of Science and Technology (MST) University of Patras, the Patras Education Museum , the Natural History Museum at Lapa Achaia, the Museum of Glafkos, the Archeological Museum of Aigio, the Municipal Museum of Kalavryta Holocaust and the Kalavrita Site of Sacrifice, the Municipal Gallery Konstantinou Fasoy at Kalavrita, the Cave of Lakes Museum and Folk Museum at Kleitoria, Chelospilia , the Aristarchos telescope (the largest telescope in the Balkans and the second largest in mainland Europe). In Ileia, the Archeological Museum of Pyrgos, the Archeological Museum of Olympia, the Museum of History of the Ancient Olympic Games, the Archeological Museum of Ilida, the Museum of Archimedes in Ancient Olympia, the Museum of Ancient Greek Technology and the Environmental Museum of Foloji. In Aetolokarnania, the Art and History Museum in Messolonghi, the centre of Literature & Arts Diexodos, the Trikoupi Museum, the Palama Museum (house of famous poet Kostis Palamas), the Papastratio Archaeological Museum of Agrinio , the Archeological Museum of Thermo, the Vasso Katraki Museum and Lord Byron Residence.

### **Cultural events and Festivals**

In Patras, the Carnival is the modern version of the Dionysian Mysteries, one of the most important carnivals in Europe and the most crowded one in terms of its active participants, the International Festival of Patras, the Institution Of Ancient Drama , the International Festival of Film & Culture, the International Shadow Theatre Festival, the Municipal and Regional Theatre of Patra, the Nautical Week , the Cultural Events at University of Patras and the different cultural events throughout the areas of the regional unit. In Ileia, the Ancient Olympia Festival, the Ancient Ilida Festival, the Chlemoutsi Castle Music Festival and the Andravida horse show. In Aetoloakarnania, the Festival of Agios Simios, the celebration for the Exodus- Sunday before Easter, the Festival of Agia Agathi, Halkounia, Achillia, the Naval battle of Nafpaktos and Oiniades Festival.

## B. REGION OF WESTERN GREECE: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Development profile</b> <i>(demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment e tc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic geographical position (Patras as the EU Entrance)</li> <li>• The ports of Patras, Pyrgos and Astakos</li> <li>• The International Airport of Araxos</li> <li>• The Athens - Patra - Pyrgos axis (part of P.A.TH.E axis)</li> <li>• The Kalamata - Pyrgos - Patra - Preveza - Ioannina axis</li> <li>• Broad range of economical activities providing growth opportunities</li> <li>• European and Balkan business and cultural centre</li> <li>• High percentage in the country's GDP due to exports</li> <li>• Higher education institutions</li> <li>• Innovative entrepreneurship activities of R&amp;D organisations</li> <li>• Proximity to decision making centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively high unemployment rate</li> <li>• High number of SMEs lacking R&amp;D potential</li> <li>• Large discrepancy of economic development at the intraregional level</li> <li>• Specialisation of the secondary sector in traditional economic activities, and low level of technological modernisation of enterprises.</li> <li>• Urban concentration – Pronounced depopulation of rural areas.</li> <li>• Low level of education and HR expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> <li>• New knowledge sectors (ICTs etc)</li> <li>• Innovation public or private funding to create an innovation market growth</li> <li>• Cooperation between public sector and universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic crisis</li> <li>• Development obstacles (delays in infrastructure)</li> <li>• High cost of introducing new technologies and innovation</li> <li>• Not expertised personnel</li> <li>• Low level of facilities and services in remote areas</li> <li>• Increasing unemployment rate</li> <li>• Aging population</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product</b> <i>Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many historical resources related to the silk industry</li> <li>• The Region is an international cultural node</li> <li>• Religion tourism destinations</li> <li>• Opportunities for alternative tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further developing tourism</li> <li>• Low level of diversification the tourism product because of lack of knowledge-experience</li> <li>• Low level in tourism investments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism funding opportunities from European, national and regional Programmes</li> <li>• Competitive pricing</li> <li>• Regional Operation Programme (2014-2020) promoting tourism development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential economic crisis in other countries, impact upon potential tourist</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mass tourism and Seasonality in some regions</li> <li>• Uneven tourist concentrations</li> <li>• Lack of integrated planning</li> <li>• Lack in tourism education</li> <li>• Lack in tourism promotion</li> <li>• low tourism development rate in some areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution of the media in tourism development</li> <li>• New international trends in tourism</li> <li>• Promotion of ICTs in tourism</li> <li>• Social tourism</li> <li>• Investment interest from other countries</li> <li>• Potentials for thematic tourism</li> <li>• Historical connections between monasteries and silk production</li> <li>• Lack of funds and cooperation prevents the revival of industry complexes</li> </ul>	
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance and Protected Areas</li> <li>• Great Biodiversity</li> <li>• Bodies and agencies intensely active in protecting and promoting the environment.</li> <li>• Relatively high investments on Renewable Energy Resources (RES)</li> <li>• Great energy resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrong development policies (economic development vs environmental protection) during the last decades</li> <li>• The effects of human intervention on the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• R&amp;D initiatives</li> <li>• Potential to diversify tourism offer towards higher-value added and 365 days a year attractions</li> <li>• Potentials for alternative tourism in the Region and protection of natural resources</li> <li>• New cultivations (mulberry trees)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• No political long-term commitment</li> <li>• Continuous need for new technologies</li> <li>• Low awareness</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich multicultural resources</li> <li>• Various local products</li> <li>• Branded local products</li> <li>• Rich tradition in gastronomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local products with strong identity</li> <li>• Transportation facilities steam exports</li> <li>• Low productivity rates in some</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas are strongly related to the Silk road and can become nodes in a Silk Road route</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of local identity</li> <li>• Lack of political initiatives towards integrated revival plans</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments in Unesco list</li> <li>• Significant cultural (mythology, historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture)</li> <li>• Significant tangible &amp; intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk road</li> </ul>	<p>areas of the Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low degree of cross sector interconnection</li> <li>• Weak manufacturing units</li> <li>• Low level promotion of the brand of Silk tourism</li> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> <li>• Limited use of the Cultural Stock for strengthening regional identity and enriching tourist product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural development</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> <li>• Existence of infrastructures connected with silk road tourism although deserted and deprived and potentials of revival</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced time travel to the region through modern highways and train network</li> <li>• Total bed capacity exceeds 100000</li> <li>• Accessibility of the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ports of Pyrgos and Astakos are not considered as key players in the region</li> <li>• None of the railway links is considered as major or in operation</li> <li>• The airport facilities need upgrade</li> <li>• Qualitative deficiencies in social infrastructure (education - health).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade and operation of railway network</li> <li>• Upgrade of airport facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient railway network</li> <li>• Degradation of road network especially within the urban centres</li> </ul>

## 2.8 Central Greece Region



### A. Region of Central Greece profile analysis

#### 2.8.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

Central Greece Region, One of the most mountainous regions of the country, lies in the heart of the mainland, bordering with Attica in the south, Thessaly in the North and Western Greece. It is on the Aegean Sea to the east, and extends until the bay of Evia to the south and the Corinthian gulf on the north.<sup>88</sup>

The region covers an area of 15,550 Km<sup>2</sup>, including the island of Evia to the east. It consists of five Regional Units: Viotia, Evia, Evritania, Fthiotida, and Fokida, with 25 Municipalities. The capital of the region is Lamia and other major towns are Chalkida, Thiva and Livadia. It acquired its name - Sterea Ellada - (firm) after 1821 since it constituted the only clearly continental part of the liberated Greek state.

#### 2.8.2 Geographical and geophysical information

Central Greece is a mountainous region, covering an area of about 15 549 km<sup>2</sup> (11.8% of the country's area), where 22% consists of valleys, 19% consists of gentle slopes and the rest of the area is mountainous. The geography of Central Greece is characterized by a breathtaking natural environment with mountains, rivers and lush green forests. The mountains of Central Greece are a natural continuation of Pindos Mountain Chain and between them rest beautiful settlements.

Central Greece is also characterized by its lakes which are formed in the western part of the region. The largest and the most important river in Sterea region is Acheloos which stretches for 220 km. Evia is the largest island in Central Greece, which connects to the mainland through Evmpos Bridge. In the coasts, it is mainly mild with hot summers and heavy winters. At a high altitude, there are many rainfall (swww.greeka.com).<sup>89</sup>

Its geographical position accounts for the great variety in the region's climate, which is dry and mountainous inland and mild on the coast. The contours of its landscape, too, are very diverse: thickly wooded green slopes, hills with pines, oaks, poplars and fast-moving streams separated by flat lands, plateaus and lakes, alternating harmoniously with the bays, intricate network of coves and picturesque islands that decorate the southwest coast.

<sup>88</sup> [http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/destinations/sterrea\\_ellada](http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/destinations/sterrea_ellada)

<sup>89</sup> [www.greeka.com](http://www.greeka.com)

The region is endowed with a particularly rich and diversified natural environment, an indented coastline, imposing rocky massifs, caves, gorges, lakes, rivers, waterfalls, wetlands of spectacular beauty and unique natural habitats, coupled with a mild climate ranking it high among the ideal destinations for alternative forms of tourism.

### **2.8.3 History of Central Greece Region**

Inhabited since the distant past, Central Greece is an area with a rich and distinctive history. Here is the legendary Mycenaean city of Thebes, where the agony of its heroes still lives on thanks to the works of Greece's great classic tragic poets, Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides. The Palace of Kadmos, preserved under the modern town of Thebae, has given valuable information for this important centre of the Mycenaean world.

The Acropolis of Glas further North, built on what used to be an island in the former Copais lake, preserves almost intact a Mycenaean citadel with its megalithic masonry. Extensive works of drainage of the lake dated to the Mycenaean era were discovered when the drainage of the lake was carried out again in the late 19th century. Mt. Elikonas, home of the Muses; as well as Delphi, antiquity's most important religious center and a pole of attraction for thousands of tourists.

The region is also famous for the great battles fought here, some of which affected the course of history (Plataiai, Chaironia), some of unsurpassed symbolic significance (Thermopylae) as well as for such personalities as Hesiodos, Pindar, Epaminondas, Pelopidas and Plutarch, all sons of this land. Visitors today, whose main aim is a pilgrimage to Delphi, should nonetheless not restrict themselves to the inexhaustible historical reference points.

Contemporary Central Greece also has much to offer: abundant natural beauty, magnificently varied scenery, as well as highly evolved tourist facilities, all of which provide infinite opportunities for a most pleasant stay both winter and summer.<sup>90</sup>

### **2.8.4 Demographic Characteristics**

The region of Central Greece has a population of 546 870 <sup>91</sup> inhabitants (4.908% of the total population), with a population density of 35.2 p/km<sup>2</sup> and contributes 6.13% of the national GDP.

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<sup>90</sup> [http://www.grecian.net/ellada/en/central\\_greece.aspx](http://www.grecian.net/ellada/en/central_greece.aspx)

<sup>91</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2016/585876/IPOL\\_IDA\(2016\)585876\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2016/585876/IPOL_IDA(2016)585876_EN.pdf)

Table 2.8.1: Resident Population by gender and by Region

Description	Totals			Percent share	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Greece, Total</b>	<b>10.816.286</b>	<b>5.303.223</b>	<b>5.513.063</b>	<b>49,0</b>	<b>51,0</b>
Region of Eastern Macedonia- Thrace	608.182	299.643	308.539	49,3	50,7
Region of Central Macedonia	1.882.108	912.693	969.415	48,5	51,5
Region of Western Macedonia	283.689	141.779	141.910	50,0	50,0
Region of Epirus	336.856	165.775	171.081	49,02	50,08
Region of Thessaly	732.762	362.194	370.568	49,4	50,6
<b>Region of Central Greece</b>	<b>547.390</b>	<b>277.475</b>	<b>269.915</b>	<b>50,7</b>	<b>49,3</b>
Region of Ionian Islands	207.855	102.400	105.455	49,3	50,7
Region of Western Greece	679.796	339.310	340.486	49,9	50,1
Region of Peloponissos	577.903	291.777	286.126	50,5	49,5
Region of Attiki	3.828.434	1.845.663	1.982.771	48,2	51,8
Region of Northern Aegean	199.231	99.984	99.247	50,2	49,8
Region of Southern Aegean	309.015	155.865	153.150	50,4	49,6
Region of Crete	623.065	308.665	314.400	49,5	50,5

Source: EL.STAT 2011, Population and Housing Census, ([www.statistics.gr](http://www.statistics.gr))

## 2.8.5 Development profile of the Region

### a. Economic characteristics

A manufacturing hotspot rich in mineral resources, Sterea Ellada also possesses a developed agricultural sector, a relatively developed tourism infrastructure and a growing services sector. The region is characterized by geographical and economic heterogeneity, with urban areas being more developed than the rural and mountainous zones. The geography (mountainous zones and coastal plains) and economy of the region are heterogeneous while there is a continuing dominance of the primary sector (agriculture and mineral extraction) particularly in terms of employment (35% in 1991), the manufacturing and service sectors account for an increasingly important part of output and employment in the regional economy. The region ranked third in export volumes in the country.

The Regional Unit Viota, bordering Greater Athens, is one of the most industrialised areas in Greece with over 200 capital intensive industrial units (aerospace, aluminium, food processing, etc.). In contrast, the economies of the remaining four Regional Units depend on more traditional industries textiles and forestry in Evrytania food processing and non-metallic minerals in Evia quarrying (bauxite) in Fokida and agro-food firms in Fthiotida (where there is increasing industrial activity around the capital of the region).<sup>92</sup>

<sup>92</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/innovation/innovating/inno/027.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/innovation/innovating/inno/027.htm)

Despite a continuing downward trend, agriculture (tomatoes, cotton, tobacco, potato, oil, wheat, meat, honey, fish, wood) still represents around 4% of employment and remains a key factor for cohesion in rural areas. Accounting for nearly 29% of employment, industry contributes more than 42% of gross regional product (mineral processing, manufacturing along the Chalkida - Thebes axis). Finally, the tertiary sector continues to grow in strength already accounting for more than 67% of employment. Large department stores and retailers congregate in urban centers. Archaeological (Delphi) and natural (Evrytania, Phocis) sites seek to exploit their potential and attract more tourists.<sup>93</sup>

### **2.8.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage**

Central Greece, also known as Roumeli, has been inhabited since the ancient times. The Region, with its forested mountains, rivers, lakes, rich flora and fauna, as well as its remarkable archaeological sites attracts Greek and foreign tourists throughout the year. Exquisite, emblematic locations, like Delphi in Central Greece frequently host symposia and seminars on poetry, literature and modern prose writing, as well as tributes to great writers, both Greek and foreign.<sup>94</sup>

The area of Thermopylae, famous from the historic battle against the Persians and the heroic figures of the Spartans fighters, is a place of intense historical interest. The archaeological site of Delphi, the "navel of the earth" was the center of the ancient Greek world and one of the most famous sites in antiquity.<sup>95</sup> Delphi includes two sanctuaries, dedicated to Apollo and Athena, and other buildings, mostly intended for sports.<sup>96</sup> Included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, is one of the most well preserved sites of mainland Greece.<sup>97</sup>

Another important site is in Boeotia, where in 1880–86, Heinrich Schliemann's excavations at Orchomenus (H. Schliemann, *Orchomenos*, Leipzig 1881) revealed the tholos tomb he called the "Tomb of Minyas", a Mycenaean monument that equalled the "Tomb of Atreus" at Mycenae itself. In 1893, A. de Ridder excavated the temple of Asklepios and some burials in the Roman necropolis. In 1903–05, a Bavarian archaeological mission under Heinrich Bulle and Adolf Furtwängler conducted successful excavations at the site. Research continued in 1970–73 by the Archaeological Service under Theodore Spyropoulos, uncovering the Mycenaean palace, a prehistoric cemetery, the ancient amphitheatre, and other structures.

### **2.8.7 Central Greece Region tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road**

#### **Cultural assets related to the Silk Road**

Thebes in Boeotia was the largest city of the ancient region of Boeotia and the leader of the Boeotian confederacy. It was a major rival of ancient Athens, and sided with the Persians during the 480 BC invasion under Xerxes. Theban forces ended the power

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<sup>93</sup> [http://www.animaweb.org/sites/default/files/kcfinder/files/InvestInGreece-SYNERGASSIA\\_EN\\_2011\\_8.pdf](http://www.animaweb.org/sites/default/files/kcfinder/files/InvestInGreece-SYNERGASSIA_EN_2011_8.pdf)

<sup>94</sup> [http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/meetings\\_and\\_incentives](http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/meetings_and_incentives)

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.holidayemotions.com/en/areas/central-greece/>

<sup>96</sup> [http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/culture/archaeological\\_sites/delphi](http://www.visitgreece.gr/en/culture/archaeological_sites/delphi)

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.holidayemotions.com/en/areas/central-greece/>

of Sparta at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BC under the command of Epaminondas. The Sacred Band of Thebes (an elite military unit) fell at the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC against Philip II and Alexander the Great. Prior to its destruction by Alexander in 335 BC, Thebes was a major force in Greek history, and was the most dominant city-state at the time of the Macedonian conquest of Greece.

The historian Pausanias (2nd century AD) reported Cadmea still inhabited, but the town was overrun by a succession of conquerors and adventurers. In Byzantine and Frankish times it prospered as an administrative and commercial center, particularly for silk weaving. It had a large Jewish colony in the 12th century. Throughout the Turkish occupation (1435-1829), it was only a poor village, and in the 19th century it was destroyed by an earthquake and rebuilt. Few artifacts of its earliest days survive.<sup>98</sup>

During the Byzantine period, the city was famous for its silk, it served as a place of refuge against foreign invaders. From the 10th century, Thebes became a center of the new silk trade, its silk workshops boosted by imports of soaps and dyes from Athens. The growth of this trade in Thebes continued to such an extent that by the middle of the 12th century, the city had become the biggest producer of silks in the entire Byzantine Empire, surpassing even the Byzantine capital, Constantinople.

Boeotia, was considered, by the western part of the Byzantine empire, as the center of production of silk textiles of high quality which they dyed by using special sea shells, called porphyry. This kind of textile, with the characteristic, unfading, deep scarlet colour was a very expensive commodity and its value was equal to its weight in silver or precious gems. It was a synonym for luxury and wealth. Competitors of the trade were the silk-mills in Lucca and Venice. The women of Thebes were famed for their skills at weaving. Theban silk was prized above all others during this period, both for its quality and its excellent reputation.<sup>99</sup>

Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Thebes in 1161, speaks of it as then a large city, with two thousand Jewish inhabitants, who were the most eminent manufacturers of silk and purple cloth in all Greece. The silks of Thebes continued to be celebrated as of superior quality after this incursion. In 1195, Moïeddin, sultan of Ancyra, demanded forty pieces of Theban silk, such as was woven for the emperor's use, with a sum of money, as the price of his alliance. It was not until the reign of John III (A.D. 1222-1255) that the decline of the silk manufacture among the Greeks caused the importation of Babylonian. A law was then passed to prohibit the wearing of foreign silk. Samit was a rich kind of silk made in the island of Samos, from which some derive the German wordk Sammet, "velvet" (Finlay, 2014).

Thebes was severely plundered by the Normans in 1146, who carried off the silk workers, many of whom were Jews, to Sicily, but it quickly recovered its prosperity and continued to grow rapidly until its conquest by the Latins of the Fourth Crusade in 1204. After 1205, Thebes was the capital of the Frankish Duchy of Athens (Facaros & Theodorou, 2003).

Silk, one of the most important products in the Byzantine world, comprised a commodity not only in use within the Empire but also an item widely traded and a valued article of

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<sup>98</sup> <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/historians/notes/thebes.html>

<sup>99</sup> [http://www.theodora.com/encyclopedia/t/thebes\\_greece.html](http://www.theodora.com/encyclopedia/t/thebes_greece.html)

diplomatic gift exchange. It is widely assumed that the major source of the Boeotian region's wealth was silk, and that the Venetian merchants established themselves in Thebes because of Boeotian silk. In the Ottoman period, from the fifteenth century onwards, the production of silk cloth continued, without, however, the same intensity of the preceding Late Medieval era.<sup>100</sup>

### **Gastronomy**

Central Greece is rich in intense and genuine flavors, the *formaela*, the traditional cheese of Arachova and its noodles, the exceptional quality olive of Amfissa, the *ravani* cake with rice in Galaxidi and the *Katiki* fresh cheese of Domokos. Some of the most important Greek wineries are located in the area with unique wine varieties, such as the famous Savatiano.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> <http://kassiani.fhw.gr/boeotia/Forms/fLemma.aspx?lemmaid=12877&contlang=58>

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.holidayemotions.com/en/areas/central-greece/24/>

## B. REGION OF CENTRAL GREECE: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Development profile</b> ( <i>demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical position</li> <li>• Strong clusters in various sectors of activity (agri-business, tourism, industry)</li> <li>• Repeated tourism</li> <li>• Satisfactory level of potential demand</li> <li>• Sufficient and high quality accommodation facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economic crisis</li> <li>• Delays in adoption of new technologies</li> <li>• intense seasonality, and unbalanced spatial distribution of tourists</li> <li>• Lack of integrated planning and support mechanism for business and investment activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU's National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013</li> <li>• Collaboration of Public and Private Sector stakeholders, and local communities</li> <li>• Opportunities for innovation, partnerships / alliances</li> <li>• Features of new technologies, Information Technology (IT)</li> <li>• Increase in investment interest from other countries</li> <li>• Importance of safe destination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent international financial crisis</li> <li>• Recent fiscal crisis resulting from high public debt (followed by reduction of public investments)</li> <li>• Growing international competition</li> <li>• Dominance of distribution channels</li> <li>• International political and economic environment</li> <li>• Competition from destinations in Southeast Mediterranean</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</b>				
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great diversity of scenery</li> <li>• Quality natural resources</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural hot springs</li> <li>• Largest snow center</li> <li>• No 1 region in wind power, mining</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of cultural characteristics of local population</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of destinations with international and domestic recognition</li> <li>• Existence of significant cultural, resources (mythology, historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level in promotion and diversification of the tourism product</li> <li>• Low level in tourism investments, in exploitation of new forms of tourism</li> <li>• Mass tourism in some destinations</li> <li>• Failure to promote cultural heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The beauty of the natural environment and our cultural heritage, that are not promoted sufficiently compared with other Mediterranean tourist destinations</li> <li>• National development plan,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential reduction in domestic tourism due to economic crisis</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weakness in tourism offer</li> <li>• International Tour Operators versus small tourist units</li> <li>• Lack in Tourism education, promotion</li> <li>• Lack of a Marketing Agency in the form of DMO</li> <li>• Lack of tourism business clusters</li> <li>• Visibility and communication with potential tourists at a small scale.</li> <li>• Unexploited potential for further developing tourism.</li> </ul>	<p>special development plan for tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The raise of Greek tourism</li> <li>• The contribution of the media in tourism development</li> <li>• New trends in tourism from the international environment</li> <li>• Increase of social tourism</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed infrastructure</li> <li>• Accessibility of the area</li> <li>• Extensive coastal areas</li> <li>• Proximity to capital (1h drive)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay in completing any type of infrastructure</li> <li>• Shortage in tourist and other public infrastructure and lack of relative services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network of infrastructures and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmental barriers (delays in infrastructure)</li> </ul>

## 2.9 Region of Attica



### A. Region of Attica profile analysis

#### 2.9.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

Attica Region, is located at the southernmost point of Central Greece. It is a metropolitan region with an extended seafront, with its capital Athens being the national capital. Located in the centre of the country, occupies a strategic position between Aegean and Ionian, Central and Southern Greece. Piraeus Port is the largest port in Eastern Mediterranean and one of the most important ports in Europe. Attica is divided into eight regional units: North Athens, West Athens, Central Athens, South Athens, East Attica, Piraeus, Islands, and West Attica, out of which four form Greater Athens, while the regional unit of Piraeus forms Greater Piraeus. Together they make up the contiguous built up Athens Urban Area, spanning over 412 sq km and has a total population of 3,074,160 (in 2011).<sup>102</sup>

The large City Centre of the Greek capital falls directly within the municipality of Athens, which is the largest in population size in Greece. Piraeus also forms a significant city center on its own, within the Athens Urban Area and being the second largest in population size within it, with Peristeri and Kallithea following. There are also some inter-municipal centers serving specific areas. For example, Kifissia and Glyfada serve as inter-municipal centers for northern and southern suburbs respectively.<sup>103</sup>

#### 2.9.2 Geographical and geophysical characteristics

Attica is a triangular peninsula jutting into the Aegean Sea. From three sides, this peninsula is watered by gulfs of the Aegean Sea, the Gulf of Evoikos, the Saronic Gulf and the Gulf of Corinth, while at the northern side it borders with Boetia through the 16km long mountain range of Kithairon. To the west, it also borders with the Corinth Canal. Athens the capital and largest city in Greece, stretches on a large peninsula that is protected by mountains from all sides: Mt Egaleo to the west, Mt Parnes to the north,

<sup>102</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20070104231706/http://www.ypes.gr/topiki.htm>

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.ypeka.gr/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=UfCMqBJHswQ%3d&tabid=367&language=el-GR>

Mt Pentelikon to the north east and Mt Hymettus to the east. The centre of Athens is surrounded by hills and parks, such as Lycabettus hill, one of the tallest hills of the city providing panoramic view of the entire Attica Basin, Philopappou hill, the Acropolis hill and others. Also underground rivers, such as Iridanos, Kifissos and Ilissus wash it. Most of the time, these rivers are dry but in the winter they get filled with the rain water. Some nice parks dot Athens, such as the National Gardens, the Antonis Tritsis Park and the Park of Veikou Hill. Athens has the typical Mediterranean climate, which means hot and dry summers and mild winters. It rarely snows (usually every 3-4 years) and some rainfalls may occur in autumn. The coasts of Attica peninsula form nice coves to swim. Most popular beaches are found on the way to Cape Sounion, such as Lagonisi, Legrena and Kalivia. There are also nice beaches on the north eastern side of Attica, such as Marathon and Schinias.<sup>104</sup>

The geography of Attica has various features. In the centre of the peninsula, there is a large basin where the entire metroplex of Athens-Piraeus has been constructed. This basin is surrounded by four mountains: Hymettus, Parnitha (the highest mountain of Attica), Egaleo and Penteli. To the east of Mount Hymettus, there is the plain of Mesogia, a totally different landscape than the urban style of Athens. In Mesogia large vineyards and many wineries are spread in this region. In the mountains Parnitha and Penteli, there are large forests of pine trees and shrubberies that actually refresh the atmosphere of the Greek capital. On the north eastern side of Attica, there is Lake Marathon, an artificial lake created by damming in 1920 that serves as the water reservoir of Athens. The geomorphology of Athens is complex because its mountains cause a temperature inversion phenomenon which, along with the Greek Government's difficulties controlling industrial pollution, was responsible for the air pollution problems the city has faced. Cephissus River, Ilisos and Eridanos stream are the historical rivers of Athens.

### 2.9.3 History of Attica Region and Athens

The history of Attica is in its major part the history of Athens. The city of Athens, Greece, with its famous Acropolis, has come to symbolize the whole country. Athens began as a small, Mycenaean community and grew to become a city that epitomized the best of Greek virtues.<sup>105</sup>

The olive tree has been treated as sacred since according to mythology, goddess Athena gave the city an olive tree as a token of her protection of the city after her conflict with god Poseidon (Neptune). Another important gift from the Gods was the vine tree, which God Dionysos gave the Athenians. The myths and traditions about the ancient and continuous history of Attica have been substantiated by the findings of Prehistoric years that have been retrieved on the Acropolis and around other parts of Attica. There is a possibility for the old myths to reflect the wars the leaders of Acropolis made in order to achieve total ruling of the territories around Athens.<sup>106</sup>

Steeped in war and intrigue, culture and myth through the centuries, Athens became the center of the then civilized world. No other area can claim so many historical events and important cities. In cities such as Eleusis, Megara and Marathon, democracy,

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<sup>104</sup> [www.greeka.com](http://www.greeka.com)

<sup>105</sup> <http://www.ancient.eu/Athens/>

<sup>106</sup> <http://cgi.di.uoa.gr/~athina/en/attica.html>

philosophy and poetry originated. At Salamis and Plateai the fate of the then free world was determined when the Athenians met the Persians and emerged victorious. The epic about the Battle of Marathon and its prequel Xerxes – this era of Greek history is one that cannot but spark interest.

Athens developed to a great industrial and naval force during the 8th and 7th century B.C. A milestone in the city's history has been the period of Peisistratus tyranny, when exporting commerce reached Sicily, Egypt and the BlackSea. New monuments were built and the city experienced cultural and artistic development. The quest for success for Athens reached its climax during Perikles "Golden Age" period. Under his leadership (495-429 B.C), a brilliant general, orator, patron of the arts and politician—"the first citizen" of democratic Athens, according to the historian Thucydides, Athens entered a Golden Age when great philosophers, writers, and artists flourished in the city.<sup>107</sup> Herodotus, the 'father of history', lived and wrote in Athens. Socrates, the 'father of philosophy', taught in the marketplace. Hippocrates, 'the father of medicine', practiced there. The sculptor Phidias created his great works for the Parthenon on the Acropolis and the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. Democritus envisioned an atomic universe. Aeschylus, Euripedes, Aristophanes, and Sophocles wrote their famous plays and Pindar his Odes. Athenian Empire encouraged an arrogance in the policy makers. During those years Athens was famous to the world for its power, civilization, culture and science. This was to be stopped from the destructive Peloponnesian War, since that war resulted in the destruction of Aticas' naval forces and the restriction of the state to Athens and island Salamina.

The Athenians fought Darius and his invading forces without the help of Spartan reinforcements. The Persian defeat was so decisive that for many years no further attempts were made to invade Greece. Miltiades' brilliant strategy, known as The Battle of Marathon, is still the foundation of a great deal of modern warfare. The Battle of Salamis, which preceded that of Plateai, was fought between the Persian fleet and the Greek Navy. More than 300 Persian vessels were sunk or captured as a result of the Athenian ambush on the formidable Persian force in the straits of Salamis, where the strategy of the Athenian general Themistocles proved effective. The Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE) between Athens and Sparta ended in disaster for Athens after her defeat. Her empire and her wealth gone, her walls destroyed, only her reputation as a great seat of learning and culture prevented the sack of the city and the enslavement of the populace. Athens struggled to throw off her condition as a subject state, and with some success, until they were defeated in 338 BCE by the Macedonian forces under Philip II at Chaeronea.<sup>108</sup>

The territory was not powerful enough to avoid the Macedonian King Fillipe II (338 B.C.) to include Attica to the Macedonian states. In 146 B.C. Athens was occupied, together with the rest of Greece, by the Romans, who although they actually were conquerors, they showed respect to the city's history. It is a tribute to an enduring legacy that the Roman general Sulla, who sacked Athens in 87-86 BCE, slaughtered the citizenry, and burned the port of Piraeus, refused to allow his soldiers to burn the city itself. (Mark, 2011).

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<sup>107</sup> <http://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/pericles>

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.ancient.eu/Athens/>

After the first years A.C. Gothic tribes brought destructive invasions looting to Athens. The gradual integration with the Byzantine Empire was completed with the shut down of Philosophic Schools, the modification of shrines to Christian temples and the general rural confrontation of Athens. After year 1214, when Konstaninopolis was occupied by the Franks, Athens was given to French dukes. Their successors were Catalans, Napolitans and finally in 1456 the Turks. Yet, the city was not the first-choice capital of modern Greece. That honour went to Nafplio in the Peloponnese, where the War of Independence was masterminded by Capodistrias and where the first Greek National Assembly met in 1828. Following his death in 1831, the "Great Powers" of western Europe intervened, inflicting on the Greeks a king of their own choosing - Otho, son of Ludwig I of Bavaria- and in 1834 transferring the capital to Athens. When Athens was proclaimed capital of Greece, it was a miserable village with very few people and piles of ancient ruins and stones. Since then new buildings were built, and Acropolis and the rest of the ancient monuments were restored. In 1896 the first modern Olympics were held in Athens.

#### 2.9.4 Demographic Characteristics

The Athens Metropolitan Area, sprawling over 2,928.717 sq km, is located within the 3,808 km<sup>2</sup> (1,470 sq mi) Attica region. The region encompasses the most populated region of Greece, reaching 3,827,624 inhabitants in 2011, while it is however one of the smallest regions in the country.

Table 2.9.1: Resident Population by gender and by Region

Description	Totals			Percent share	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Greece, Total</b>	<b>10.816.286</b>	<b>5.303.223</b>	<b>5.513.063</b>	<b>49,0</b>	<b>51,0</b>
Region of Eastern Macedonia- Thrace	608.182	299.643	308.539	49,3	50,7
Region of Central Macedonia	1.882.108	912.693	969.415	48,5	51,5
Region of Western Macedonia	283.689	141.779	141.910	50,0	50,0
Region of Epirus	336.856	165.775	171.081	49,02	50,08
Region of Thessaly	732.762	362.194	370.568	49,4	50,6
Region of Central Greece	547.390	277.475	269.915	50,7	49,3
Region of Ioanian Islands	207.855	102.400	105.455	49,3	50,7
Region of Western Greece	679.796	339.310	340.486	49,9	50,1
Region of Peloponissos	577.903	291.777	286.126	50,5	49,5
<b>Region of Attiki</b>	<b>3.828.434</b>	<b>1.845.663</b>	<b>1.982.771</b>	<b>48,2</b>	<b>51,8</b>
Region of Northern Aegean	199.231	99.984	99.247	50,2	49,8
Region of Southern Aegean	309.015	155.865	153.150	50,4	49,6
Region of Crete	623.065	308.665	314.400	49,5	50,5

Source: EL.STAT 2011, Population and Housing Census, ([www.statistics.gr](http://www.statistics.gr))

Attica Region is the most urbanized region in the country, concentrating about 36% of the national population and 38% of the national active population. According to the Greek National Statistical Service Attica region had a population of 3.828.434 in 2011. The municipality of Athens has an official population of 664,046 people. The four Regional Units that make up what is referred to as Greater Athens have a combined population of 2,640,701. They together with the regional unit of Piraeus (Greater Piraeus) make up the dense Athens Urban Area, which reaches a total population of 3,090,508 inhabitants (in 2011).

The ancient site of Athens is centered on the rocky hill of the acropolis. In ancient times the port of Piraeus was a separate city, but it has now been absorbed into the Athens Urban Area. The rapid expansion of the city, which continues to this day, was initiated in the 1950s and 1960s, because of Greece's transition from an agricultural to an industrial nation. The expansion is now particularly toward the East and North East (a tendency greatly related to the new Eleftherios Venizelos International Airport and the Attiki Odos, the freeway that cuts across Attica). By this process Athens has engulfed many former suburbs and villages in Attica, and continues to do so.

### **2.9.5 Development profile of the Region**

#### **a. Economic characteristics**

Attica Region is well-known because its capital, the centre of economic, financial, industrial, political and cultural life in Greece. The Region produces about 45% of National GDP; it hosts more than 35% of the country's enterprises; it is the place of employment for about 37% of the country's workforce; it is the main national transportation hub, as well as an international tourism destination and the main national education and research centre. Its economy is heavily based on services, contributing more than 56% of the overall national sector. (ENPE 2014)

Almost 21.7% of the GDP comes from the secondary sector. The shipbuilding yards of "Skaramagkas" and "Eleusina", the expansion of the port of Lavrion (situated near the Cape Sounion) and the continuous growth of international industries on the outskirts of Athens have led to the massive urbanization of the city, resulting in more employment opportunities. The primary sector occupies only 0.6% of the GDP. The plain of Attica is an agricultural wine-growing region. The mountains of Hymettus, Parnitha and Pendeli are a nearby respite from the urbanized landscape, as are the beach resorts that dot the southern coastline all the way to Cape Sounion and continue northeast to the port of Rafina. The region's agricultural sector produces crops of olive oil, wheat, citrus fruits, tomatoes and potatoes.

### **2.9.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage**

The greater metropolitan area and Attica in general, constitute an ever more popular destination. Hotel accommodation, information services for visitors, the breadth of sightseeing options and attractions, as well as locals' outstanding sense of hospitality, rank highly on visitor satisfaction testimonials, demonstrating Athens as an attractive and safe destination. Moreover, the city's brand identity is strongly associated with its historical centre in addition to its beautiful coastline and surrounding landscape. Athens was voted as the second best European city to visit in 2016 by Best European Destinations, where more than 288,992 people voted.

The following data present an overview of the capital's tourism sector:

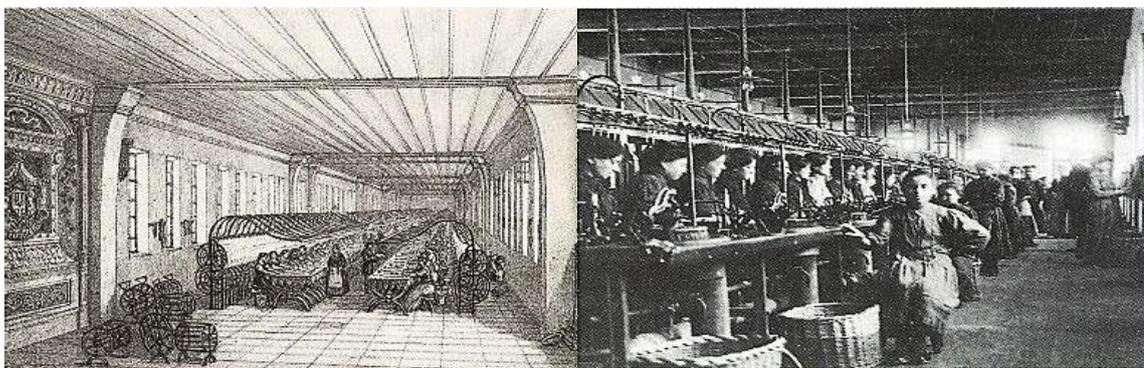
- The City of Athens has 230 hotels with 28.401 beds (2012), more than half of the total room capacity of the entire Region of Attica (458 units with 51.368 beds).
- 2.5 million tourists checked in to hotels in 2011 in Athens, resulting in 5.3 million overnights, approximately 77% of total overnights of the Region of Attica. The average length of stay was 2.13 days.
- Since its opening in 2009, the New Acropolis Museum recorded a significant and increasing flow of visitors underscoring the benefits of investing in the city's cultural heritage.
- 82 conferences of international organizations and associations were held in Athens in 2012, which constitute more than 50% of conferences held in the country.
- In the cruise sector, the port of Piraeus performance in recent years has exceeded expectations, paving its way as an increasingly dynamic destination in the Eastern Mediterranean basin. The number of cruise ships reached 936 in 2011, a year-on-year 13.73% rise, while passengers reached 2.066 million (up by 34.89%).<sup>109</sup>

Arriving from all over Greece and from Hellenic bastions beyond Greece proper (Alexandria, Constantinople, Smyrna, Pontus, etc.), Athenians have brought a mishmash of cultural intricacies and traditions. Behind the stark buildings of Athens lies a much more intimate fabric of civilization from old culinary secrets to island-like houses such as those in Anafiotika, Plaka. This, mixed with rich archaeological treasures and the natural attractions of Attica make any trip across and around the city more a unique eco-friendly cultural experience.

### **2.9.7 Region of Attica tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road**

#### **Cultural assets related to the Silk Road**

Hellenic Silk Company was initially established on August 6th, 1854 in an area in the center of Athens that has been named ever since "Metaxourgio" (Silk Reeling factory). The Company built the largest and most contemporary Steam powered Silk Reeling Factory in Europe of its time.



Hellenic Silk Company. Source: <http://www.hellenicsilk.com/>

<sup>109</sup> Athens Development and Destination Management Agency (ADDMA), City of Athens <http://www.developathens.gr/en/tourism/key-facts-and-figures>

The Company had well established production facilities and trading links in Attica, Messinia, Laconia, Central Greece and Thessalia, it industrialized Greek Silk Production and acted as the coordinator of the Sericulture Industry in Greece paving the way to European exports.<sup>110</sup>



Hellenic Silk Company. Source: [http://www.hellenicsilk.com/?page\\_id=464](http://www.hellenicsilk.com/?page_id=464)

Today, the Hellenic Silk Company's mission is the restart and the viable development of Sericulture in the traditionally Silk Production areas of Greece as well as the upgrade and promotion of Greek Silk as a high value added exportable product. The World demand for top quality Raw Silk and Silk Products is high and an organized and coordinated effort is necessary for their production. To this end, Hellenic Silk Company provides support and coordination for this effort through a series of activities and services:<sup>111</sup>

- Organization, management and coordination of the Sericulture Primary Sector. (Setup and management of Mulberry plantations and standardized Sericulture units).
- Establishment of Raw Silk Processing units (Silk Reeling etc) that will support local Fresh Cocoon producers.
- Support and promotion of Greek Silk products and by-products to world markets through marketable brand names and a strong network of commercial representatives and associates.
- Design and implementation of Contract and hyper-intensive sericulture.
- Research and Development, Educational services and scientific collaborations with the World Sericulture Community and International Research Centers.
- Commercial and Production collaborations with the main producing and high quality Silk Product consuming Countries.

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<sup>110</sup> [http://www.hellenicsilk.com/?page\\_id=464](http://www.hellenicsilk.com/?page_id=464)

<sup>111</sup> <http://www.hellenicsilk.com/>

## Archaeological sites and Museums

The ancient city of Athens hosts a large part of archaeological sites. Some of the highlights are Acropolis and the New Acropolis Museum. Acropolis is also called the Sacred Rock which is the most important ancient heritage of the country. There is the Herodeion Theatre (Theatre of Herodes Atticus), an impressive monument of Athens which today hosts Athens Festival with theater, music and dance performances. Herodes Atticus has inaugurated the Panathenaic (Roman) Stadium, a very important site in Athens, built in the 4th century BC, hosting the Panathenaic Athletic contests.

Another important site is the Ancient Agora, the commercial, trading, administrative and social center of ancient Athens, where Socrates, Sophocles and Aristotle used to express their thoughts and ideas. It is said that Saint Paul was present in the Agora in 49 AD. There is also the ancient cemetery of Kerameikos, one of the greenest places in Athens. Kerameikos was the cemetery of Athens from the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC to the Roman Times.

The Sanctuary of Poseidon, Cape Sounion, is known as the place where King Aegeus committed suicide, after his son Theseus has killed Minotaur in Crete Island. The theatre of Dionysus, the oldest in Athens, is located on the southeastern slope of the Acropolis. There once used to be an older theatre from the 6th century BC that was located at the same place, which had welcomed the Festival of the Great Dionysia, a festival of great cultural importance that welcomed great play writers such as Sophocles or Euripides.

The city is a world centre of archaeological research. Along with national institutions, such as Athens University and the Archaeological Society, there are multiple archaeological Museums including the National Archaeological Museum, which is the largest archaeological museum in the country, and one of the most important internationally, as it contains a vast collection of antiquities and its artifacts cover a period of more than 5,000 years, from late Neolithic Age to Roman Greece, the Cycladic Museum, home to an extensive collection of Cycladic art, including its famous figurines of white marble, the Epigraphic Museum, the Byzantine & Christian Museum, one of the most important museums of Byzantine art, as well as museums at the ancient Agora, Acropolis, Kerameikos, and the Kerameikos Archaeological Museum, a museum which displays artifacts from the burial site of Kerameikos.

Finally the New Acropolis Museum that opened in 2009, replacing the old museum, has proved considerably popular; almost one million people visited during the summer period June–October 2009. A number of smaller and privately owned museums focused on Greek culture and arts are also to be found.<sup>112</sup>

## Gastronomy

A plethora of traditional Greek foods branded by the fertile soil of Attica and the salty breeze of its islands, flavour that truly comes from the earth and sky. Wine, honey, nuts, fruits, vegetables, olives, are all unique tastes and textures. Also local fresh fish prepared sauce-less, charcoaled simply and served with just a touch of olive oil and a squeeze of lemon and seafood from the Saronic Gulf, care of Attica's islanders, sheer sweetness.

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<sup>112</sup> <http://www.greeka.com/attica/athens/ancient-sites.htm>

amygdalota (almond cookies) from Spetses, or pure honey from Kythera and Aegina pistachio nuts.<sup>113</sup>

Local choriatiki Greek salad at seaside tavernas, with organic tomato from Vravrona, cucumber from Kalyvia, oregano and capers from Mount Hymettus, black olives from Megara, virgin olive oil from Troezen, red wine vinegar from Spata, onion and garlic from Marathon and feta cheese (note: sheeps' cheese, made from an exclusive Greek recipe) from Lavrio.<sup>114</sup>

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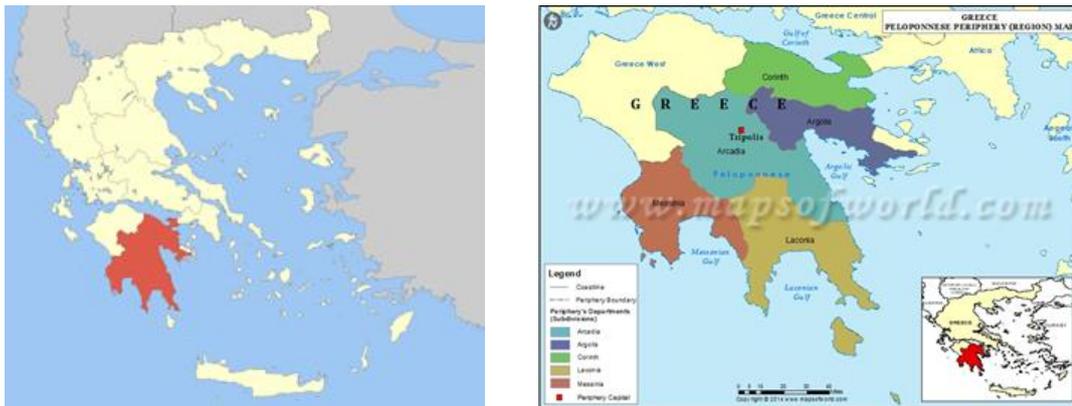
<sup>113</sup> <http://www.greekgastronomyguide.gr/en/athens-attica/dishes/>

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.athensattica.gr/en/plan-in-advance/before-coming-to-attica/what-for/the-greek-food>

## B. REGION OF ATTICA: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Development profile</b> <i>(demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hellenic silk company and effort to restart the traditional silk production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing: product oriented rather than consumer oriented</li> <li>Lack of economies of scale</li> <li>Financial constraints</li> <li>Inadequate training procedures</li> <li>Seasonality problems</li> <li>No quality standards</li> <li>High cost of living (in general)</li> <li>No Policy rules and regulations</li> <li>No satisfactory ground transport infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>European Union support</li> <li>Increase in tourism demand</li> <li>New emerging markets, China and Russia</li> <li>Trends in tourism demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of visibility in Global Distribution Systems</li> <li>Political crises/Wars/terrorism</li> <li>Political intervention</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product</b> <i>Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</i>				
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural and cultural attractions/resources, archeological, heritage etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental sustainability</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental degradation</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>				
<i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good connections with means of transport, especially by air</li> </ul>	No satisfactory ground transport infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure development</li> <li>Air Transportation (low-cost carriers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure</li> </ul>

## 2.10 Region of Peloponnese



Map 2.1.1 Location of Peloponnese Region.

Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/greece/regions/peloponnese.html>

### A. Region of Peloponnese profile analysis

#### 2.10.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

The Peloponnese region covers a total area of 15,490sk, 11.7% of the total area of the country. On the west it is surrounded by the Ionian Sea, on the northeast it borders with the region of Attica, and on the east coast it is surrounded by the Sea of Myrtoo. The region includes five units, namely: Arkadia, Argolida, Korinthia, Lakonia and Messinia, and 26 Municipalities. Key cities include the capital Tripoli, Argos, Nafplio, Corinth, Sparta, and Kalamata.

#### 2.10.2 Geographical and geophysical information

In Arcadia, the Monastery of Eloni and the Gorge of Leonidio (included in the European Network Natura 2000 under the code GR2520005), River Ladon, the Artificial Lake and its Dam and River Lousios and its Gorge. In Korinthia, the Melagavi Lighthouse, Doxa lake, the Pheneos wetland (Dam), Stymphalia Lake and Vouliagmeni Lake. In Argolida, the Ververontas Lagoon, the Katafyki gorge, the Thermisia Lagoon (habitat of rare migratory birds), the Dolines in Didyma and the Franchthi cave. In Messinia / Kalamata, the Gorge of Ned (the only “female” river in Greece) and the Glyfada Cave at Diros.

#### 2.10.3 History of Peloponnese Region

Habitation of the region is recorded since at least 24,000 years before our era. Franchthi Cave in the Argolid presents a continuous habitation from the Upper Paleolithic down to the Bronze Age, and it is one site for which archaeologists suggest a contribution of local, indigenous population of hunter-gatherers to the establishment of agriculture in Greece. Open-air sites of hunter-gatherers abound in the Argolid, indicating an active and dynamic component in the shift to the agricultural way of life. By far, however, Peloponnese is well-known as the centre of the glorious Mycenaean civilization. Mycenae and Tiryns, Pylos and Sparta flourished from the 16th century BCE onwards, into rich, powerful kingdoms, boasting major urban centres and impressive citadels and architecture, imposing burial monuments and a sophisticated material culture.

Arcadia took its name from the mythological character Arkas and in Greek mythology, it was the home of the god Pan. Arcadia was gradually linked in a loose confederation

that included all the Arcadian towns and was named League of the Arcadians. It successfully faced in 7th century BC the threat of Sparta and the Arcadians managed to maintain their independence<sup>115</sup>. They participated in the Persian Wars alongside other Greeks by sending forces to Thermopylae and Plataea. During the Peloponnesian War Arcadia allied with Sparta and Corinth. In the following years, during the period of the Hegemony of Thebes, the Theban general Epaminondas reinforced the Arcadian federation in order to form a rival pole to the neighboring Sparta. Then he founded Megalopolis which became its new capital. Over the next centuries Arcadia weakened. It initially was subjugated by the Macedonians and later the Arcadians joined the Achaean League.

During the Roman Era, Arcadia abandoned completely and the period that followed was called the Arcadian Dark Ages. After the collapse of the Roman power in the west, Arcadia became part of the Greek-speaking Byzantine Empire. The region fell into the hands of the Ottoman Turks in 1460. With the exception of a period of Venetian rule in 1687–1715, the region remained under Turkish control until 1821. Arcadia was one of the centres of the Greek War of Independence which saw victories in their battles including one in Tripoli. After a victorious revolutionary war, Arcadia was finally incorporated into the newly created Greek state<sup>116</sup>.

The settlement dating to 5000 B.C that was discovered in the Feneos, Stymfalia, Nemea, Vouliagmani Lake and Korakos region is testament to Korinthos' habitation since the Neolithic Age<sup>117</sup>. In antiquity Korinthos was one of the largest and most important cities in Greece. Corinth became a powerful city-state establishing colonies in Syracuse and Epidamnus. In 338 BC, following the Peloponnesian War and the subsequent Corinthian War, Corinth was conquered by Philip II of Macedon. In 146 BC, Corinth suffered partial destruction from the invasion of Roman general Mummius, although it was later rebuilt under Julius Caesar, growing into an even more prosperous Roman city. On March 14th, 1821, at Saint George of Zaholis the revolution flag, that carried the symbols of the Filiki Eteria, was raised. Finally, after the sea battle of Navarino, in October 1827, Ibrahim's army was scattered Peloponnese and Corinthia consisted the core of the first Greek nation, whose independence was officially recognized on January 22nd, 1830. The First National Assembly of Epidaurus took place in 1821 to the now New Epidaurus, while Nafplio remained the capital of Greece until September 1834, when the Athens was named the new capital city.

Messinia<sup>118</sup> monuments, witnesses the area's long history, representing a course of 4,500 years. Prehistoric sites discovered by archaeological excavations, show a land that was inhabited throughout the prehistoric period, particularly the areas of Pylia and Trifylia (Chora, Englianos, Malthi, Chandrinos, Koryfasion). Mycenaean finds discovered all over the Peloponnese attest to the great prime that this civilization reached in the area. Messinia then followed the fate of the rest of the country during both the Roman period and, later, the Byzantine period. From the 4th century AD until the early 9th century, the Peloponnese was attacked by Goths, Avars and Slavs; The Frankish rule in the Peloponnese lasted for over 200 years. From the end of the late 14th century, the

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<sup>115</sup> [http://www.greekhotels.gr/peloponnese\\_hotels/arcadia\\_hotels/history.asp](http://www.greekhotels.gr/peloponnese_hotels/arcadia_hotels/history.asp)

<sup>116</sup> <http://www.mythicalpeloponnese.gr/category/mathe/ana-perioxi/arkadia.1/25>

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.in-korinthia.com/en/history-myth/>

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.cvf.gr/eng/history-messinia>

Turks began the gradual conquest of Messinian cities and regions, which was completed in 1498. Peloponnese was the theatre of many battles and events of the War of Independence of 1821-1827. The naval battle of Navarino in Pylos in 1827, where the ships of the allied European Powers (England, France and Russia) defeated the Turkish - Egyptian fleet, was decisive for ending the invasion of Ibrahim Passa in Peloponnese and eventually the war. Nafplion was the seat of the first Greek government until 1834, when the capital was transferred to Athens.

Tradition says that Sparta was founded by Lacedaemon, son of Zeus and Taygete, who called the city after his wife, daughter of Eurotas<sup>119</sup>. The recorded history of Sparta began with the Dorian invasions –the early years after the Trojan War–, when the Peloponnese was settled by Greek tribes coming from Epirus and Macedonia, submitting or displacing the older Achaean Greek inhabitants. In later Classical times, Sparta along with Athens, Thebes and Persia had been the main powers fighting for supremacy against each other. In the medieval period, Laconia formed part of the Byzantine Empire. Following the Fourth Crusade, it was gradually conquered by the Frankish Principality of Achaea. In the 1260s, however, the Byzantines recovered Mystras and other fortresses in the region and managed to evict the Franks from Laconia<sup>120</sup>, which became the nucleus of a new Byzantine province. By the mid-14th century, this evolved into the Despotate of Morea, held by the last Greek ruling dynasty, the Palaiologoi. With the fall of the Despotate to the Ottomans in 1460, Laconia was conquered as well. With the exception of a 30-year interval of Venetian rule, Laconia remained under Ottoman control until the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence of 1821. Following independence, Sparta was selected as the capital of the modern prefecture, and its economy and agriculture expanded. With the incorporation of the British-ruled Ionian Islands into Greece in 1864, Elafonissos became part of the prefecture. After World War II and the Greek Civil War, its population began to somewhat decline, as people moved from the villages toward the larger cities of Greece and abroad.

#### 2.10.4 Demographic Characteristics

According to Hellenic Statistics Authority (2011), the Region consists of 577.903 inhabitants 286.126 female and 291.777 male, mostly active in agriculture and tourism.

Table 2.10.1: Resident Population by gender and by Region

Description	Totals			Percent share	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Greece, Total	10.816.286	5.303.223	5.513.063	49,0	51,0
Region East Macedonia-Thrace	608.182	299.643	308.539	49,3	50,7
Region of Central Macedonia	1.882.108	912.693	969.415	48,5	51,5
Region of Western Macedonia	283.689	141.779	141.910	50,0	50,0
Region of Epirus	336.856	165.775	171.081	49,02	50,08
Region of Thessaly	732.762	362.194	370.568	49,4	50,6
Region of Central Greece	547.390	277.475	269.915	50,7	49,3
Region of Ioanian Islands	207.855	102.400	105.455	49,3	50,7
Region of Western Greece	679.796	339.310	340.486	49,9	50,1
<b>Region of Peloponnese</b>	<b>577.903</b>	<b>291.777</b>	<b>286.126</b>	<b>50,5</b>	<b>49,5</b>
Region of Attiki	3.828.434	1.845.663	1.982.771	48,2	51,8
Region of Northern Aegean	199.231	99.984	99.247	50,2	49,8
Region of Southern Aegean	309.015	155.865	153.150	50,4	49,6
Region of Crete	623.065	308.665	314.400	49,5	50,5

Source: EL.STAT 2011, Population and Housing Census, (www.statistics.gr)

<sup>119</sup> <http://www.greece.com/destinations/Peloponnese/Laconia/>

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.mythicalpeloponnese.gr/category/mathe/ana-perioxi/lakonia.1/28>

## **2.10.5 Development profile of the Region**

### **a. Economic characteristics**

Main agricultural products are fruits (53% of national production), olive oil (65% of national production) and potatoes (11% of national production). The region represents 29.1% of the Greek vineyard map and produces 1,208 different labels with significant export activities, thus ranking 1st in the variety and number of wines produced in Greece.

The Peloponnese holds unique cultural, historic and archaeological treasures. The first World Heritage site, declared by UNESCO, was the Temple of Apollo. The region is famous for its amazing variety in scenery, encompassing 47 sites registered and protected by the Natura 2000 programme for their rare species of flora and fauna.

Education system consists of 615 kindergartens and primary schools, 240 gymnasium and lyceum<sup>121</sup>, 5 adult learning centers and four Universities. Regarding Health Services infrastructure the region has 8 general hospitals, 2 primary aid health centers and 4 regional health centers.

### **b. Transport infrastructure**

The region is connected by boat from the ports of Pireaus and Igoumenitsa throughout the year plus having interconnection between the islands facilitating island hopping during summer times and access to local and tax authorities for locals throughout the year. The region can be reached by air since airports and/or heliports are in operation throughout the year but mainly by car. Public transportation, taxi service, local car and/or moto rental services within each island are also available throughout the year.

## **2.10.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage**

The region offers the visitor with 656 different types of accommodation from simple B&B to luxurious hotels providing 19.319 rooms and 37.809 beds. More specific, Peloponnison offers 22 units (5 star), 116 units (4 star), 210 units (3 star), 232 units (2 star), 76 units (1 star). Peloponnisos is the 9th visited Region in Greece and accounts for 3.5% of nights spent by residents and non-residents out of the total percentage of nights spent nationally in 2014. Residents and non-residents overnight stay in Peloponnisos increased in 2014 by 9.2% compared to 2013, totaling 2.670 mil stays (EL.STAT., 2016) .

In Arcadia, The Gorge of Lepida, Mountain biking, Rafting and other River Activities (Arcadia), Mount Parnon paths, The Ski Center in Mainalo and the Wine Routes. In Korinthia, the Ziria Athletic Centre, the Club Hotel Casino Loutraki, the Fonissa Gorge, Marinas, Diving and the Loutraki Thermal Spa. In Laconia, the Lagada Climbing Park, the E4 European long distance path, Mount Parnon paths, Mount Taygetus Paths, National path E32, Scuba Diving in Laconia and Spartathlon.

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<sup>121</sup> <http://pelop.pde.sch.gr/perif/>

## 2.10.7 Region of Peloponnese tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road

### Cultural assets connected related the Silk Road

Peloponnese is the only region for which there seems to exist dated historical evidence about the early phases of sericulture. The diffusion of moriculture in certain parts of the peninsula is suggested by the name Morea apparently derived from the appellation of the mulberry tree. The *Vita Basilii*, composed under the reign of Coiistantine VII Porphyrogenitus, is the only source apparently documenting the production of silks in the Peloponnese before the eleventh century (Jacoby, 2015).

It is only since the early twelfth century that the information about silk, silk textiles and silk dyes in the western provinces of the Empire becomes more abundant and more precise. The rearing of silk worms was exclusively carried out by peasant house-holds, yet the silk yields were small. Testimonies from 1328 in the Venetian Peloponnese, though, record an increase from 10 to 25 light pounds of cocoon. The rise of Corinth as important silk producer, presumably since the second half of the eleventh century, as well as the growth of other urban silk centers of lesser importance such as Euripos and Patras required a similar restructuring of the silk trade network within the Byzantine Empire. Some of these cities had previously served as entrepots and transit stations for raw silk and dyestuffs and, to some extent, also for silk textiles largely shipped to Constantinople (Jacoby, 1992).

For a long period the breeding of the silk-worm was confined to the Greeks of the Lower Empire. Manufactures were established in Athens, Thebes and Corinth; from whence the Venetians, supplied Europe with silk goods (Spicer 1877). It is difficult to say what types of silks were woven in provincial workshops such as Thebes and Corinth in the twelfth century (Muthesius 1995).

The economy of the city of Corinth First, it is concluded on the basis of documents, that was based overwhelmingly on agricultural production and that trade and industry were minor contributors to the city's vitality. Silk production, which apparently had been an important source of wealth in the Middle Ages, was negligible in the 15th century (Gregory 2007).

The Tripolis panegyri (documented for the late 18th century), which might last as long as 15 days, involved commercial exchange in cloth of all types (e.g., felts, silks) and in other commodities as well (Blitzer 1990). From the 7th century, Jews were settled in Sparta where they lived as producers and elaborators of silk and silk merchants (Houmanidis, 2003). In the close are, Modon (Methoni) the major outlet for commodities of the southern Peloponnese, assumed a pivotal role as transit and transshipment station, thanks to its location at the juncture of the two main Venetian shipping lanes in the eastern Mediterranean, one leading to Constantinople and the other to Egypt.

Messinia enables witnessing a long tradition in the development of sericulture of the region. Silk, with raisins and figs, were the most common local resources. Sericulture was one of the main occupations of the inhabitants, boosting the economic and export activities of the region. Historical accounts, along with accounts from travelers visiting the region clearly show the important position held by sericulture in economic and social

life of the people since the 13<sup>th</sup> century in Kalamata. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the production grew steady, and silk factories were built, surviving until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (CES, 2009).

From the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, during the Frankish, silk was already one of the main productions of the region, so much so that a special annual tax to the rulers of Venice called “metaxiatikon” (from the Greek word for silk “metaxi”) was introduced for the households producing the good. The quantities of silk exported to foreign markets were important, and all commercial registers from that period included a section on Kalamata silk. Thousands of bales of silk were exported to Europe each year, while the locals used the fabric to craft scarves, belts, shirts and caps (CES, 2009).

By the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Peloponnese with its nickname “Morea” (from the Greek word «*mouria*» meaning berry), is a land covered by mulberry trees. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sericulture and silk processing was so highly developed in the region that the silk was the product most exported. According to the testimony of the English traveler William Gell in 1805, there were silk workshops in almost every family in Kalamata, where a room for sericulture was dedicated in almost each house. Even before the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, French ships were frequently seen in the small regional port, loading silk and cotton bales to be shipped to Marseille. More than 1500 pounds of raw silk were consumed each year for the crafting of scarves and mosquito nets; the value of the fabric increasing some sixty times after transformation. The Estonian Otto Magnus von Stackelberg, relates in 1811 that large quantities of raw silk were shipped abroad, mainly to the markets of Turin, Smyrna, Chios, Constantinople, Skorda and Ioannina. Sericulture was widespread in other parts of Messenia, which largely influenced the name of places: Metaxada-Sapriki, from the greek word “metaxi” that means silk, was one of the largest silk producing centers; the region of Skarmigka that greatly benefited from silk production for its development has its name originating from the Chinese word “skarminx” which means silk route; or the Tsernitsa village region, which grows many mulberry trees, also comes from the Chinese for silk road. In 1837, the first motor processing silk factory was founded in Kalamata. It was founded by Alexandre Fournair during the campaign of the French Marine conducted by Marshall Nicolas-Joseph Maison (CES, 2009).



Staninopoulos Brothers Silk Factory in Kalamata. Source : Silk Dance (CES 2009)



Kalamata port. Source : Silk Dance (CES 2009)

In 1853, the city of Kalamata produced 38,000 pounds of silk, while the total production throughout Greece was of 150,000 pounds, meaning the city alone accounted for almost a third of the country's production (CES, 2009).

In Greece, a total of 12 silk factories could be found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, 5 of which were located in Kalamata, all implanted between 1853 and 1859. The largest factory established was founded by "House Fels and Co" in 1859. In 1870, the city of Kalamata sees its first steam locomotive, quickly influencing silk factories to adopt this way of producing energy. Thus, shortly after the arrival of steam to the city, the silk factory of Th. Maraveas started using steam for its production (CES, 2009). In the mid-1870s, Kalamata was the biggest center of silk production in Greece. With its 5 silk factories, and a steam-power production totaling 43 horse-power, enabling an astonishing production of 40 tons of silk per year. The main market for silk at the time was France, although a significant part of the production was consumed locally for various crafts productions. About five hundred workers benefited from the silk industry in the region, women for the most part (CES, 2009).

In 1897, shortly before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first two silk enterprises held by individuals appeared in the city of Kalamata. With the change in the size of producing spaces, the silk production shifted from simple fabric production to the export of already cut and sown pieces. The new demand for finished items of clothing contributed to give work to hundreds of households in the city. References show that some five hundred looms were necessary to respond to the demand. Thus, weaving shops slowly succeeded to silk factories. In the Interwar period three family businesses were still running in Kalamata, with owners successful enough to open branches in Athens. Shortly before the Second World War, along with the Monastery of Nuns, Kalamata counted four silk manufacturers (CES, 2009).

Today, Kalamata is the most important economic, commercial, tourist, cultural and athletic center of the wider region. It allocates one from the more important harbors of the country and it is famous around the world for the "Kalamatiano" dance and the production of silk neckerchiefs. The local economy is based to a large extent on the rural production. Kalamata is also acquaintance in international scale for her traditional products: the olive oil, the black olives and the nougat with honey.

The town of Kalamata now continues the silk industry tradition, in particular thanks to the Gonos factory. This factory, organized in a systematic way since 1920, was considered as one of the most modern silk factories of the region at the eve of the Second World War. Around 1950, the Gonos factory began to operate the first electronic looms for silk weaving of the region, and is still operating today (CES, 2009).

Statistical studies show that global demand in silk increased from 68,000 tons in 1983, to over 152,000 tons in 2012. Within the EU, the value of silk imports increased steadily during the period between 2001 and 2010, going from 191 million euros in 2001 to 214 million euros in 2010. New technologies enable the sector to compete with other agricultural performance today, as electronic looms are enabling producers to become competitive in a fast paced market. Furthermore, through a program of the Athens Agricultural University showing a continuing interest in silk production in Greece, a box of 20,000 cocoons for silkworm rearing can be obtained for 254 euro per box, thus encouraging the perpetuation of this agricultural tradition in the country. On the cultural

front, several places in the region hold testimony to the immense richness silk brought to the area, with notably the Koroni and Methoni castles where historians describe treasures found as tens of chests of precious gems, gold and silver, and silk embroideries (CES, 2009).

### Silk Rod Built Heritage

In the city of Kalamata, there is the Monastery of Saint Constantine and Helen, also known as the Monastery of nuns, because it has always been a female monastery. Founded in 1796 in the center of Kalamata on the ruins of a 13<sup>th</sup> century church it has had an important charity activity, being really next to the society of the city. Apart from charities, the Monastery is also widely known for sericulture and the processing of silk. It is considered that the art of silk weaving was brought to the region by nine nuns arriving from Constantinople. They passed on the knowledge of silk making and weaving to their pupils, and gave unparalleled reputation to the silk of Kalamata. Through the practice of apprenticeship, the monastery became the heart of silk production of the city<sup>122</sup>.



Nun behind the silk loom  
Source : Silk Dance (CES 2009)



Silk Scarf  
Source : Silk Dance (CES 2009)

Along with the traditional duties of a monastery, the place was also operating as a boarding school for orphans and poor girls of the city. In its beginnings, the school welcomed 25 orphan girls to teach them the rudiments of ascetic life, along with notions of arts and literature. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the monastery held by some eighty nuns welcomed approximately 100 apprentice girls and continued to pass on the traditions relating to silk to the girls.

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[http://www.foodandnutritionjournal.org/pdf/conference/ENG\\_Messinia-the%20ideal%20tourist%20destination.pdf](http://www.foodandnutritionjournal.org/pdf/conference/ENG_Messinia-the%20ideal%20tourist%20destination.pdf)



Silk School inside the Monastery  
Source : Silk Dance (CES 2009)



Silk School students  
Source : Silk Dance (CES 009)

Until the catastrophic 1986 earthquake of Kalamata, the monastery continued to breed silkworms, process the cocoons, and weave silk. The contribution of the monastery in sericulture is of paramount importance, as it resulted in an industrial transition between cottage based industry to a most elaborate industrialized silk production, thus enabling the tradition to carry on over the centuries.

The handiworks of the nuns are unique and due to them many prizes have been awarded to the Monastery. There is a weaving-mill, a library as well as a shop in the Monastery. Moreover there is a vestry-museum, with mortal relics of Saints and artifacts, such as vestments, sacred vessels, icons and a part of the ancient iconostasis. The Castle, monastery of saint Konstantinos and Eleni (1796), where the nuns continue till nowadays to texture the famous silk handkerchiefs.

### **Archaeological Sites**

In Arcadia, the Ancient Theatre of Megalopolis, Ancient Tegea, the Temple of Apollo Epikourios (included in the list of UNESCO's World Heritage Monuments) and Ancient Mantinea and Gortys. In Korinthia, the Archaeological sites (Nemea, Pheneos, Stymphalia, Sicyon, Heraion, Ancient Corinth). In Argolida, Midea, Mycenae, Dendra, Ancient Asine, Heraion, the Sanctuary of Asclepius, the Ancient Theater of Orchomenos, the Theater of Epidaurus, the Pyramid of Hellinikon, Ancient Troezen and the Bridge of Kazarma. In Messinia / Kalamata, the Nestor Palace and Adjacent Tholos tombs in Pylos.

### **Museums**

In Arcadia, the Archeological Museum of Astros, Archaeological Museum of Tripoli, Folklore Museum of Tegea, Archaeological Museum of Lycosoura, Dimitsana Library, the War Museum of Tripoli, Stemnitsa Folklore Museum, Outdoor Museum "Ydrokinisis" and the Religion Museum of Dimitsana. In Korinthia, the Archaeological Museums (Corinth, Nemea, Isthmia, Sikyona), Environmental Museum of Stymphalia and the Historic and Folklore Museum of Corinth. In Argolida, the Archeological Museums (Mycenae, Epidaurus, Nafplio), Nafplio Gallery, Nafplio War Museum and Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation. In Messinia / Kalamata, Archaeological Museum of Kalamata. Lastly, in Lakonia, the Museum of Olive and Greek Olive Oil in Sparta, the Museum of Neolithic Civilization of Diros and the Historical Museum of Mani.

### **Cultural Events / Festivals**

In Arcadia, the Night of the Balloons, the Panhellenic Folk Song Contest in Lagkadia, Karytaina Women's Bazaar, Festival of Tsakonia (also known as "Melijazz" combining culinary traditions of Tsakonia with musical sounds of all over the world), the Chestnut

Festival in Kastanitsa, Liberation of Tripolitsa celebrations, Battle of Valtetsi celebrations and 1st Peloponnesian Senate in Stemnitsa. In Korinthia, Sikyonia festival, the "Cultural Routes" of Corinth, Evrostini "Cultural Summer", Great Days of Nemea and Nemean Games. In Argolida, Tulip Festival, Burn of the Joudas, Ancient town of Fishermen (Porto Heli), Wine and Harvest Festival, Fishermen's Festival, Festival of Choral Music, Carnibal in Porto Heli, Theofaneia "Giala - Giala", festival of Art and Culture in Porto Heli, Nafplion Festival along with Epidaurus Festival and the Armata. In Messinia / Kalamata, Peloponnesian Equestrian Games and Show Jumping. Lastly, in Lakonia, the Olive and Olive Oil Festival.

## B. REGION OF PELOPONNESE: SWOT ANALYSIS<sup>123</sup>

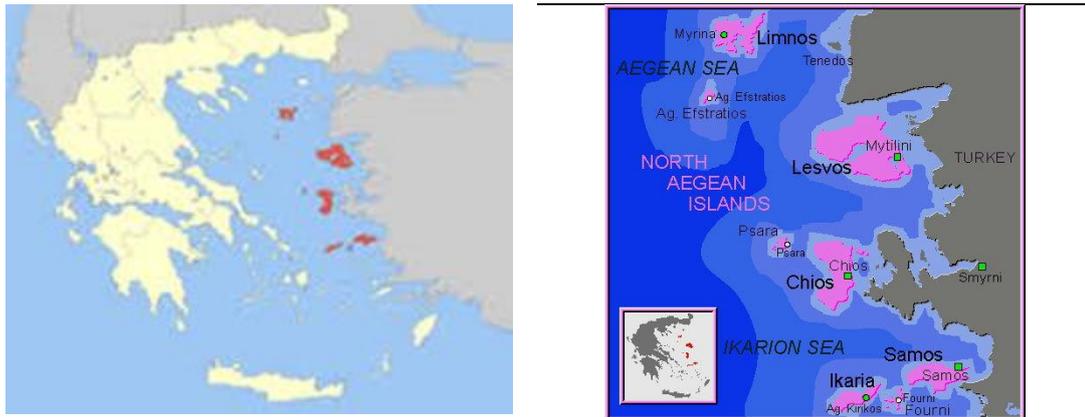
	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Development profile</b> <i>(demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic geographical position</li> <li>• The ports of Corinth and Kalamata</li> <li>• The International Airport of Kalamata</li> <li>• The Athens - Kalamata axis</li> <li>• Broad range of economical activities providing growth opportunities</li> <li>• European and Balkan business and cultural centre</li> <li>• High percentage in the country's GDP due to exports</li> <li>• Higher education institutions</li> <li>• Innovative entrepreneurship activities of R&amp;D organisations</li> <li>• Proximity to decision making centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively high unemployment rate</li> <li>• High number of SMEs lacking R&amp;D potential</li> <li>• Large discrepancy of economic development at the intraregional level</li> <li>• Specialisation of the secondary sector in traditional economic activities, and low level of technological modernisation of enterprises.</li> <li>• Urban concentration – Pronounced depopulation of rural areas.</li> <li>• Low level of education and HR expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> <li>• New knowledge sectors (ICTs etc)</li> <li>• Innovation public or private funding to create an innovation market growth</li> <li>• Cooperation between public sector and universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic crisis</li> <li>• Development obstacles (delays in infrastructure)</li> <li>• High cost of introducing new technologies and innovation</li> <li>• Not expertised personnel</li> <li>• Low level of facilities and services in remote areas</li> <li>• Increasing unemployment rate</li> <li>• Aging population</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product</b> <i>Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many historical resources related to the silk industry</li> <li>• The Region is an international cultural node</li> <li>• Religion tourism destinations</li> <li>• Opportunities for alternative tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further developing tourism</li> <li>• Low level of diversification the tourism product because of lack of knowledge-experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism funding opportunities from European, national and regional Programmes</li> <li>• Competitive pricing</li> <li>• Regional Operation Programme (2014-2020) promoting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential economic crisis in other countries, impact upon potential tourist</li> </ul>

<sup>123</sup> Business Action Plan of Western Greece, Peloponnese and Ionian Islands, submitted on March 2007

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level in tourism investments</li> <li>• Mass tourism and Seasonality in some regions</li> <li>• Uneven tourist concentrations</li> <li>• Lack of integrated planning</li> <li>• Lack in tourism education</li> <li>• Lack in tourism promotion</li> <li>• low tourism development rate in some areas</li> </ul>	<p>tourism development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution of the media in tourism development</li> <li>• New international trends in tourism</li> <li>• Promotion of ICTs in tourism</li> <li>• Social tourism</li> <li>• Investment interest from other countries</li> <li>• Potentials for thematic tourism</li> <li>• Historical connections between monasteries and silk production</li> <li>• Lack of funds and cooperation prevents the revival of industry complexes</li> </ul>	
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance and Protected Areas</li> <li>• Great Biodiversity</li> <li>• Bodies and agencies intensely active in protecting and promoting the environment.</li> <li>• Relatively high investments on Renewable Energy Resources (RES)</li> <li>• Great energy resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrong development policies (economic development vs environmental protection) during the last decades</li> <li>• The effects of human intervention on the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• R&amp;D initiatives</li> <li>• Potential to diversify tourism offer towards higher-value added and 365 days a year attractions</li> <li>• Potentials for alternative tourism in the Region and protection of natural resources</li> <li>• New cultivations (mulberry trees)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• No political long-term commitment</li> <li>• Continuous need for new technologies</li> <li>• Low awareness</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich multicultural resources</li> <li>• Various local products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local products with strong identity</li> <li>• Transportation facilities steam exports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas are strongly related to the Silk road and can become nodes in a Silk Road route</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of local identity</li> <li>• Lack of political initiatives towards integrated revival plans</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branded local products</li> <li>• Rich tradition in gastronomy</li> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments in Unesco list</li> <li>• Significant cultural (mythology, historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture)</li> <li>• Significant tangible &amp; intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk road</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low productivity rates in some areas of the Region</li> <li>• Low degree of cross sector interconnection</li> <li>• Weak manufacturing units</li> <li>• Low level promotion of the brand of Silk tourism</li> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> <li>• Limited use of the Cultural Stock for strengthening regional identity and enriching tourist product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural development</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> <li>• Existence of infrastructures connected with silk road tourism (ex. Kalamata silk factory) and potentials of revival</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced time travel to the region through modern highways</li> <li>• Total bed capacity exceeds 100000</li> <li>• Accessibility of the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ports of Corinth and Kalamata are not considered as key players in the region</li> <li>• None of the railway links is considered as major or in operation</li> <li>• The airport facilities need upgrade</li> <li>• Qualitative deficiencies in social infrastructure (education - health).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade and operation of railway network</li> <li>• Upgrade of airport facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient railway network</li> <li>• Degradation of road network especially within the urban centres</li> </ul>

## 2.11 Region of North Aegean



### A. Region of North Aegean profile analysis

#### 2.11.1 Location-Administrative profile of the Region

The archipelagic region of North Aegean is an island complex northeastern of mainland Greece, bordering with Turkey and composed of several islands, each one with unique and distinct natural features. The region comprises four Regional Units: Lesvos, Limnos, Samos and Chios, and includes 9 island Municipalities, covering a total extent of 3.836 km<sup>2</sup> and 2% of total extent of the country. It consists of 9 municipalities.

#### 2.11.2 Geographical and geophysical information

The geography of Lemnos is quite fascinating, similar to other Eastern Aegean islands. Lemnos is very low and its highest peak, Mount Skopia, rises at an altitude of only 470 metres. Lemnos has various areas of fertile lava soil from which the islanders produce fruits, vines, silk and wheat as well as a famous medicinal earth used in curing open wounds and snake bites. These productions are connected with the history and mythology of Lemnos<sup>124</sup>.

The geography of Chios has mountainous spots and hilly locations. Actually it is a semi-mountainous island. Its highest mountain is Pilineo and its highest peak is Prophet Elias, at an altitude of 1,297 metres. Numerous small valleys lay between the mountains and the coasts of the island. The main port of the island is at Chios Town.

The island of Lesvos (Mytilene)<sup>125</sup> has two major bays – Gera Bay and Kalloni Bay – as well as a plethora of coves and peninsulas. Its most significant valleys are those of Kalloni, Ippeio, Perama and Eresos. Its highest mountains are Lepetymnos, Olympus and Psilokoudouno. The eastern and central part of the island is characterized by lush flora and fauna, which includes olive groves, dense pine and fir forests, as well as large formations of plane, chestnut and oak trees.

<sup>124</sup> [http://www.greeka.com/eastern\\_aegean/](http://www.greeka.com/eastern_aegean/)

<sup>125</sup> <http://en.mytilene.gr/municipality-of-lesvos/municipal-units/municipal-unit-of-mantamados/geography/>

The geography of Samos<sup>126</sup> distinguishes for the lush forests and valleys. Small plains and valleys separate the mountains, covered mostly by olive groves, orange and citrus trees. Bushes, pine forests, plane trees, cypresses, chestnut trees and more vegetation cover the ground of Samos. Endless vineyards can be seen and in fact wine is strongly connected to the local history. From those are produced the famous and excellent wines of Samos. Numerous bird species live on Mount Kerkis, while in the sea surrounding Samos, there are seagulls and flamingos.

### 2.11.3 History of North Aegean Region

Lesvos and Lemnos were forming a part of the active network of Early Bronze sites controlling trade and communications in the Northeastern Aegean. Poliochni in Lemnos and Thermi in Lesvos were inhabited from 3000 BCE onwards, exhibiting impressive proto-urban organization. According to Greek mythology, Lesvos<sup>127</sup> was the patron god of the island. Macar was reputedly the first king whose many daughters bequeathed their names to some of the present larger towns. After the death of Alexander the Great (333 BC) Lesvos history is less rich in events. It seems that “during the Roman occupation the island was used as a place of exile for eminent figures who had fallen into disfavour”. During the Byzantine period, the Aegean region had only occasional contacts with Constantinople, that used it to exile undesirable persons. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Turks managed to occupy Lesvos and took it of the Gattilusi family, seizing the island in 1462. From that moment on, Lesvos was under the supremacy and oppression of the Turks. In 1824 it took part to the Greek Revolution, but this rising provoked a strong violent reaction by them. At this point, European countries also intervened on Greece’s behalf. The island gained its freedom only in 1912 and became officially part of Greece in 1923 with the Treaty of Lausanne.

For ancient Greeks, the island was sacred to Hephaestus, god of technology, who fell on Lemnos when his father Zeus hurled him headlong out of Olympus<sup>128</sup>. There, he was cared for by the Sinties, according to Iliad or by Thetis (Apollodorus, Bibliothekē I:3.5), and there with a Thracian nymph Kabiro (a daughter of Proteus) he fathered a tribe called the Kabiroides. Homer speaks as if there were one town in the island called Lemnos, but in historical times there was no such place. There were two towns, Myrina (also called Kastro), and Hephaestia which was the chief town. Like other eastern provinces, its possession changed between Greeks, Italians and Turks. In 1912, Lemnos became part of Greece during the First Balkan War.

Archaeological research on Chios has found evidence of habitation dating back at least to the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age.<sup>129</sup> The Peloponnesian War disrupted the balance of power in the Aegean, affecting the economy and the trade. The Byzantine administration recognized Chios’ important geographic location and reinforced the island’s defense with castles. Chios was taken over by the Genovese, after a series of raids, in 1346. Chios became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1566. In 1912, during the Balkan wars (1912 - 1914) Chios became a part of the Greek State.

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<sup>126</sup> [http://www.greeka.com/eastern\\_aegean/samos/samos-geography.htm](http://www.greeka.com/eastern_aegean/samos/samos-geography.htm)

<sup>127</sup> <http://european-heritage.org/greece/lesvos/history-lesvos>

<sup>128</sup> <http://www.mylemnos.gr/greece/history.html>

<sup>129</sup> <http://www.chios.gr/en/discover-chios/culture/history>

There are several findings which testify the presence of traces of human presence in different periods of time in Ikaria,<sup>130</sup> from the Neolithic period, to the early Bronze Age, the Mycenaean times etc. until later antiquity and modern times. For many people, Ikaria is assumed to be the birthplace of god Dionysos. Before its current name, Ikaria (or Icaria) had the names *Dolichi* or *Doligi*, which according to some historians means ‘worm’ while according to others, it was due to the shape of the island. Other names that have been given are *Makris*, due to its elongated shape, *Ichthyoessa*, because of the number of fishes (‘ichtyes’=fish in Greek) in the sea and *Anemoessa*, because of the severity of the wind. It was also called *Oinoe* (‘oinos’=wine in Greek), because of the large production wine.

Samos<sup>131</sup> was also known in ancient times as Doryssa, Dryoussa, Parthenia, Anthemis, Melamfyllos and Fyllas. Its first inhabitants were Pelasgians, Carians and Leleges. The growth of Samos is connected with tyrant Polycrates (532-522 BC) since it was at the time of his tyranny that the greatest works on the island were built. In 1363, the Genoese Giustiniani established a state in Chios, where by a treaty of the Byzantine Emperor John Palaeologus they also annexed Samos. When the London Protocol (February 3rd 1830) left Samos outside the boundaries of the newly established Greek State, an independent “Samian State” was formed. Finally, in 1912, with the outbreak of the Second Balkan War, Samos declared its union with Greece.

#### 2.11.4 Demographic Characteristics

According to Hellenic Statistics Authority, the Region of North Aegean consists of 199.231 inhabitants of which 99.247 are female and 99.984 are male, concentrating 1.8% of the country’s population (EL.STAT., 2016).

Table 2.11.1: Resident Population by gender and by Region

Description	Totals			Percent share	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Greece, Total	10.816.286	5.303.223	5.513.063	49,0	51,0
Region East Macedonia-Thrace	608.182	299.643	308.539	49,3	50,7
Region of Central Macedonia	1.882.108	912.693	969.415	48,5	51,5
Region of Western Macedonia	283.689	141.779	141.910	50,0	50,0
Region of Epirus	336.856	165.775	171.081	49,02	50,08
Region of Thessaly	732.762	362.194	370.568	49,4	50,6
Region of Central Greece	547.390	277.475	269.915	50,7	49,3
Region of Ioanian Islands	207.855	102.400	105.455	49,3	50,7
Region of Western Greece	679.796	339.310	340.486	49,9	50,1
Region of Peloponissos	577.903	291.777	286.126	50,5	49,5
Region of Attiki	3.828.434	1.845.663	1.982.771	48,2	51,8
<b>Region of Northern Aegean</b>	<b>199.231</b>	<b>99.984</b>	<b>99.247</b>	<b>50,2</b>	<b>49,8</b>
Region of Southern Aegean	309.015	155.865	153.150	50,4	49,6
Region of Crete	623.065	308.665	314.400	49,5	50,5

Source: EL.STAT 2011, Population and Housing Census, (www.statistics.gr)

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.visitikaria.gr/en/ikaria/history>

<sup>131</sup> <http://visit.samos.gr/index.php/discover-islands/samos-island/about-samos/>

### **2.11.5 Development profile of the Region**

#### **a. Economic characteristics**

The growing tourism sector, trade and agriculture constitute the major income sources. The region accounts for 1.4% of the national GDP. Within the services sector retail trade, real estate activities and transport services account for over 60% of the value added of the tertiary economy in the region.

The most dynamic manufacturing sectors are: food and beverages, fabricated metal products, furniture, wood and wooden products. Their share in regional value add has increased over the previous decade, partly as a result of regional policies to diversify local economy that was heavily dependent on tourism and agriculture.

The unique natural environment and variety of scenery make the islands of the N. Aegean stand out and lead visitors to trails for exploration and recreation. Wetlands with rare flora and fauna, salt marshes, waterfalls, dense forests of pine, walnut, oak, olive groves, mastic trees are just a few of the things to be enjoyed in the region.

Education system consists of 301 kindergartens and primary schools, 87 gymnasium and lyceum<sup>132</sup>, 4 adult learning centers and one University. Regarding Health Services infrastructure, the region has 5 general hospitals, 5 primary aid health centers and 52 regional health centers<sup>133</sup>.

#### **b. Transport infrastructure**

Every island is regularly connected by boat with the ports of Piraeus, Lavrio, Rafina and occasionally Thessaloniki, plus having interconnection between the islands facilitating island hopping during summer times and access to local authorities for locals throughout the year. Almost every island can be reached by air since airports and/or heliports are in operation throughout the year. Public transportation, taxi service, local car and/or moto rental services within each island are also available throughout the year.

### **2.11.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage**

The region offers the visitor with 387 different types of accommodation from simple B&B to luxurious hotels providing 11.657 rooms and 22.020 beds. More specific, North Aegean offer 6 units (5 star), 32 units (4 star), 126 units (3 star), 177 units (2 star), 46 units (1 star). North Aegean is the 10th visited Region in Greece and accounts for 2.2% of nights spent by residents and non-residents out of the total percentage of nights spent nationally in 2014. Residents and non-residents overnight stay in North Aegean increased in 2014 by 10.8% compared to 2013, totaling 1.653 mil. stays (EL.STAT., 2016).

In the region, other forms of activities are also offered such as Hiking - Mountain Climbing - Bouldering Trails and Climbing, Cycling, Agritourism, Thermal Baths and Springs, Yachting, Scuba Diving, Windsurfing, Fishing, Sailing, Horse Riding, Birdwatching and Canoe-Cayak.

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<sup>132</sup> <http://vaigaiou.pde.sch.gr/newsch/>

<sup>133</sup> <http://www.2dype.gr/esy/dimosia-nosokomeia>

## 2.11.7 Region of North Aegean tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road

### Cultural assets related to the Silk Road

Silk production was for many centuries an important source of income for Chios. (<http://www.chios.gr/en/kampos-of-chios>). Silk production on the island of Chios was probably established by the Genoese during the fifteenth century (Karl, 2014). The Justinians governed Chios, appointing a commissioner, commanding 52 military Genuates in the island. During these years (1346-1566), the trade revived and the prosperity came again in the Island. Later on, the Justinians introduced the cultivation of citrus trees and established the silk industry. They constructed a lot of public works and imposed the order. Their administration was cruel, resulting to the total elimination of cultural development, causing also a hatred on the part of the people.<sup>134</sup> In 1856, in the words of Fustel de Coulanges, silkworm rearing was the main activity of the inhabitants of Volissos, but by the end of the century it had almost disappeared, in all of Chios. According to Strabo, the old town of Volissos was in the middle of the western part of the island, about the position of Elinta.



Silk table cover from Mytilene/Chios - a patchwork of motifs joined by Venetian-style lace  
Source : <http://stitchmomshop.blogspot.gr/2010/08/greek-folklore-introduction-to-greek.html>

Volissos was flourishing during the Byzantine Empire. In the era of Basil I the Macedonian (866-867 AD), he secured the Aegean islands from pirate raids by Arabs, by fortresses and defensive towers in coastal cities. For the safety of residents threatened by pirates and production safety watchtowers, commonly angles were built into some coastal positions, the distance between them varied from one to three miles. At the ports, the watchtowers were stronger and bigger towers. Genoese sources evidence that, Volissos had 700 houses, several churches, a large silk production, oil, figs and wheat<sup>135</sup> Unlike the island of Chios, Lesvos island did not have a substantial silk industry.

### Archaeological sites

In Lesvos, the Ancient Theatre of Mytilene, the Roman Aqueduct at Moria, the Mytilene Fortress, Ancient Antissa, Ancient Makara, the Temple of the Mesa and the Sanctuary of Lesvos. In Lemnos, the Archaeological Hfaisteia, the Archaeological Site of Ancient Myrinas, Kaveirio – Cave of Philoctetes and Poliochni (the oldest city in Europe). In Aghios Efstratios, the ruins of the ancient city on the hill of Agios Minas. In Chios, the

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.chiosonline.gr/genoans.asp>

<sup>135</sup> <http://sotirakis.biz/en/destinations/west-chios-volissos>

Daskalopetra rock, the Emporios Archaeological Site, .Apollo's temple at Fana (Temple of Fanaios Apollo), the Rimokastro and Anavatos. Also, the fortified medieval settlements (Pyrgi, Mesta, Olympoi, Kalamoti, Armolia, Vessa, Anavatos) and the Castles (Chios, Apolichna (Armolia), Gria (Kardamyla), Oria (Kampia), tower of Dotia (Pyrgi), tower of "Ta markou" (Pispilounta). In Psara, Palaiokastro (the Black Ridge of Psara) and the Mycenaean tombs. In Samos, the Temple of Hera, the Efpalinio Orygma (The Tunnel of Efpalinos), the Polykrateia Teichi (The Walls of Polycrates), the Archaeological Site of Thermae, the Archaeological site of Pythagoreio Castle and the Castle archaeological site of Karlovasi. In Ikaria, the Archaeological site of Kambos, the Castles of Koskina, Kapsalino and Perdiki, the Archaeological city of Therma, the Lighthouse of Kavos Papas, the Megalithic Monuments, the Palaiokastro in Miliopo, the Rock of Icarus, Tavropolion, the Tower of Drakano and underwater antiquities.

### **Museums**

In Lesvos, the Archeological Museum of Mytilene, Theophilos Museum, the Museum of Modern Art/Eleftheriadis-Tériade Library, Ecclesiastical Byzantine Museum, Museum of Natural History (Petriified forest).

In Lemnos, the Archaeological Museum, Ecclesiastical Museum Metropolis Lemnos, Museum of Prehistoric Housing Poliochnis, Folklore Museum Portianou, Maritime Museum delivery sponge Lemnos, Wetland Information Centre Chortarolimni – Alikí and Gallery of Contemporary Byzantine Art. In Agios Efstratios, the Museum of Democracy.

In Chios, Chios Archaeological Museum, Chios Byzantine Museum, Chios Maritime Museum, Oinousses Maritime Museum, Argenti Folklore Museum, Chios Municipality Art Gallery, Nea Moni Museum, Kallimasia Folklore Museum, Kourounia Museum of Religious Art, Natural History and Pharmaceutical Museum, Chios Medical Museum, Citrus Memories and Chios Mastic Museum.

In Samos, Archaeological Museum of Samos, Archaeological Museum of Pythagoreio, Natural History Museum of the Aegean, Samos Wine Museum, Folklore Museums (Samos, Karlovasi, Pagonda, Koumeika), Ecclesiastical & Byzantine Museum of Samos, Karlovasi Tannery Museum, Museum of Traditional Silver-Gold Smithery Tools.

In Ikaria, the Archaeological Museum of Kambos, The Archaeological Museum of Agios Kirykos, Folklore Museums of Agios Kirykos, Agios Polykarpos, Perdiki and Vrakades, Local Archive of Ikaria, the Museum Mikis Theodorakis and the Museum of Woodcut Art. In Fourni, the Acropolis, Sarcophagus, Latomio (quarry), Pirgos (tower) and Kamari sites.

### **Festivals**

Throughout the year, the islands of Lesvos and Lemnos celebrate various religious and non-religious feasts. In Lemnos, the St. Panteleimon Feast, the Fair Lady Kakaviotissa, St. Constantine Festival and the Celebration of the Life Giving Fountain among others. In Chios, the New Year's Eve Model Ships festival, the rocketwar in Vrontados, the Mostra of Thimiana, the "Agas" event, the "Diplos" dance in Volissos and traditional folk festivals. In Psara, the Holocaust anniversary and the Assumption of Mary.

In Samos, the Eraion Music Festival, the Samian Wine Festivals, the "Heraia Pythagoria" Festival, the Festival of Young Artists and the Ai Giannis Klidonas Festival. In Ikaria, the

Ikaria Festival, The “Icarus” Festival For The Dialogue Between Cultures, the Ikaria Eleftheria and the Anniversary of Ikarian Revolution of 1912 among others. In Fourni, Saint Marina’s day , the Fish Festival, the Honey and Traditional Products Festival, the Virgin Mary festival and the festival of Saint John Thermastis (the one who heals from fever) or Beheaded.

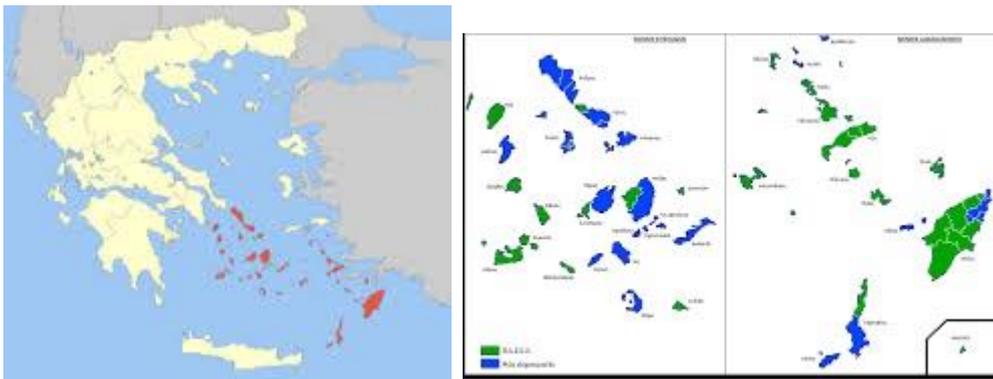
## B. REGION OF NORTH AEGEAN: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Development profile</b> <i>(demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every island is accessible by boat</li> <li>• Airports in several of the islands in the region (Chios, Mytilini, Samos, Icaria, Limnos)</li> <li>• Higher education institutions</li> <li>• Innovative entrepreneurship activities of R&amp;D organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively high unemployment rate</li> <li>• High number of SMEs lacking R&amp;D potential</li> <li>• Large discrepancy of economic development at the intraregional level</li> <li>• Specialisation of the secondary sector in traditional economic activities, and low level of technological modernisation of enterprises.</li> <li>• Urban concentration – Pronounced depopulation of rural areas.</li> <li>• Low level of education and HR expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> <li>• New knowledge sectors (ICTs etc)</li> <li>• Innovation public or private funding to create an innovation market growth</li> <li>• Cooperation between public sector and universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic crisis</li> <li>• Development obstacles (delays in infrastructure)</li> <li>• High cost of introducing new technologies and innovation</li> <li>• Not expertised personnel</li> <li>• Low level of facilities and services in remote areas</li> <li>• Increasing unemployment rate</li> <li>• Aging population</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many historical resources related to the silk industry</li> <li>• The Region is an international cultural node</li> <li>• Religion tourism destinations</li> <li>• Opportunities for alternative tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further developing tourism</li> <li>• Low level of diversification the tourism product because of lack of knowledge-experience</li> <li>• Low level in tourism investments</li> <li>• Mass tourism and Seasonality in some regions</li> <li>• Uneven tourist concentrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism funding opportunities from European, national and regional Programmes</li> <li>• Competitive pricing</li> <li>• Regional Operation Programme (2014-2020) promoting tourism development</li> <li>• Contribution of the media in tourism development</li> <li>• New international trends in tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential economic crisis in other countries, impact upon potential tourist</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of integrated planning</li> <li>• Lack in tourism education</li> <li>• Lack in tourism promotion</li> <li>• low tourism development rate in some areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of ICTs in tourism</li> <li>• Social tourism</li> <li>• Investment interest from other countries</li> <li>• Potentials for thematic tourism</li> <li>• Historical connections between monasteries and silk production</li> <li>• Lack of funds and cooperation prevents the revival of industry complexes</li> </ul>	
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance and Protected Areas</li> <li>• Great Biodiversity</li> <li>• Bodies and agencies intensely active in protecting and promoting the environment.</li> <li>• Relatively high investments on Renewable Energy Resources (RES)</li> <li>• Great energy resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrong development policies (economic development vs environmental protection) during the last decades</li> <li>• The effects of human intervention on the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• Potential to diversify tourism offer towards higher-value added and 365 days a year attractions</li> <li>• Potentials for alternative tourism in the Region and protection of natural resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• No political long-term commitment</li> <li>• Continuous need for new technologies</li> <li>• Low awareness</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich multicultural resources</li> <li>• Various local products</li> <li>• Branded local products</li> <li>• Rich tradition in gastronomy</li> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments in Unesco list</li> <li>• Significant cultural (mythology, historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local products with strong identity</li> <li>• Low productivity rates in some areas of the Region</li> <li>• Low degree of cross sector interconnection</li> <li>• Weak manufacturing units</li> <li>• Low level promotion of the brand of Silk tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas are strongly related to the Silk road and can become nodes in a Silk Road route</li> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural development</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of local identity</li> <li>• Lack of political initiatives towards integrated revival plans</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant tangible &amp; intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> <li>• Limited use of the Cultural Stock for strengthening regional identity and enriching tourist product</li> </ul>		
<p><i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total bed capacity exceeds 100000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ports are not considered as key players in the region with no upgrade</li> <li>• The airport facilities need upgrade</li> <li>• Qualitative deficiencies in social infrastructure (education - health).</li> <li>• Accessibility of the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade and operation ports</li> <li>• Upgrade of airport facilities</li> <li>• Improvements in transportation links with the rest of Greece/Europe in order to contain the “psychology of isolation” that may deprive businesses active in the region from reaching their true potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of road network especially within the urban centres</li> </ul>

## 2.12. Region of South Aegean



### A. Region of South Aegean profile analysis

#### 2.12.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

Located in the southern part of the Aegean Sea, the archipelagos region includes the Cyclades and the Dodecanese, two island complexes amounting together to some 400 islands. Among these, 48 are inhabited, 31 are uninhabited and there are many rocky islets. The South Aegean Region is divided in thirteen regional units and 35 island Municipalities. The major cities are the capital Ermoupolis in Syros, Mikonos, Naxos, Santorini, Rhodes, and Kos.

The Cyclades Regional Unit, with Ermoypoli in Syros as capital, is administratively divided in seven Regional Units, Andros, Santorini, Milos, Naxos, Tinos, Paros, Kea-Kythnos and 31 Local authorities out of which, 20 are Municipalities and 11 Communities. The main geographic characteristic of the Regional Unit is the existence of many islands (more than 200 islands out of which 24 are populated). The total extent of the-Regional Unit is 2.572km<sup>2</sup>. The Regional Unit of Dodecanese is the insular complex in the southeastern Aegean, which is defined north of Samos, northwest of the municipality of the Cyclades, west of the Cretan Sea, south of the Libyan Sea and east of the coasts of Asia Minor. The Dodecanese consist of 18 big islands, many smaller ones and numerous rocky islets. The bigger islands of the Dodecanese are: Rhodes, Kos, Karpathos, Kalymnos, Astypalea, Kasos, Tilos, Symi, Leros, Nisyros, Patmos, Kastellorizo, Halki, Leipsoi, Agathonisi and Arkoi. The Regional Unit of Dodecanese has an extent of 2.705 sq. km. The capital of the Regional Unit is Rhodes.

#### 2.12.2 Geographical and geophysical information

The Region of Southern Aegean, covers a total extent of 5.286 km<sup>2</sup> and 4% of total extent of the country. The region includes some of the richest Natura 2000 protected areas. Old and New Kameni, Sifnos, Paros and Astipalea islands have been characterised landscapes of Natural Beauty. The natural cypress forest of South Rhodes is a characterised natural monument. The vast majority of the Aegean Islands have optimal wind and solar potential in addition to the substantial geothermal resources of the Aegean volcanic arch.

The rural landscape is a result of interaction between the natural environment and the administrative rural systems. The long historical course of this interaction in the region of the Southern Aegean, has created an array of semi natural landscapes, which are

characterized by great ecological and aesthetic value. The characteristics of rural landscape can be separated in five categories: Escalations, that constitute precious maintenance means of natural resources (soil, water). Fencings that are usually used for the management of flocks of sheep and goats (made of stone) and the protection by the winds of weak cultivations, with bush fences (usually from stubbles). The rural constructions, that are of a wide category. The remaining constructions of the countryside. Rural landscapes of the South Aegean islands, also present interesting natural characteristics, such as geological background and natural uses of earth.

### **2.12.3 History of South Aegean Region**

The cluster of the Cyclades islands, due to its position had a strong presence in the communications through the Aegean Sea, throughout prehistoric and historic times. The name Cyclades is known since antiquity from the text of ancient writers such as Herodotos, Thucydides Strabon, Kallimachos etc. It was given to the islands because they shaped a circle round the holy island of Greek antiquity, Delos. Their role in the sea-born communications is testified by the exploitation of the obsidian sources in Melos, already by hunter-gatherers of the 12th millennium BCE, as well by sites such as Maroulas in Kythnos and Keramé in Ikaria, which date from the 9th millennium. Since the end of 4th millennium B.C. along with the early Minoan Culture of Crete and the early Helladic Culture of continental Greece, starting at Kea (Kefala settlement, 3300-3200 B.C.) a culture with particular characteristics was developed in the Cyclades.

With the Persian wars however (beginning the 5th century B.C.) the islands are found literally in the line of fire. Up to 480 B.C. the Cyclades remain under Persian occupation. With Macedonians the situation changed, especially after the death of Alexander the Great, Cyclades changed often sovereign rulers depending on the powerful of each period. After the dissolution of the second Athenian Alliance, Cyclades acquired their autonomy. In 313 B.C. the commonwealth of the islanders was created, which was a type of federation based initially in Delos and later in Tinos, (beginning of a new period of ascent for the Cyclades). Cosmopolitan Delos sees a great economic growth, as well as Tinos. In the next centuries Cyclades became object of claim between the Macedonians, the descendants of Alexander the Great and the Romans. Cyclades along with the other islands of the Aegean, became a province of the Eastern Roman State. Within the frame of the Byzantine Empire, Cyclades continued their history, giving marvellous monuments of Byzantine culture, brilliant Byzantine pictures and splendid churches.

After occupation of Constantinople from the Crusaders, in 1204, most islands of the Cyclades came under Venetian rule. In 1766 the Cyclades were occupied by the Turks. Several islands began to raise wealth through shipping and trade and begun to thrive. The Russian-Turkish treaty of Kioutsouk - Kainartzi (1774) gradually ensured many privileges for the islander's shipping and trade. They gradually became so wealthy, that they effectively assisted financially and with ships the fight for the liberation of the Nation, which burst out in 1821. In the last decades, the Cyclades have been designated internationally as a beloved travelling destination. Visitors come from all parts of the world in order to enjoy intact nature and the traditional colour of Cyclades.

The name *Dōdekanēsos* first appears in Byzantine sources in the 8th century. However it was not applied to the current island group, but to the twelve Cyclades islands clustered around Delos. The name may indeed be of far earlier date, and modern historians suggest that a list of 12 islands given by Strabo was the origin of the term. The term remained in use throughout the medieval period and was still used for the Cyclades in both colloquial usage and scholarly Greek-language literature until the 18th century. The transfer of the name to the present-day Dodecanese has its roots in the Ottoman period. In 1912, most of the Southern Sporades were captured by the Italians in the Italo-Turkish War; except for Kastellorizo, which came under Italian rule in 1921. Thus when the Greek press began agitating for the cession of the islands to Greece in 1913, the term used was "Dodecanese". The Italian occupation authorities helped to establish the term when they named the islands under their control "Rhodes and the Dodecanese" (*Rodi e Dodecaneso*), adding Leipsoi to the list of the islands to make up for considering Rhodes separately. The islands became part of Greece in 1947 as the "Governorate-General of the Dodecanese", since 1955 the "Dodecanese Prefecture".

#### 2.12.4 Demographic Characteristics

According to Hellenic Statistics Authority, the region of South Aegean consists of 309.015 inhabitants of which 153.150 are female and 155.865 are male (EL.STAT. 2011).

Table 2.12.1: Resident Population by gender and by Region

Description	Totals			Percent share	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Greece, Total	10.816.286	5.303.223	5.513.063	49,0	51,0
Region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace	608.182	299.643	308.539	49,3	50,7
Region of Central Macedonia	1.882.108	912.693	969.415	48,5	51,5
Region of Western Macedonia	283.689	141.779	141.910	50,0	50,0
Region of Epirus	336.856	165.775	171.081	49,02	50,08
Region of Thessaly	732.762	362.194	370.568	49,4	50,6
Region of Central Greece	547.390	277.475	269.915	50,7	49,3
Region of Ionian Islands	207.855	102.400	105.455	49,3	50,7
Region of Western Greece	679.796	339.310	340.486	49,9	50,1
Region of Peloponissos	577.903	291.777	286.126	50,5	49,5
Region of Attiki	3.828.434	1.845.663	1.982.771	48,2	51,8
Region of Northern Aegean	199.231	99.984	99.247	50,2	49,8
<b>Region of Southern Aegean</b>	<b>309.015</b>	<b>155.865</b>	<b>153.150</b>	<b>50,4</b>	<b>49,6</b>
Region of Crete	623.065	308.665	314.400	49,5	50,5

Source: EL.STAT 2011, Population and Housing Census, ([www.statistics.gr](http://www.statistics.gr))

## 2.12.5 Development profile of the Region

### a. Economic characteristics

The South Aegean Region contributes 2.8% of the country's GDP, and has the highest level of tourism development in the country. Unemployment is comparatively low, yet the seasonal nature of tourism results in a large amount of temporary employment, twice the national average. The primary sector is limited due to the mountainous nature of the islands, based on winery, livestock and fisheries.

The Dodekanese complex has 49 secondary schools, 21 high schools, 14 professional training schools, 2 special education schools, 1 adult learning center and one University. Additionally, it has 2 special kindergarten schools and 8 special primary schools plus 118 kindergartens and 102 primary schools<sup>136</sup>. In Cyclades, the education system consists of 115 kindergartens, 87 primary schools, 5 special education primary schools, 57 gymnasium, 27 lyceum, 16 special education lyceum, 3 adult learning centers<sup>137</sup> and one University. Regarding South Aegean Health Services infrastructure, the Cyclades complex has 2 general hospitals and 9 primary aid health centers. On the other hand, the Dodekanese complex has 4 general hospitals<sup>138</sup> and 5 primary aid health centers<sup>139</sup>.

### b. Transport infrastructure

Islands are connected by boat with the ports of Piraeus, Rafina and Lavrion throughout the year, plus interconnections exist between the islands. Several islands can be reached by air. Public transportation, taxi service, local car and/or moto rental services are also available throughout the year.

## 2.12.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage

The South Aegean complex offers the visitor with 2.068 different types of accommodation from simple B&B to luxurious hotels<sup>140</sup> providing 98.907 rooms with 193.620 beds. More specific, Ionian Islands offer 135 units (5 star), 350 units (4 star), 484 units (3 star), 882 units (2 star), 217 units (1 star). South Aegean is the 2nd most visited Region in Greece and accounts for 23.8% of nights spent by residents and non-residents out of the total percentage of nights spent nationally in 2014. Residents and non-residents overnight stay in Crete increased in 2014 by 3.1% compared to 2013, totaling 17.654 mil. stays (EL.STAT 2016).

Sea Activities: Most islands of the South Aegean region offer organised facilities for a variety of marine sports and diving opportunities.

Wine Tourism: In Santorini, there are many visitable wineries, where the visitors can do wine tasting and tasting. On the other hand, the vineyard of Paros is classic Aegean. Lastly, there are visitable vineyards to sample local wines in Syros, Naxos, Milos, and Mykonos. In Rhodes, the vineyards cover thousands of acres and the varieties cultivated are 'athiri' and muscat producing white wine, and 'mandilaria' (or Amorgiano) producing

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<sup>136</sup> <http://dipe.dod.sch.gr/autosch/joomla15/index.php/78-kyria-arthra/93-domh>  
<http://dipe.kyk.sch.gr> and <http://dipe.kyk.sch.gr>

<sup>138</sup> <http://www.2dype.gr/esy/dimosia-nosokomeia>

<sup>139</sup> <http://www.moh.gov.gr/articles/citizen/xrhsima-thlefwna-amp-dieythynseis/3081-monades-ygeias-p-e-d-y>

<sup>140</sup> [http://www.e-kyklades.gr/travel/tourism/cyclades\\_accommodation?lang=el](http://www.e-kyklades.gr/travel/tourism/cyclades_accommodation?lang=el)

red wine. Lastly, in Kos, another variety grown is the red Mantilaria. The regenerated vineyard of Kos produces the wines Kos PGI.

Religious Tourism: Great pilgrimages are in the South Aegean Region with unique architecture and historic monuments, with hagiography, paintings and priceless relics and libraries that keep important manuscripts and books. Temples in operation, early Christian and Byzantine churches.

### 2.12.7 Region of South Aegean tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road

#### Cultural assets connected with the Silk Road

Aristotle mentions silk weaving conducted by the women of the island (Porter 1831). Pamphile, a woman of Cos, according to Aristotle, was the first to unwind a cocoon of the silkworm and to weave it into silk. This discovery led to the monopoly of the silk trade by the Island of Cos for nearly 500 years (Major 1941).



Ancient Silk Loom from Greek pottery c 500 BCE Source : Metropolitan Museum, NY

Silk production of garments was conducted in large factories by women slaves. The island was originally colonised by the Carians. The Dorians invaded it in the 11th century BC, establishing a Dorian colony with a large contingent of settlers from Epidaurus, whose Asclepius cult made their new home famous for its sanatoria. The other chief sources of the island's wealth lay in its wines and, in later days, in its silk manufacture. Proximity to the east gave the island first access to imported silk thread. Kos produced excellent wine, abundant timber and made considerable revenue from fishing and its silk manufacturing (Kaloudis 2007:10)<sup>141</sup> The island economy always prospered because of its fertile land, flourishing silk industry, and trade. In the first century B.C., the priestess commissioned the sculptor Philiskos from Thasos to create a sculpture of Demeter (197 cm) and she set this up within the limits of Kos town (Catalogue 20). This statue represents a Hellenistic female dressed in a rich chiton with her right hand grasping her mantle. Her arms are covered beneath the drapery while the left hand grasps the folds of her mantle. She wears a veil that hangs down behind her head and her hair is parted down the center and tied back in a knot in the back of the head, an apparently common style for the Eleusinian goddesses during this century. The artist covers the figure with a thin veil and fines silks, probably the very expensive Coae vestes. (Kaloudis 2007:33)

Amorgos is a small, narrow island, lying in the middle of the Aegean Sea. Silk was not produced on this island, but on the neighbouring island of Cos, closely situated near the

<sup>141</sup> <https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10355/5037/research.pdf?sequence=3>

Ionian coast of Asia Minor. Silk was only dyed red in Amorgos and then exported to Greece (Sudzuki 1975). Richter (1929: 27-33) has argued that famous *Amorgian* fabric, much of it dedicated to Artemis Brauronia (Cleland 2005: 96-112 ), was in fact silk from the island of Cos already being used for luxury garments in the fifth century BCE. The word *Amorgis* may well have been the early Greek word for silk. The island of Amorgos is in the same island grouping as Cos, and Richter suggests that it was probably a stopping point for a major trade route between the Levant and the Greek mainland. There were apparently two chief routes connecting the far East with the Mediterranean, one, the Northern, via Samarkand and the Caspian Sea, another further south via the Persian Gulf to Babylon and Tyre. Amorgos would be a convenient station on this second route. It is, moreover, a next-door neighbor of Kos which Aristotle says was the home of the Greek silk manufacture. What more natural than to call these silk garments Amorgian, just as the later Romans called them Coan (Coae vestes), since it is a well-known practice to call a material after the nearest place from which it is supplied (Richter 1929).

The rearing of silk worms and the collection of kermes were encouraged in western Asia Minor, on mainland Greece from the Peloponnese to Macedonia and in the islands of Negroponte and Andros. Andros was renowned in this period for its silk textiles. Merchants could have bought the silk fabric in Andros, as the island was situated on the navigation route linking Italian ports via Southern Greece, the Cyclades and Chios to the Byzantine capital. In Andros the private workshop constituted the basic production unit, as imperial silk factories had ceased to exist in the provinces long before that time (Jacoby 1992). While foodstuffs and some other commodities were partly retained or distributed within the Aegean region itself, such as raw silk for the manufacture of textiles the rest of them conveyed to major transit and transshipment stations in order to be dispatched to western centers (Harris et al. 2012).

During the years of the first Byzantine Emperor Constantinos, Andros<sup>142</sup> was part of the Empire. The basis for the prosperity in the area was the silkworm trade which occupied most of the inhabitants who used the top floors of their houses to cultivate the silkworms and to produce fine silk materials which were in demand in the capitals of Greece and in Europe and European businessmen came to the island to make their transactions.<sup>143</sup>

In the 11th and 12th century the island experienced an economic boom, becoming the centre of silk-weaving industry and exporting exquisite velvet fabrics known as *examita* or *zentata*, which were highly valued in the West and were sent as gifts to the German imperial court. At the same time, during the entire Middle Ages, the island suffered raids from pirates and Saracens. Following the fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Franks in 1204, Andros was dominated by the Venetians and ruled by Governor Marino Dandolo, followed by Governor Sanoudo and later by various descendants of aristocratic families. At that time, many towers and forts were erected on the island, and some partially survive until today.

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<http://www.gtp.gr/LocInfo.asp?IncludeWide=&Infold=28&Code=EGRSKY&PrimeCode=EGRSKY&Level=4&PrimeLevel=4&LocId=11700&Entity=577>

<sup>143</sup> Association of Andros Municipalities <http://www.andros-island.com/history.htm>

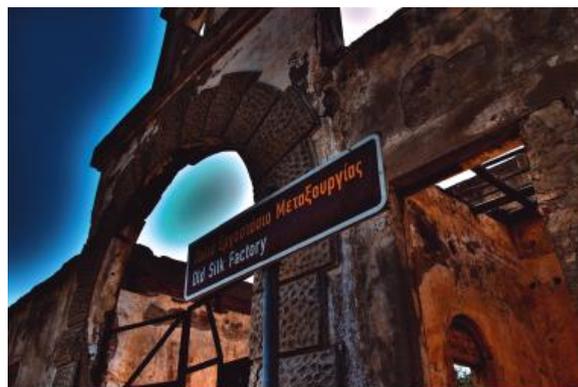
In the 12th century, the period of Komninos reign, is the best documented for the island. Valuable sources of information are the foreign travellers who stopped there, on their trip to Holy Lands. Anglo-Saxon Seawulf, who passed from Andros in 1204, informs that silk industry was the main occupation of the inhabitants. Most prized were mainly the andriotic sixtimes-woven silk textiles, heavy and luxurious.

Some noteworthy churches and monasteries dating from Byzantine Times survive today, as the church of Taxiarch Michael at Mesaria, the church of the Taxiarch of Melida at Pitrofos and the Monastery of Zoodochos Pigi. These monuments date from the time of the Komninoi emperors (11th century AD), a period of prosperity for Andros brought by the development of silk industry. The monuments have also gone through later reconstructions and additions<sup>144</sup>.

In addition, other activities such as the feeding of silkworms and the production of silk, previously indicated in Akrotiri, Santorini by the occurrence of a lepidopterous cocoon but otherwise questioned in the absence of evidence for the existence locally of suitable tree species (cypress, juniper, deciduous oak;) could be now re-addressed in the light of the charcoal data (Asouti, 2003, Panagiotakopulu et al, 1997).

Tinos<sup>145</sup> and the other islands of the Cyclades fell into the hands of the Venetians Ghizzi dynasty which ruled the island until 1390 when Tinos and Mykonos fell under the direct jurisdiction of Venice and were sent a governor. Tinos remained a part of the Venetian empire until 1715 long after the rest of Greece had fallen to the Turks and maintained a society that was far more advanced than what was found in the other islands in terms of art, culture, food production, agriculture, pottery and even the production of silk.

In the embroideries from the islands of Astypalea and Karpathos, the work is distinguished by little in the way of design. In these islands the workers have simply used the rich-hued silks in mass effects, producing broad borders with disk-like motives in the field worked in a solid surface stitch with loosely twisted silk. In Rhodian work, which is familiar to many who have traveled in the East and of which, the entire surface is covered with a flat darning stitch in crimson silk worked in a leaf-diaper and star pattern, to which is often added an occasional spot of bright turquoise blue (Morris 1923).



Silk Factory in Rhodes  
Source : Silk Dance (CES, 2009)

<sup>144</sup> <http://www2.egeonet.gr/Forms/fLemmaBody.aspx?lemmaid=10403>

<sup>145</sup> <http://www.greektravel.com/greekislands/tinos/history.htm>

A figure dressed as a woman of Karpathos 150 years ago; raw silk embroidered with a wide border in green, dark blue, and red silks, also all round the neck and down to the knees. The sleeves are square, and the pattern mostly a chequer. The dress is 8 or 9 feet long, and a great tuck forms it into a double skirt. Embroidered trousers. Round the waist a silk scarf, embroidered, and on the head, over a black kerchief, a long silk scarf called bolia (midojia): three or four silver and gilt chains, etc., round the neck, and chains with drops across the brow, also pear-shaped silver-gilt ornaments with glass garnets hooked on the top of the head, with several chains coming down the cheeks, and rings about 4 inches across banging from them (Bent 1886).

A figure dressed as a woman of Niseros, in a short narrow dress of white cotton, embroidered round the tail and round the square neck, and with wide sleeves, emboldered in stripes of various coloured silks, and with silver embroidery on the shoulders; over this a very wide dress of turkey-red, half a yard shorter, and sleeveless. A black kerchief across the forehead, and a yellow one over that, hiding the mouth (Bent 1886). Bed valances from Ios, Naxos, and Keos / Kea. These consist of a silk embroidered border 6 feet long and a narrower border 10 inches up the sides sewn to a piece of linen, tucked in to the edge of the bed; having originated in the sheet having been adorned to hang over; still called *Sindhoni*, or sheets (Bent 1886). It is documented at length the produce of the island saying that the silk, cotton, excellent wine, cheap salt, Sulphur, alum, vitriol, iron and millstones were all exported (Peter, 1949).

Rhodes island is situated on the main trade routes of three important commercial centers of the Ottoman Empire; Istanbul, Izmir and Egypt, thus it was commercially more prominent compared to islands nearby. The most lucrative export articles of the island were oranges, lemons and silk. However, in the 1870's both fruits and silkworm were severely attacked by diseases. As a result, the production of these items entirely disappeared (Kutbay 2014).

## Museums

In Delos, in which the whole island is considered an archaeological site, there is an archaeological museum. Of special importance is the Prehistoric Museum of Thera. In the old town, Chora, in Amorgos one can find the Archaeological Collection which is hosted in Gavras Tower. In Chora of Andros, one can find the archaeological museum. One of the most important museum in the Aegean in the island of Kea, the archaeological museum. The replica of the famous Aphrodite of Milos can be seen at the archaeological museum in Plaka, Melos. In Naxos, the archaeological museum in Chora and the museum in Apeiranthos. In Paroikia of Paros, the archaeological museum<sup>146</sup>. In Mykonos, the archaeological museum. In Sifnos, the archaeological museum. In Panagia of Tinos sculptures and other artifacts are been displayed in the archaeological museum. Lastly, in Syros, the archaeological museum is situated in the city hall of Ermoupolis. In Apollonia Sifnos one can find the Folklore Museum. In Tilos, one can find the Small Elephants Collection with fossils of bones of dwarf elephants which had been living in the island for the last 50,000 years and became extinct 3,700 years ago. In Kalymnos, the Naval Museum where one can learn the naval tradition of the island, its history and methods of sponge collection and many objects from ancient ship wrecks. In Kos, the Archaeological Museum and in Rhodes the archaeological museum of Rhodes is housed

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<sup>146</sup> [http://www.greekhotels.gr/greek\\_island\\_hotels/dodecanese\\_islands\\_hotels/museums.asp](http://www.greekhotels.gr/greek_island_hotels/dodecanese_islands_hotels/museums.asp)

in the Hospital of the Kings, one of the most important buildings built during the rule of the Knights. In Leros, the War Museum has been constructed inside the military tunnel of Merikia, which has been renovated with care and respect. In Patmos, the Treasure Museum of the Monastery of Saint John the Theologian.

## **Festivals**

The traditional Santorini wedding organised in the summertime. The festival of the Agia Epta Paidia, a feast at the Metamorfosis of Sotiros in Akrotiri. In Naxos, Agios Georgios in Kinidaro, the Agia Triada in Galanado, the Agioi Apostoloi in Melanes. The traditional feasts that take place all year long in Syros are many. Festivals of Agios Petros Kini, Profitis Ilias Piskopeio, Agios Panteleimonas, Agios Yannis and the feast of reception of tourists during July and August every year. In Amorgos, a big festival in the church of Agia Paraskevi and Agioi Anargyroi in Tholaria. In Tinos, the centre of festive life are the feasts of Panagia: the finding of the icon of Panagia. In Andros, the celebration of Panagia Theoskepasti in Hora. In Milos, the festivals of Agia Triada, Agioi Anargyroi and Agia Markella. In Karpathos, the Karpathian Wedding, Yilles, Efta (in Greek seven), Piperi, the Wine Festival in Lastos. In Leros, the Festival of Alonari, the festival of the Virgin Mary, Celebration of Agios Fanourios with representation of grape pressing, Gournas (representation of the traditional threshing), Wine festival, Lerian Cuisine Festival, Fishermen's festival and Alintia – Naval Sports Games. In Patmos, St. Panteleimon of Hiliomodi island, the fair of Panaghia of Geranos, St. Thekla Osiapostolos and the famous feast of Panaghia is realised in Arki. In Astipalea, Panagia Flevariotissa, the Assumption of Mary (Panagia Portaitissa), "koukania" (a swimming competition). In Symi, the Panormitis and Michael Roukouniotis and the Taxiarchs Day among others. In Nisyros, the fair of Panagia Spiliani (Virgin Mary of Caves) in Mandraki and the feast at the Holy Monastery of Panagia Kyra in celebration of the nine days of the Dormition of the Theotokos. In Lipsi<sup>147</sup>, the Wine Festival in August and the feast of "Kleidonas".

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<sup>147</sup> <http://www.lipsi-island.com/culture.html>

## B. REGION OF SOUTH AEGEAN: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Development profile</b> <i>(demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every island is accessible by boat</li> <li>• Airports in several of the islands in the region</li> <li>• Higher education institutions</li> <li>• Innovative entrepreneurship activities of R&amp;D organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively high unemployment rate</li> <li>• High number of SMEs lacking R&amp;D potential</li> <li>• Large discrepancy of economic development at the intraregional level</li> <li>• Specialisation of the secondary sector in traditional economic activities, and low level of technological modernisation of enterprises.</li> <li>• Urban concentration – Pronounced depopulation of rural areas.</li> <li>• Low level of education and HR expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> <li>• New knowledge sectors (ICTs etc)</li> <li>• Innovation public or private funding to create an innovation market growth</li> <li>• Cooperation between public sector and universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic crisis</li> <li>• Development obstacles (delays in infrastructure)</li> <li>• High cost of introducing new technologies and innovation</li> <li>• Not expertised personnel</li> <li>• Low level of facilities and services in remote areas</li> <li>• Increasing unemployment rate</li> <li>• Aging population</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product</b> <i>Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many historical resources related to the silk industry</li> <li>• The Region is an international cultural node</li> <li>• Religion tourism destinations</li> <li>• Opportunities for alternative tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further developing tourism</li> <li>• Low level of diversification the tourism product because of lack of knowledge-experience</li> <li>• Low level in tourism investments</li> <li>• Mass tourism and Seasonality in some regions</li> <li>• Uneven tourist concentrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism funding opportunities from European, national and regional Programmes</li> <li>• Competitive pricing</li> <li>• Regional Operation Programme (2014-2020) promoting tourism development</li> <li>• Contribution of the media in tourism development</li> <li>• New international trends in tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential economic crisis in other countries, impact upon potential tourist</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of integrated planning</li> <li>• Lack in tourism education</li> <li>• Lack in tourism promotion</li> <li>• low tourism development rate in some areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of ICTs in tourism</li> <li>• Social tourism</li> <li>• Investment interest from other countries</li> <li>• Potentials for thematic tourism</li> <li>• Historical connections between monasteries and silk production</li> <li>• Lack of funds and cooperation prevents the revival of industry complexes</li> </ul>	
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance and Protected Areas</li> <li>• Great Biodiversity</li> <li>• Bodies and agencies intensely active in protecting and promoting the environment.</li> <li>• Relatively high investments on Renewable Energy Resources (RES)</li> <li>• Great energy resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrong development policies (economic development vs environmental protection) during the last decades</li> <li>• The effects of human intervention on the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• Potential to diversify tourism offer towards higher-value added and 365 days a year attractions</li> <li>• Potentials for alternative tourism in the Region and protection of natural resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• No political long-term commitment</li> <li>• Continuous need for new technologies</li> <li>• Low awareness</li> </ul>
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich multicultural resources</li> <li>• Various local products</li> <li>• Branded local products</li> <li>• Rich tradition in gastronomy</li> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments in Unesco list</li> <li>• Significant cultural (mythology, historical sites,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local products with strong identity</li> <li>• Low productivity rates in some areas of the Region</li> <li>• Low degree of cross sector interconnection</li> <li>• Weak manufacturing units</li> <li>• Low level promotion of the brand of Silk tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas are strongly related to the Silk road and can become nodes in a Silk Road route</li> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural development</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of local identity</li> <li>• Lack of political initiatives towards integrated revival plans</li> </ul>

	<p>architectural heritage and modern culture)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant tangible &amp; intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> <li>• Limited use of the Cultural Stock for strengthening regional identity and enriching tourist product</li> </ul>		
<p><i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total bed capacity exceeds 100000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ports are not considered as key players in the region with no upgrade</li> <li>• The airport facilities need upgrade</li> <li>• Qualitative deficiencies in social infrastructure (education - health).</li> <li>• Accessibility of the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade and operation ports</li> <li>• Upgrade of airport facilities</li> <li>• Improvements in transportation links with the rest of Greece/Europe in order to contain the “psychology of isolation” that may deprive businesses active in the region from reaching their true potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of road network especially within the urban centres</li> </ul>

## 2.13 Region of Crete



### A. Region of Crete profile analysis

#### 2.13.1 Location-Administrative Profile of the Region

Crete, the 5th biggest Mediterranean Island, lies in the southern frontier of Europe. Popular for its culture, innovative spirit and nutritional habits, the island is one of the most popular Greek tourist destinations. It is located at southern edge of the Aegean Sea, at a distance of about 160 sq.Km. from the mainland. It is bordered by the Cretan Sea to the north and the Lybian Sea to the South. It is surrounded by a number of small islands (Gavdos, Gavdopoula, Chrysi, Koufonisi, Dia, Dyonisades etc.). It consists of 24 municipalities and is divided into four regional units: Heraklio, Lasithi, Rethimno, and Chania, all comprising 24 Municipalities.

#### 2.13.2 Geographical and geophysical information

Crete covers a total extent of 8.336 km<sup>2</sup> and 6% of total extent of the country. Crete has a remarkable coastline of more than 1,000 km, but it is also extremely mountainous. The region includes important natural reserves such as the island of Elafonisi, the palm forest of Vai in eastern Crete and Dionysades that have diverse animal and plant life. Samaria Gorge is a World Biosphere Reserve and Richtis Gorge is protected for its landscape diversity.

The length of the island from one edge (west) to the other (east) is 256 Km. Its morphology includes three zones, the mountainous zone, with an altitude of 400m and above, the semi mountainous zone with 200-400m and the level area with up to 200 m from sea level. The first two zones cover about 3/5 of the island. The percentage of mountainous area is 49%.

#### 2.13.3 History of Crete Region

A walk in the island of Crete is a scent of spring flowers growing in the yards of the houses (<http://www.crete.gov.gr/>). Generations of Minoan, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Venetian, Turkish, Jewish and Egyptian people lived here. Here, in these cultural crossroads a large number of elements of other cultures still form a part of the everyday life of the Cretan people. From mythology - antiquity, Cretan-born Zeus was born and raised in the mountains of Crete. Minos is referred to in mythology as the son of Zeus and Europe. There is evidence that the island was inhabited ever since the Neolithic times. During the Bronze Age the Minoan civilization developed, especially from 1900 BC until its sudden collapse around 1600 BCE. Knossos was the centre of it, until

destruction and decline of it in around 1300 BCE. From 1100 onwards a so-called Subminoan period starts, which marks the pass to the Iron Age and historical periods. People from mainland Greece arrived on the island, followed by the Romans in 67 BC and then the Byzantines, with an interval between 824-961AD, when the island fell into the hands of Arab (Saracen) pirates. In 1204 Crete was conquered by the Venetians, who were ousted by the Turks in 1669. At the end of the 19th century the Ottoman troops left the island, which was autonomous until its Union with Greece in 1913. The great politician Eleftherios Venizelos played an important role in the Union of Crete. Crete strongly resisted the German invaders as well. The Battle of Crete constitutes a brilliant page in world history, as simple citizens, elderly people and children resisted the heavily armed invaders. The Cretans paid their bravery with executions, tortures and destructions of entire villages by the Nazi regime.

#### 2.13.4 Demographic Characteristics

According to Hellenic Statistics Authority, the Region of Crete consists of 623.065 inhabitants of which 314.400 are female and 308.665 are male (EL.STAT 2011).

Table 2.13.1: Resident Population by gender and by Region

Description	Totals			Percent share	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Greece, Total	10.816.286	5.303.223	5.513.063	49,0	51,0
Region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace	608.182	299.643	308.539	49,3	50,7
Region of Central Macedonia	1.882.108	912.693	969.415	48,5	51,5
Region of Western Macedonia	283.689	141.779	141.910	50,0	50,0
Region of Epirus	336.856	165.775	171.081	49,02	50,08
Region of Thessaly	732.762	362.194	370.568	49,4	50,6
Region of Central Greece	547.390	277.475	269.915	50,7	49,3
Region of Ionian Islands	207.855	102.400	105.455	49,3	50,7
Region of Western Greece	679.796	339.310	340.486	49,9	50,1
Region of Peloponissos	577.903	291.777	286.126	50,5	49,5
Region of Attiki	3.828.434	1.845.663	1.982.771	48,2	51,8
Region of Northern Aegean	199.231	99.984	99.247	50,2	49,8
Region of Southern Aegean	309.015	155.865	153.150	50,4	49,6
<b>Region of Crete</b>	<b>623.065</b>	<b>308.665</b>	<b>314.400</b>	<b>49,5</b>	<b>50,5</b>

Source: EL.STAT 2011, Population and Housing Census, (www.statistics.gr)

#### 2.13.5 Development profile of the Region

##### a. Economic characteristics

Crete, participates in the country's GDP by approx. 5%. Main economic activities include agriculture and tourism. The economy of Crete is predominantly based on services and tourism, the most dynamically developing sector and providing opportunities for important investments. The economy began to change during the 1970s as tourism gained in importance.

However, agriculture also plays an important role and Crete is one of the few Greek islands that is self-reliant without a tourism industry. Although emphasis remains on agriculture and stock breeding, because of the climate and terrain of the island, there

has been a drop in manufacturing, and an expansion in its service industries (mainly tourism-related). All three sectors of the Cretan economy (agriculture/farming, processing-packaging, services), are directly connected and interdependent. The island has a per capita income much higher than the Greek average, whereas unemployment is at approximately 4%, one-sixth of that of the country overall.

The region also has an expanding export activity with more than 160 enterprises in sectors such as food and beverage, olive oil, wine, and bakery. Crete's workforce increased by 2.82% between the years 2000 and 2008, from 267,320 to 274,872.

Education system consists of 682 kindergartens and primary schools, 215 gymnasium and lyceum, 16 special education lyceum<sup>148</sup>, 3 adult learning centers and two Universities. Regarding Health Services infrastructure, Crete has 8 general hospitals, 17 primary aid health centers and 47 regional health centers<sup>149</sup>.

#### **b. Transport infrastructure**

Crete is connected by boat from the port of Piraeus throughout the year plus having interconnection between the islands facilitating island hopping during summer times and access to local and tax authorities for locals throughout the year. The island is well served by ferries, mostly from Athens, by ferry companies such as Minoan Lines and ANEK Lines. Crete can be reached by air since airports are in operation throughout the year. The island has three significant airports, Nikos Kazantzakis at Heraklion, the Daskalogiannis airport at Chania and a smaller one in Sitia. Public transportation, taxi service, local car and/or moto rental services within each island are also available throughout the year. The European route E75 is situated near Heraklion. Although the road network leads almost everywhere, there is a lack of modern highways, although this is gradually changing with the completion of the northern coastal spine highway. There are no railway lines on Crete.

#### **2.13.6 Tourism development emphasizing on cultural heritage**

Crete offers the visitor with 1.565 different types of accommodation from simple B&B to luxurious hotels providing 89.511 rooms and 170.756 beds. More specific, Crete offers 96 units (5 star), 246 units (4 star), 360 units (3 star), 657 units (2star) and 206 units (1 star). Crete is the most visited Region in Greece and accounts for 27.4% of nights spent by residents and non-residents out of the total percentage of nights spent nationally in 2014. Residents and non-residents overnight stay in Crete increased in 2014 by 2.5% compared to 2013, totaling 20.626 mil. stays (EL.STAT. 2016)

Diving tourism in Greece did not take its first tentative steps until the early 90s.<sup>150</sup> The majority of diving centres and diving training centres are located in Crete, Corfu or Athens and Piraeus. Diving in Crete is permitted in specific areas of each regional unit. On the other hand, visitors of Crete can practice some of their favorite sports or be introduced to new ones. Every year, navy clubs organize open-sea sailing races such as J24, Regatta and Laser. Moreover, modern basketball, soccer and golf courts host international matches. Associations of martial arts host world class events. Athletics, marathon, trail running and cycling are also very common. Moreover, the

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<sup>148</sup> <http://kritis.pde.sch.gr/>

<sup>149</sup> <https://www.hc-crete.gr/nosokomia>

<sup>150</sup> <https://www.incrediblecrete.gr/wine-tasting/>

mediterranean climate of Crete, the modern health structures and the innovative services that are offered, make the island a competitive destination, combining vacations and treatment harmonically. This latter, contributes to the fact that Greek thalassotherapy and spa facilities offered by luxury hotels are among the best in the world. This makes the island an ideal destination for spa hotels, wellness spa hotels, healing and medical tourism generally. Some other types are herbal treatment, aromatherapy, Cretan nutrition, meditation, yoga and reiki. Of the new types ecotourism is a form of tourism associated with various forms of tourism activity in nature. These are activities that do not necessarily contribute to the protection of the natural environment, but include all those activities organized in the natural environment. The rich natural environment of Crete is suitable for a variety of activities. Additionally, agritourism lodges and several specialized companies provide seminars for traditional cooking, making pastry, kneading bread and collecting of wild greens, herbs, mushrooms, snails and truffle. Moreover, one can participate in the harvest of olives, the process of the olive oil production, distillation of raki, vintage, honey production, vegetable cultivation, collection of milk and dairy products processing, raising of domestic animals, sheep – shearing, etc. Finally, romantic Tourism through the idyllic scenery of Crete, renders it ideal for romance, specifically weddings and honeymoon<sup>151</sup>.

### **2.13.7 Region of Crete tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk Road**

#### **Cultural assets connected related the Silk Road**

Candia became the major transit and transshipment station, between Venice, on the one hand, and Cyprus, Egypt, Syria and the Turkish emirates of southern and western Asia Minor on the other (Harris et al, 2012). Until the end of the 19th century the production of silk was quite widespread in Greece. Stelios Vasilakis in an article at the Chania newspaper *Patris*, writes that Greece in 1855 produced 90.000 kg of silk.<sup>152</sup> In his travel book from Crete (1834) Robert Pashley writes in his description of Crete's economy, that the yearly export of silk was 11.000 okades (= 14.102 kg) - at least officially, because as he mentions in a footnote: an amount of silk is exported as smuggled goods, so that the exporters can avoid the tax of 3 %. The silk was used for embroidery and different articles of clothing. The silk was produced at home by women, who fed the silkworms with mulberry leaves. (it should be mentioned, that the production of mulberry raki as well took place much more often than nowadays). The actual processing of the silk tread was often taken over by professional women (anelytres). They heated up the cocoons in big pots, until they became soft and the glue dissolved, so that the windings of thread could be taken apart. With a forked branch they picked up the silk, which other women then spun on a reel. The task died out, when the home production of silk stopped because of a disease among the silkworms and because of the importat of cheap and readymade silk from the East and from Europe.

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<sup>151</sup> <https://www.incrediblecrete.gr/romantic-tourism/>

<sup>152</sup> <http://www.kretakultur.dk/english/folklore/crafts/silk/silk.htm>



Silk Factory in Gavalochori, Crete

Source : <http://www.completely-crete.com/cretan-folk-art.html>

In the mountainous villages of Mylopotamos, Anogeia, Zoniana, Livadia and in the rest of the prefecture, traditional weaving, knitting and embroidery are the basic hobby of the women in their free time. The techniques are handed down from mother to daughter. Traditional materials are used in weaving, such as wool, cotton, linen and silk. The women produce the thread themselves and weave it in the loom. Even today they often dye the textiles with natural colours made from plants and white flowers of the Cretan earth.

In his book "Memories and merry, true stories from my homeland area" Manolis Despotakis among other things describes silk production in his village, Kakópetros, 38 km from Chania: "Silk production is probably unknown to many young people. But nevertheless our forefathers were silk producers. Before the war in 1940 the women in the village - among them also my mother - made ready every summer a big, clean and sunny house for their silkworms. Onto a rack made for the occasion they placed straw mats in two, three or four "storeys" to have free passage while looking after the silkworms. In spring some special traders came to the village to sell silkworm eggs wrapped up in boxes of three different sizes. All the old women knew very well, how many eggs to buy for the room they had prepared, and in proportion to the amount of mulberry leaves they had on their own trees and those they could get from their neighbours. I remember that my mother opened the box in the clean, freshly whitewashed room, where she had prepared the straw mats in three storeys, and placed the eggs on a clean piece of linen, which she placed between some woollen blankets or in her armpit at night for hours enough to hatch out the eggs. She cut mulberry leaves into tiny little pieces, and at the right moment she placed them in small piles side by side on the linen. Hundreds of microscopic caterpillars stuck to it. She moved them onto the straw mats, where she had already placed a whole layer of fresh and finely chopped mulberry leaves. This procedure was repeated several times, until all the eggs on the linen had hatched out. The first week or so she fed them with finely chopped leaves, and when they had grown a little, she placed whole mulberry branches onto the straw mats, which were immediately filled with caterpillars. Then she moved them to free spaces on the straw mats, and in this way all three layers were quickly equally covered. When the silk worms had grown big, they were generously fed with whole mulberry leaves three times a day, until they were ready for pupation. The women gathered clean twigs from thyme, sage, broom and others and placed them in all directions on top of the straw mats. On these branches the silk worms spun their airtight cocoons in which they

enclosed themselves. If the women did not within a few days put the branches into a place with a high temperature (into the sun), so that the worms died, they hatched out into small butterflies, broke through the cocoons and flew away.

M. Despotakis continues saying "I remember that my late mother once chose 10 thick cocoons, on which she kept an eagle eye. After some days the small butterflies broke through. She closed them into a white, spreadsheet where they mated without eating and laid an incredible amount of eggs. Unfortunately she could not keep them alive to the following year, because this requires scientific care, disinfectants etc. so she threw them away. One of the worst enemies of the silk producer is the summer rain (which is indeed rare in our parts of the country), because it is in vain to gather wet mulberry leaves, as they can not be used as food, when they are wet." (The silkworm eats the leaves only if they have an appropriate humidity). "During the short time the caterpillars (the silk worms) were growing, people omitted to burn gypsum in the village, because the smoke and the strange smell of burning stones (it smells like burnt sulphur) would have killed them." (Silkworms are extremely sensitive to noise, chemical substances and smoke).

Women's cooperatives in all major villages still weave on the loom, reminding of the just as they used to do in Minoan times. Sariki, the Cretan head scarf with fringes resembling tears, symbolizes lamentation for the hardships Crete experienced in the past centuries. The black sariki is worn as a sign of mourning, while the white sariki is worn as a sign of joy during weddings, feasts, births and christenings. Another kind of folk art which is relevant to home handcraft is the use of straw to make objects of everyday use like baskets, panniers etc. Objects of folk art can be seen today in the homes of the local people or in folk museums, where older objects are kept.

### **Museums and Collections**

The island's archaeological importance is highlighted through museums and archaeological collections<sup>153</sup>. The Archaeological Museum of Heraklion houses the most important finds of the unique Minoan civilization. Treasures dating back from the Neolithic to the Roman Era can also be viewed in the archaeological museum of Chania, Rethymnon, Sitia, Kissamos and Arhanes. In the following years, the new museums of Messara and Ancient Eleftherna, while the museum of Agios Nikolaos is under maintenance. Important local archaeological Collections operate at in Ierapetra, Myrtos and Gazi.

The Historical Museum of Crete offers an overall picture of the history and culture of Crete from the early Christian times to the 20th century, while seasonal exhibitions include subjects of Byzantine or modern art, important personalities of Greece and presentation of historical events. Chania city is home to the Historical Archive of Crete with more than 170 archival collections and the second largest Nautical Museum in Greece, which aims to preserve the great maritime tradition of Crete. The Byzantine Museums of Heraklion, Chania and Rethymnon are also very special venues dedicated mainly to ecclesiastical art. The war collections and archives intend to commemorate the resistance and struggle of the Cretans against the various occupiers of Crete. The most important of these are the War Museum of Rethymnon at Chromonastiri, the

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<sup>153</sup> <https://www.incrediblecrete.gr/museums-sights/>

Historical Museum of Vorizia, the Museums of National Resistance at Therisso and Heraklion, the Historical Museum of Keramia, the Museum of Skalidis at Pervolia, the War Museum at Askyfou and the Military Collection of Argyrakis at Episkopi. Additionally, the German Tunnels at Platania and Makasi Gate at Heraklion Walls are important historical sites. Museums and collections that highlight the life and work of great Cretan authors, artists and politicians are met all over the island. Venues dedicated to the life and work of the national leader Eleftherios Venizelos are open to visitors. These include the house where he was born at Mournies, his house at Halepa, the Historical Museum at Therisso and the Museum of Venizelos at village Agios Georgios. A very interesting museum dedicated to the great author Nikos Kazantzakis operates at his birthplace, Myrtia. Moreover, visitors can visit the house, where the great Cretan painter El Greco is believed to have been born at Fodele, and the Gate Bethlehem at the Walls of Heraklion, where objects used for the film El Greco are exposed. Lastly, Viannos houses a museum dedicated to the author Ioannis Kondylakis.

It is worth visiting venues about nature and science, such as the Natural History Museum, the Aquarium of Crete at in Gournes, the Museums of Cretan Herbs and Fisheries of Kolimvari, the Geological Museum of Zaros and the Museum of Chemistry in Chania. Other special museums in Crete are the museum of Classical Vehicles in Exo Lakonia, the Museum of the National Soccer Team and the Museum of Typography in Chania, the Museum of Musical Instruments at Houdetsi, the Wax Museum at Zoniana, the Museum of School Life in Nerokouros and the Museum of Acritans of Europe in Paleochora. Most museums in Crete are dedicated to the daily life of the Cretans, mainly by exposing objects from rural tradition. Very nice collections are exhibited at the folklore museums of Lychnostatis in Hersonissos, Chania, Vori, Arolithos, Tylissos, Rethymnon, Agios Nikolaos, Sitia, Vainia, Therisso, Gavalohori, Piskopiano, Somatas, Ini, Asites, Handras, Kandanos, Palekastro, Vrahassi, Gavdos, Pefki, Hamezi, Mohos, Spili etc. Traditional watermills in Zakros and Chromonastiri are open to visitors. Similarly, venues related to the olive tree include the Museum of Olive in Vouves, the old oil mill (fabrica) of Arhanes and Vatolakos and the Historical - Folk Museum of Gavalohori. Lastly, in the Historic Museum of Gavalochori, the Museum is divided into seven rooms, according to the following units: "The Arched House", "Silk", "Pottery", "Lace-making", "Masonry and Stone Carving", "Church and Woodcarving".

### **Architecture**

Major cities of Crete are home to impressive architectural structures, mainly from the Venetian and the Ottoman era. Forts, scenic harbors, palaces, fountains and temples are the main attractions of the cities. On the other hand, the interesting attractions in the hinterland include arched bridges, water and wind mills, aqueducts, cisterns and chapels. Venetian and Ottoman architectural patterns, combined with features of folklore architecture, are evident in contemporary houses. Arched gates since the Venetian era, and sahnisi (protruding covered balcony) since the Ottoman era, are some of the features used even today. The traditional rural house is an evolution of the prehistoric home dwelling; it is constructed with stone, branches and soil, while wooden beams support the roof. To the interior, there is space for animals, while the main features include a stone-built wine press covered by with a wooden platform, a fireplace for cooking and heating, and some niches in the walls for storing household utensils. Some of the most interesting traditional buildings, perfectly adapted to the needs and

particularities of the mountainous areas of Crete, are mitata. They are round domed buildings, made solely of dry stone, being an evolution of the domed Minoan tombs. Mitata provided shelter to shepherds and were used for milking goats and cheese-making. They are met in all ranges of Crete, but Nida plateau by Anogia is the most famous place to come across such constructions.

### Local culture

According to ancient legends, Greek dances and music first appeared in Crete, where the mother of the gods, Rhea, taught them to Curetes who venerated her. The most famous Cretan dance was the Pyrrhic. Very famous throughout Greece, Cretan dances are echoes of the dances of the Curetes (i.e. daemons from Cretan mythology). Traditional Cretan dances are danced by men and women, who wear their Cretan costumes in formal events. They are either fast or slow, but always vivid and imposing. With the lyre or the violin as a guide, accompanied by the lute and rarer instruments, such as the bulgari, the askomandoura or the thiamboli, dancers present the complex steps and the first of the cycle, usually a man, performs skillful dance movements called tsalimia. Each area of the island has its own traditional dances, most of which retain the primitive circular pattern. Main dances are pentozalis, kastrinos, pidichtos, siganos, syrτος and sousta, which is danced in couples and is an erotic and vigorous dance, almost danced on the tip of the toes<sup>154</sup>.

The island is known for its Mantinades-based music (typically performed with the Cretan lyra and the laouto) and has many indigenous dances, the most noted of which is the Pentozali. Cretan authors have made important contributions to Greek Literature throughout the modern period; In the Renaissance, Crete was the home of the Cretan School of icon painting. Carpenters transform wood into traditional musical instruments, such as the lyre and the lute. Vori, Zaros, Rethymnon, Neapolis and Kritsa are places famous for their long tradition in the manufacture and development of such instruments. Cobblers in major cities and villages such as Anogia, make the traditional stivania, the resistant Cretan leather boots. Knife manufacturers in Chania and Heraklion convert steel into the famous Cretan knife, the inseparable companion of each Cretan. Engraved depictions and poems adorn the blades.

### Festivals

Crete is characterised by a variety of festivals in each Regional Unit throughout the year demonstrating its rich and diverse cultural background. The majority of festivals have to do with Saint celebrations in every village and/or city. In Chania regional unit, the traditional festival of Sfakia, St. George's Day in Asi Gonia, Archangel Michael's Day in Aradaine, Annunciation of the Mother of God in several villages as well as the Transfiguration and the birth of the Mother of Christ. In Rethymno, the festival of Ipapantis, the festival of Analipsi, the festivals of St Panteleimon and St Ilias and the festival of Stavros are among the most notable. On the other hand, in Heraklion, the festival of Ai-Yianni Klidona, the festival of the Apostles Peter and Paul (Petros and Pavlos), the festival of Agia Marina, the festival with music and dance at the Monastery of Kera are only some of several in this regional unit. Finally, in Lasithi, the three Prelates festival, the Holy Trinity festival, the Saint Paraskevi festival, the Saints Kosmas and

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<sup>154</sup> <https://www.incrediblecrete.gr/traditional-music-dances/>

Damianos festival and the Saint Katherine among others. Modern festivals are numerous but seasonal and are hosted mainly during spring and summer periods.

### **Gastronomy**

Moning along, travellers are after unique gastronomical experiences and it is one of the most important trends in the sector of tourism worldwide. Examples of gastronomic tourism services: Seminars of Cretan Cuisine, gourmed's and wine conoisseur's events, visits to places where traditional products are produced, cooking events etc.

Cretan cuisine is famous around the world for its rich aromas and flavors. It is the original Mediterranean diet. Culture, history and geography have helped create a combination of foods and lifestyle which provides a unique diet that is highly nutritious, prolonging life and helping to prevent many of the modern diseases that shorten the lives of millions of people every year in the West. The authenticity of Cretan cuisine is what makes it different from other cuisines, as it always keeps it simple. No matter the plethora of ingredients used to get every dish prepared, mixed flavors are not typical of this cuisine. Thanks to the way of cooking, every ingredient maintains its identity, taste and independence.

## B. REGION OF CRETE: SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Development profile</b> <i>(demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powerful geographic position: in the middle of the Mediterranean basin</li> <li>• The ports of Chania and Heraklion</li> <li>• The International Airports of Heraklion, Souda and Chania</li> <li>• The Northern Crete axis</li> <li>• Broad range of economical activities providing growth opportunities</li> <li>• European and Balkan business and cultural centre</li> <li>• High percentage in the country's GDP due to exports</li> <li>• Higher education institutions</li> <li>• Innovative entrepreneurship activities of R&amp;D organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively high unemployment rate</li> <li>• High number of SMEs lacking R&amp;D potential</li> <li>• Large discrepancy of economic development at the intraregional level</li> <li>• Specialisation of the secondary sector in traditional economic activities, and low level of technological modernisation of enterprises.</li> <li>• Urban concentration – Pronounced depopulation of rural areas.</li> <li>• Low level of education and HR expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> <li>• New knowledge sectors (ICTs etc)</li> <li>• Innovation public or private funding to create an innovation market growth</li> <li>• Cooperation between public sector and universities</li> <li>• Effective use of co-financed opportunities in tourism, R&amp;D and Innovation (NSRF, FP7, CIP, JEREMIE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic crisis</li> <li>• Development obstacles (delays in infrastructure)</li> <li>• High cost of introducing new technologies and innovation</li> <li>• Not expertised personnel</li> <li>• Low level of facilities and services in remote areas</li> <li>• Increasing unemployment rate</li> <li>• Aging population</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Development Determinants</b>				
<b>Tourism Product</b> <i>Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many historical resources related to the silk industry</li> <li>• The Region is an international cultural node</li> <li>• Religion tourism destinations</li> <li>• Opportunities for alternative tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexploited potential for further developing tourism</li> <li>• Low level of diversification the tourism product because of lack of knowledge-experience</li> <li>• Low level in tourism investments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism funding opportunities from European, national and regional Programmes</li> <li>• Competitive pricing</li> <li>• Regional Operation Programme (2014-2020) promoting tourism development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential economic crisis in other countries, impact upon potential tourist</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mass tourism and Seasonality in some regions</li> <li>• Uneven tourist concentrations</li> <li>• Lack of integrated planning</li> <li>• Lack in tourism education</li> <li>• Lack in tourism promotion</li> <li>• low tourism development rate in some areas</li> <li>• Low level of networking and clustering of tourism operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution of the media in tourism development</li> <li>• New international trends in tourism</li> <li>• Promotion of ICTs in tourism</li> <li>• Social tourism</li> <li>• Investment interest from other countries</li> <li>• Potentials for thematic tourism</li> <li>• Historical connections between monasteries and silk production</li> <li>• Lack of funds and cooperation prevents the revival of industry complexes</li> <li>• Nutrition and gastronomy as a new tourist product: quality and its beneficial effects on human health</li> <li>• Exploitation of new markets: American, Russian, Chinese etc</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Natural resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance and Protected Areas</li> <li>• Great Biodiversity</li> <li>• Bodies and agencies intensely active in protecting and promoting the environment.</li> <li>• Relatively high investments on Renewable Energy Resources (RES)</li> <li>• Great energy resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrong development policies (economic development vs environmental protection) during the last decades</li> <li>• The effects of human intervention on the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• R&amp;D initiatives</li> <li>• Potential to diversify tourism offer towards higher-value added and 365 days a year attractions</li> <li>• Potentials for alternative tourism in the Region and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• No political long-term commitment</li> <li>• Continuous need for new technologies</li> <li>• Low awareness</li> </ul>

			<p>protection of natural resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New cultivations (mulberry trees)</li> </ul>	
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich multicultural resources</li> <li>• Various local products</li> <li>• Branded local products</li> <li>• Rich tradition in gastronomy</li> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments in Unesco list</li> <li>• Significant cultural (mythology, historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture)</li> <li>• Significant intangible cultural heritage related to the Silk road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local products with strong identity</li> <li>• Transportation facilities steam exports</li> <li>• Low productivity rates in some areas of the Region</li> <li>• Low degree of cross sector interconnection</li> <li>• Weak manufacturing units</li> <li>• Low level promotion of the brand of Silk tourism</li> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> <li>• Limited use of the Cultural Stock for strengthening regional identity and enriching tourist product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas are strongly related to the Silk road and can become nodes in a Silk Road route</li> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural development</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national strategic planning targets</li> <li>• Existence of infrastructures connected with silk road tourism (ex. Kalamata silk factory) and potentials of revival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of local identity</li> <li>• Lack of political initiatives towards integrated revival plans</li> </ul>
<i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total bed capacity exceeds 100000</li> <li>• Accessibility of the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative deficiencies in social infrastructure (education - health).</li> <li>• Low quality of infrastructure and services: poor organisation of ports and airports, low quality of public transport, inadequate making of road infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade of airport facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of road network especially within the urban centres</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER 3: THE WSR NATIONAL SWOT ANALYSIS OF GREECE

### 3.1 The Western Silk Road in Greece. Analysis of the secondary sources findings at the national level

In this chapter, Greek tourism is analyzed with regard to the untapped Silk Road cultural heritage at the national level, and the results are briefly presented, as arising from the extensive research that has been conducted on primary and secondary sources at the regional level.

The research analysis findings showcase the plethora of tourism resources with cultural, environmental and historic value as well as the significant intangible cultural heritage linked to WSR (fairs, music/ dance/ theater festivals and cultural events). These resources feature the potential of promoting an authentic experience for tourists to share the way of life of local communities through their participation in diverse activities. Travelers have the opportunity to choose among an impressive amount of activities and areas across the country related to the Silk Road:

#### 1. Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

1. Art Silk Museum of Soufli, as a living thematical museum of silk production and processing
2. Tzivre Silk mill, one of the most significant signs of the industrialized silk production in Thrace
3. modern-day silk worm farm in the small town of Soufli
4. cocoon houses (spaces of breeding silkworms) found in Evros
5. Abdera, a significant historical economic, commercial and cultural center in Xanthi Regional Unit, with numerous art crafts, works of stone, clay and bronze, mosaics, jewellery, relics of public and private buildings of unique architecture
6. Tobacco Museum of Xanthi in Kougioumtzoglou Mansion (first tobacco tradesmen)
7. Tobacco Museum of Kavala, exhibiting the commercial processing of oriental tobacco and highlighting the social history of Kavala - East Macedonia & Thrace

#### 2. Region of Central Macedonia

8. future museum of silk and repository of the Chryssalis factory (silk production firm) in Goumenissa
9. spinning-weaving mill YFANET historical monument in Thessaloniki
10. open air museum of the old Silk mill known as Benozilio in Pilea-Chortiatis, nearby Thessaloniki
11. Palaiochori village in Chalkidiki, with rich tradition in the craft of weaving
12. "Vermion" Spinnery, an inactive spinning mill in Veroia

13. textile factory 'Longou-Tourpali' in Naoussa, the first textile industry in the Balkans with modern standards, an important industrial monument that has been restored and today houses a University Technology Management Department

14. yarn factory of G. Tsitsis, the first water driven textile factory in Edessa

### **3. Region of Western Macedonia**

15. Kozani "Crocus" (saffron), known from Homer for its aromatic, colour and therapeutic attributes

16. Servia (called 'Little Bursa') sericulture and silk processing heritage in monasteries

### **4. Region of Thessaly**

17. Silk Factory in Volos, restored buildings complex now hosting museum and recreation facilities

18. Mt Pelion traditional villages (Zagora, Metaxochori: silk village in Greek) known for silk production

### **5. Region of Epirus**

19. Koukouli village in Pindus, which takes its name from the Greek word "koukouli" i.e. silkworm cocoon

20. Syrrako Folk Art Museum in the mountainous bulk of Tzumerka, Epirus

### **6. Region of Ionian Islands**

21. Corfu town, port of major strategic importance as key stop on the route to the Indies

### **7. Region of Central Greece**

22. Thebes in Boeotia, the center of high quality silk textiles production during the Byzantine empire, where inhabitants dyed the silk textiles by using special sea shells, called porphyry

### **8. Region of Attica**

23. Hellenic Silk Company at Metaxourgio in Athens (Silk Reeling factory)

### **9. Region of Western Greece**

24. Achaia reemerged in the development scene as a result of silk production in the region

### **10. Region of Peloponnese**

25. Peloponnese was renamed into Morias or Moreas, a name coming from the greek word "mouries" i.e. mulberry trees used in the reproduction of silkworms;

26. Staninopoulos Brothers Silk Factory in Kalamata, which accounted for almost a third of the country's production In 1853

27. Silk School in the Monastery of Saint Constantine and Helen

28. Tripolis festival in Peloponnese, documented in the late 18th century, involving commercial exchange in cloth of all types (e.g., felts, silks) and other commodities;

### **11. Region of North Aegean**

29. silk production was for many centuries an important source of income for Chios

### **12. Region of South Aegean**

30. distinguished embroideries from the islands of Astypalea and Karpathos, where workers simply used the rich-hued silks in mass effects, producing broad borders with disk-like motives in the field worked in a solid surface stitch with loosely twisted silk;
31. top floors of Andros houses that most of the inhabitants used them as workshops to cultivate the silkworms and to produce fine silk materials;
32. traditional silk women costumes across the Aegean Sea islands (Amorgos, Nisyros, Ios, Naxos, Tinos and Keos);
33. island of Kos where according to Aristotle, Pamphile, a woman of Cos, was the first to unwind a cocoon of the silkworm and to weave it into silk, a discovery that led to the monopoly of the silk trade by the Island of Cos for nearly 500 years

### **13. Region of Crete**

34. mountain villages of Mylopotamos, Anogeia, Zoniana, Livadia in Crete, where local women create traditional weaving, knitting and embroidery
35. Historic Museum of Gavalochori in Crete, divided into seven rooms-units: "The Arched House", "Silk", "Pottery", "Lace-making", "Masonry and Stone Carving", "Church and Woodcarving";
36. local gastronomy all over the country

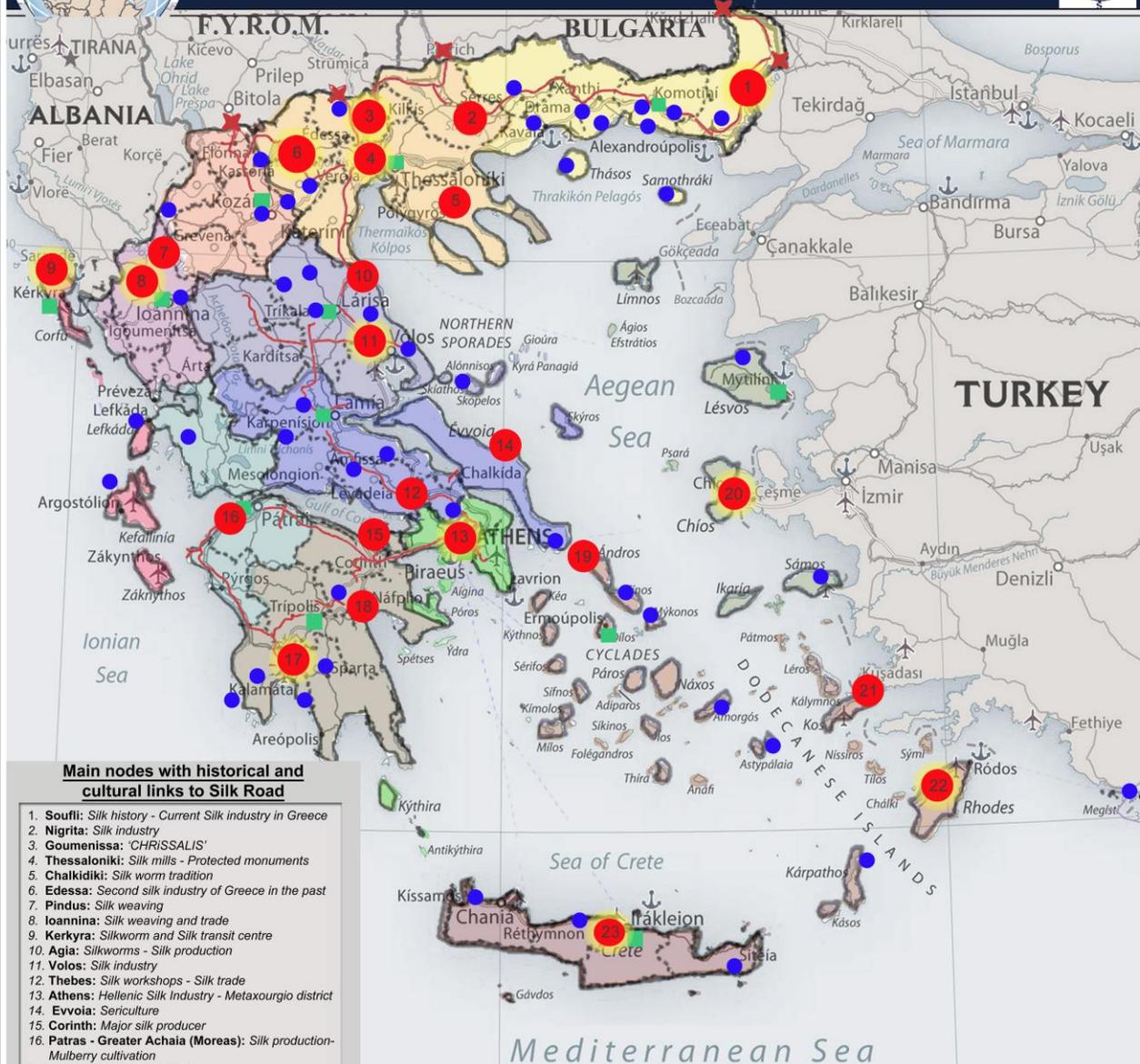
All these experiences await the cultural visitor seeking to capture the unique mystic footprint of the old Silk Road cultural heritage in Greece, the adventure travelers seeking for an active holiday across the stunning natural scenery of the country and tourists eager to witness the fascinating and exotic local Greek customs. All the above tangible and intangible cultural heritage linked to the Silk Road across Greece, as listed and analysed in this Report is recorded at the following Western Silk Road Map of Greece.

### **3.2 Western Silk Road Map of Greece**

The survey conducted within the framework of the Western Silk Road Initiative, targets to highlight Greece's historical and cultural bonds with the Silk Road heritage, in order to create a Silk Road map of Greece towards the West. Greece's Western Silk Road Map is expected to indicate a plethora of opportunities for Greece as a tourism destination and for tourism stakeholders interested in cross-border partnerships and in developing novel products focused on untapped Silk Road heritage.



# GREECE



### Main nodes with historical and cultural links to Silk Road

1. **Soufli:** Silk history - Current Silk industry in Greece
2. **Nigrita:** Silk industry
3. **Goumenissa:** 'CHRISALIS'
4. **Thessaloniki:** Silk mills - Protected monuments
5. **Chalkidiki:** Silk worm tradition
6. **Edessa:** Second silk industry of Greece in the past
7. **Pindus:** Silk weaving
8. **Ioannina:** Silk weaving and trade
9. **Kerkyra:** Silkworm and Silk transit centre
10. **Agia:** Silkworms - Silk production
11. **Volos:** Silk industry
12. **Thebes:** Silk workshops - Silk trade
13. **Athens:** Hellenic Silk Industry - Metaxourgio district
14. **Evvoia:** Sericulture
15. **Corinth:** Major silk producer
16. **Patras - Greater Achaia (Moreas):** Silk production- Mulberry cultivation
17. **Kalamata:** Silk neckerchief
18. **Messinia:** Sericulture - Silk process
19. **Andros:** Basic silk production unit - Node on silk trade route
20. **Chios:** Silk production - Trade - Mulberries
21. **Cos:** Silk manufacture
22. **Rhodes:** Main trade node - Silkworms
23. **Crete:** Silk production - Exports - Main transit node

## Silk Road Map of Greece

### Administrative boundaries

- International boundary
- Decentralized Region boundary
- Regional Unit boundary
- National capital
- Capital of Region

### Core Network

- Expressway
- Road
- Railway network
- Major airport
- Major port
- Railway border crossing

### Regions

- Eastern Macedonia & Thrace
- Central Macedonia
- Western Macedonia
- Epirus
- Thessaly
- Central Greece
- Attica
- Western Greece
- Peloponnese
- North Aegean
- Ionian Islands
- South Aegean
- Crete

### Silk Road Route

- Silk Road Branded Sites
- Main Silk Road Nodes
- Alternative Silk Road Nodes

### Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Department of Economics

Scientific responsible: *Kostopoulou S.*

Map designed by: *Sofianou E.*

Data provided by: *Kyriakou D., Malisiova S., Toufengopoulou A., Xanthopoulou V.*

0 50 100 150 200 km

0 50 100 mi

Background: [www.mapsland.com](http://www.mapsland.com)

### 3.3 Findings of the Primary Research

At this stage, as mentioned in the Introduction, a primary research has been conducted which concerns study analysis at the national, regional and local level, in order to collect qualitative information to enrich the results of the secondary research.

An extensive primary research has been embarked, to comprehend the opinions, views and attitudes of tourism stakeholders involved in tourism development, marketing and delivery across the country, regarding the exploration of tourism development opportunities based on the Western Silk Road in Greece.

The data collection is carried out with techniques, such as questioning through online submission, using Google Forms questionnaire. The aim of the questioning is to identify critical information and possible gaps and evaluate tourism opportunities for marketing and promotion of the WSR Brand at all levels: site, destination, regional and national.

For this reason, almost 400 questionnaires have been sent by e-mail in two subsequent mailings during the second and third week of November 2016, addressed to stakeholders involved in tourism development, falling into 3 categories: Tourism Industry, Government Authorities with relative competence and Civil Societies, such as: national authorities for tourism and culture; representatives of regional/local tourism organizations and tourism development companies; regional and local authorities; local populations and host communities at tourism destinations through their representatives; tourism establishments and tourism enterprises, including their associations (national and local); institutions engaged in financing tourism projects; tourism professionals and tourism consultants; trade unions of tourism employees; other juridical and natural persons having stakes in tourism development including non-governmental organizations specializing in tourism.

Due to the extreme short timeframe, the survey has received a 10% response rate. Representatives of all the categories answered the questionnaire, as shown in Figure 3.3.1.

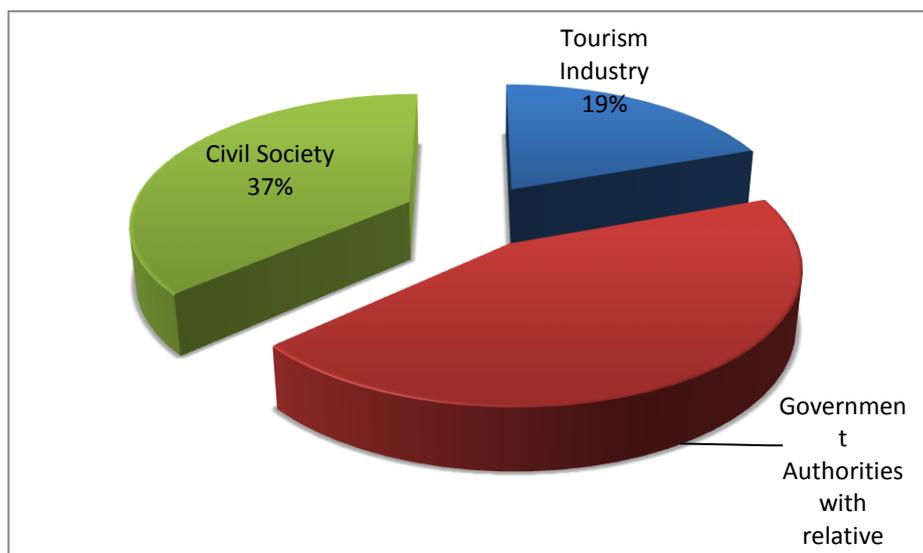


Figure 3.3.7: Distribution of respondents according to the survey categories.

The content and structure of the questionnaire focused on specific characteristics in order to be successful; it was attempted to be clear and concise, well structured, technically accurate, short, to provide basic instructions for completion, to be easily codified and susceptible to computer processing and analysis of the results.

The result was a three pages questionnaire (herewith attached in the Annex), including closed-ended questions (questions limit the answers of the respondents to response options provided on the questionnaire), and open-ended questions (in which participants are asked to provide their own answers-views-perceptions).

The close-ended questions include dichotomous or two point questions (to be answered by checking Yes or No) and scaled questions making use of rating scales, in this case a seven-point scale. There were also matrix questions, questions arranged one under the other, so that the questions form a table with response options placed on top.

The open-ended questions were either word association questions, where participants are asked to state the first word that comes to mind or unstructured questions, where participants are asked to write a short free text. There were also contingency questions that needed to be answered when the respondent provided a particular response to a previous question.

More specifically, the main reviewed elements include:

- knowledge about “The Silk Road”, from the perspective of History, Geography, Tourism Products and Tourism Destinations.
- relation between the stakeholders involved in tourism development and the Western Silk Road Initiatives, such as studies/researches elaborated by organisations in relation to the Silk Road or tourism actions/plans/policies introducing Silk Road promotion.
- main positive and negative elements, opportunities and threats from the development of the Western Silk Road as a tourism product / cultural route in the organisation’s area of responsibility.
- the actual interest in the Silk Roads in Greece, such as the likely participation in initiatives and networks in relation to the Silk Road or any propositions to promote the Silk Road as an alternative development perspective for the country’s tourism development.

## Research results analysis

**Question 1.** According to you, what is “The Silk Road”? Write three representative keywords or phrases that come to mind:

The question is used to identify the level of the participants’ knowledge of the Silk Road Heritage in general and the main “mental map” indicators describing the Silk Road in the form of top representative keywords or phrases that come to mind in reference to the “The Silk Road”. The majority of the stakeholders answered that culture, trade, China, Soufli and travel are the most characterizing words of Silk Road,

highlighting the significance of cultural and trade connections, as well as the importance of Soufli<sup>155</sup> as a branded Silk Road destination.

**Question 2.** How would you assess your knowledge on “The Silk Road”?

This matrix question referred to four indicators: from the perspective of History, Geography, Tourism Products and Tourism Destinations. For all of these factors, the majority of respondents (71-83%) show general knowledge, a small percentage has specialized knowledge on the Silk Road (ranging from 7% for tourism destinations to 12% for history and geography of Silk Road), 22% of respondents have no knowledge of the Silk Road Tourism destinations and 19% have no knowledge of Silk Road Tourism products, as shown in Figures 3.3.2 -3.3.5.



Figure 3.3.2 Knowledge about History on “The Silk Road”



Figure 3.3.3 Knowledge about Geography on “The Silk Road”

<sup>155</sup> The most notable town in the Evros Regional Unit, as far as the silk industry is concerned.

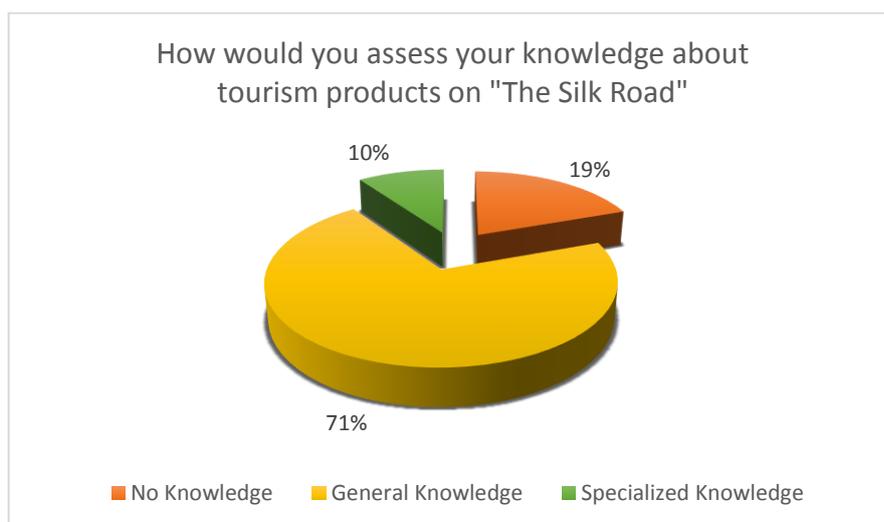


Figure 3.3.4 Knowledge about Tourism products on “The Silk Road”

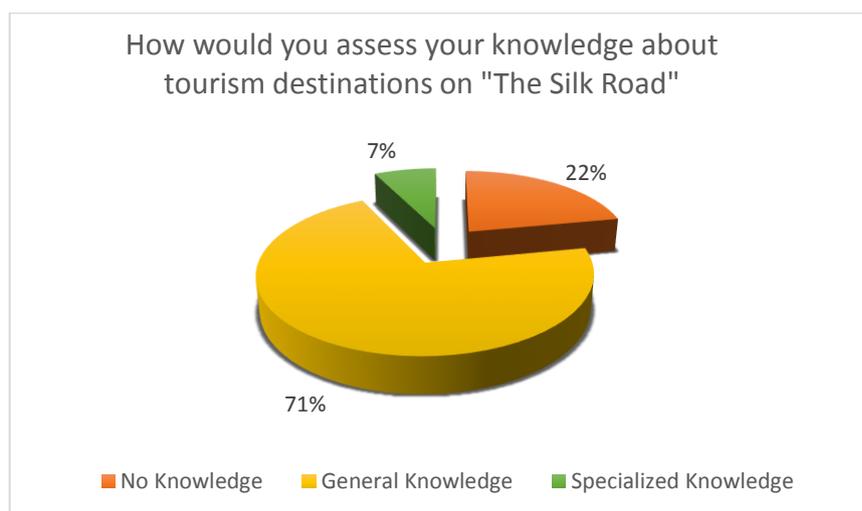


Figure 3.3.5 Knowledge about Tourism destinations on “The Silk Road”

**Question 3.** Share any destination in your organisation’s area of responsibility that has any relation to the Silk Road.

Respondents mentioned many destinations, the most cited include: Koukouli village in Epirus, Soufli in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Kos island in Southern Aegean, Pella, Edessa, Goumenissa in Central Greece, Metaxochori in Thessaly, port of Pireus in Attica, Florina in Western Macedonia.

**Question 4.** How important do you consider the factors below for Silk Road tourists to select your organisations area of responsibility?

Concerning the factors that the tourism stakeholders consider as very important for Silk Road tourists to select their areas of responsibility as Silk Road destinations, most of the respondents highlighted the significance of the natural environment and landscape

as the main factor (22 of the participants rating ‘Very much’); monuments and archaeological sites as the second factor of importance (19 participants). Of less importance are considered the tourism infrastructure, extreme sports and experience in local communities (Figure 3.3.6).

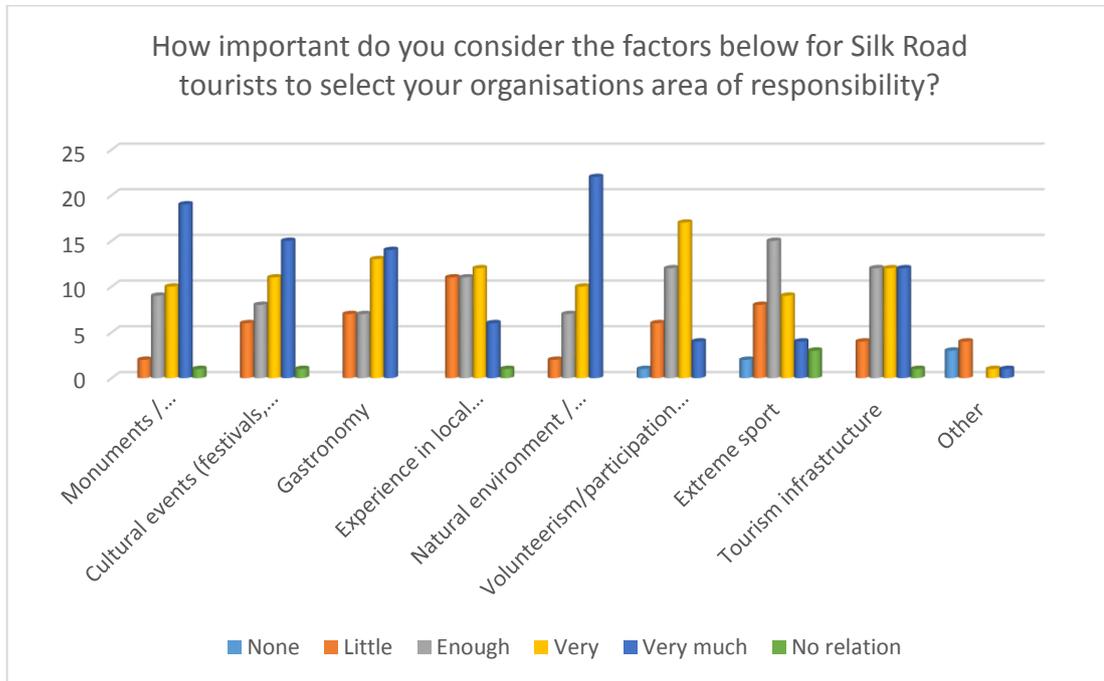


Figure 3.3.6 Rating of poles of attraction for Silk Road tourists

**Question 5.** Has your organisation any relation to the World Tourism Organisation’s program for the Silk Road?

In addition, the conclusions regarding the relation that Greek tourism stakeholders have with the World Tourism Organization’s programme for the Silk Road are also highly disappointed: 90% of the responders declare that have no relation, as reflected in Figure 3.3.8.

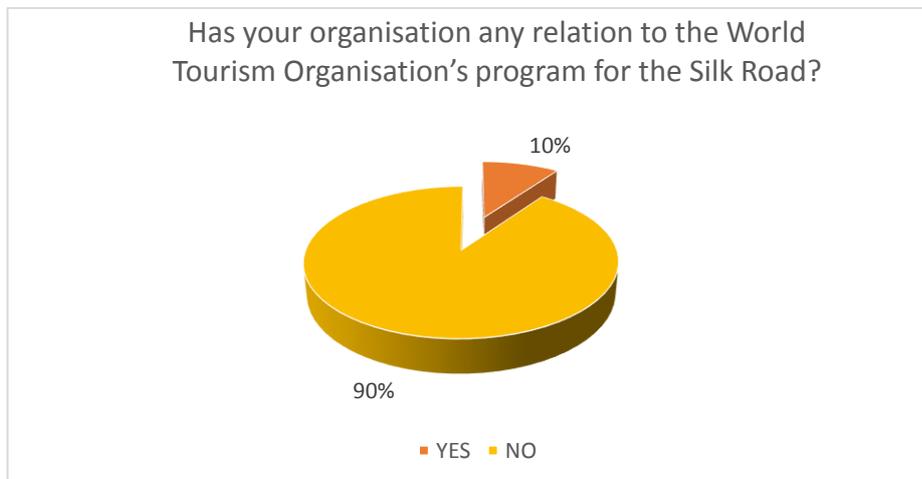


Figure 3.3.8 Organisations’ relations to the World Tourism Organization’s programme for the Silk Road

**Question 6.** Has your organisation introduced Silk Road promotion into tourism actions/plans/policies within its area of responsibility?

Unlike the reasonable level of knowledge that the responders have in the Silk Road, highly disappointed are the percentages concerning the tourism actions/plans/policies introducing the Silk Road promotion initiatives within the respondents' organisation's area of responsibility. 83% of the tourism stakeholders in Greece have not yet developed such actions/plans/policies, whereas only 17% answered that their organisations has introduced Silk Road promotion into tourism actions and plans. Examples include the 'Amphictyony Ancient Greek Cities' (1st Forum of Greek-Chinese Cities in Zappeio, Athens), the 'Black Sea Silk Road Programme', actions to encourage visits to heritage assets connected with the Silk Road e.g. in Soufli (Figure 3.3.7).

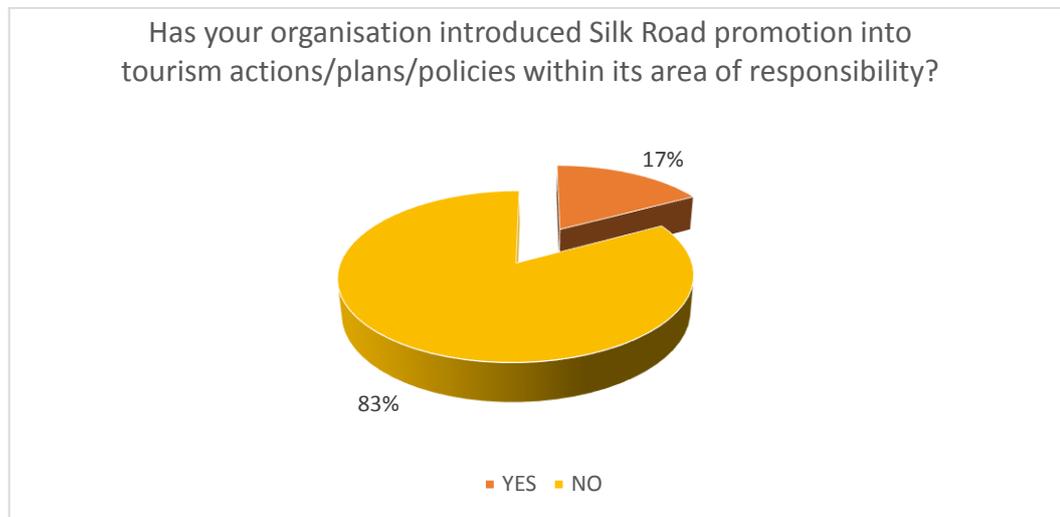


Figure 3.3.7 Organisations' tourism actions/plans/policies introducing Silk Road promotion

**Question 7.** Please share any study/research elaborated by your organisation in relation to the Silk Road.

The majority of the participants did not answer this question or answered that there are no studies/researches elaborated in relation to the Silk Tourism, except for specific actions e.g. the restoration and rehabilitation of Tzivre Silk Mill and cocoon houses at Soufli, the promotion of the traditional architecture of the area, e.tc. But also, excavation works, research on Central Asia civilizations, regional development plans and carrying capacity of islands as tourist destinations, are among the answers.

**Questions 8, 9, 10, 11.** Which ones do you consider being the three main positive/negative/elements opportunities/ threats from the development of the Silk Road as tourism product/cultural route in your organisation's area of responsibility?

Regarding the main positive and negative elements, opportunities and threats from the development of the Silk Road as tourism product/cultural route in the organisation's area of responsibility that the responders have mentioned, these can be categorized as indicated by the table below.

Positive elements	Negative elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• benefits of historical and cultural heritage</li> <li>• promotion of local identity and local products</li> <li>• promotion of brand name destination and tourist attractions</li> <li>• economic development through networking and synergies</li> <li>• access to tourist markets of the East</li> <li>• Extension of the tourism season</li> <li>• Attracting new tourists of high income</li> <li>• Development of new alternative forms of tourism</li> <li>• Accessing the Far East tourism market</li> <li>• Cultural exchanges/ Swop cultural ideas</li> <li>• Organizing joint cultural and tourism activities</li> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Job creation</li> <li>• Strengthen relations</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism development</li> <li>• Increase in inbound tourism arrivals and receipts, in visitor length of stay, competitiveness of tourism product</li> <li>• Trade facilitation</li> <li>• Infrastructure development</li> <li>• Preserving Architecture legacy</li> <li>• Creating new tourism products</li> </ul>	<p>No negative elements in the development of the Silk Road in organisation's areas of responsibility could be found, other than:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tradition commercialization</li> <li>• Alteration of local cultural, natural and social environment</li> <li>• alteration of local identity</li> <li>• overexploitation of the destination's natural resources</li> <li>• Pollution</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WSR can be used as a branding, marketing and development tool in a wide range of situations to further a wide variety of tourism policy goals</li> <li>• promotion of local cultural heritage, products and identity</li> <li>• economic development and opportunities for new investments</li> <li>• international cooperation and synergies</li> <li>• integration in new markets</li> <li>• potentials of new cultural and tourist activities,</li> <li>• tourism development in many Regions</li> </ul>	<p>Not so serious threats in the development of the Silk Road in organisation's areas of responsibility could be found, other than:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The possible exceeding of the carrying capacity of tourism areas and sites</li> <li>• degradation of natural environment in destinations</li> <li>• unstable socio-political environment</li> <li>• creation of further disparities between tourist destinations</li> <li>• lack of funds for targeted marketing</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opportunity for long term development strategies</li> <li>• Brand awareness</li> <li>• China’s new Maritime Silk Road in Europe</li> <li>• New tourism investments</li> <li>• Exchange of expertise</li> <li>• Promoting the conservation of the route's natural and cultural heritage</li> <li>• Differentiation of the tourism offer</li> <li>• Regional dispersal and yield across Greece</li> <li>• A possible solution to the issues of the less developed regions of Greece</li> <li>• enhance Soufli as a unique Silk Road destination and the only silk producer in Greece today</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trade competition</li> <li>• alteration of local identity</li> <li>• Degeneration of tradition as a tourist product</li> <li>• Increase in imported products</li> <li>• Creating non collective thinking operators and stakeholders</li> </ul>
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Most of the participants did not answer the question about negative elements, or they answered that there are no negative elements. 19.5% of the respondents answered that there are negative elements.

**Question 12.** Which ones do you believe being the three key characteristics to form the tourism image of the Silk Road in Greece?

The three key characteristics forming the tourism image of the Silk Road in Greece, according to the majority of respondents are: History, Trade and Culture.

**Question 13.** Do you wish to participate in initiatives and networks in relation to the Silk Road?

In the direction that the most of the tourism stakeholders in Greece find no negative elements and serious threats in the development of the Silk Road in their areas of responsibility, they also stated their willingness to participate in initiatives and networks in relation to the Silk Road. All the respondents, except for one stated that they are willing to participate in initiatives and networks in relation to the Silk Road.

**Question 14.** Would you like to add anything? (e.g. propositions to promote the Silk Road as an alternative development perspective for country’s tourism development?)

Among the answers is worth mentioning the wish to create activities of international importance (exhibitions, festivals, e.tc.) and that Silk Road tourism and Ecotourism are important dipole for local development e.g. in the area of Soufli’s. Many of the respondents asked to be further informed about the Silk Road initiative for future cooperation opportunities.

As shown by the results of the primary and secondary survey, Greece has many tangible and intangible linkages with the Silk Road heritage, however only a few actions have already been realised towards this direction. For example, in the “2016 Silk Road International Cultural Expo (Dunhuang)” held in China, Greece was represented by the

Ministry of Culture and Sports. Also interesting is the fact that Lefkada (Ionian Islands) and Shouzhan of China are twin cities.

An exceptional example is the **'Amphictyony of Ancient Greek Cities'** initiated by the Mayor of Marathon Municipality Mr Ilias Psinakis, based on the "Amphictyony" in ancient Greece. The institution of "Amphictyony" was the organization of Ancient Greek Cities in associations centered on sanctuaries. In Ancient Greece several such institutions existed like, the Amphictyony of Neptune in Kalavria (current Poros), the Amphictyony of Apollo in Delos, the most known being the Amphictyony of Central Greece, centered on the sanctuary of Delphi. The main tasks of Amphictyony concerned the supervision of those sacred places, the promotion of the ideal of peace and often acquired political power.

The main objectives of the "Amphictyony of Ancient Greek cities" include, to take advantage of networking opportunities and strengthen the administrative structures of local government with expertise on culture policy in order for: Exchange of information and experiences on cultural issues; Expansion of the Ancient Philosophy and Cultural Tradition; Development of bonds of friendship, cooperation, respect; Citizen participation as part of cultural cooperation among its members; Exchange of "Know how" between the members; Promotion of the municipal cooperation through joint events, Conferences and Visits, surveys and studies, as well as establishment of common standards and cooperation with international organizations; Facilitation of interregional and/or transnational cooperation; Cooperation with scientific organizations, institutions. Actions already taken within the "Amphictyony of Ancient Greek cities" are:

28.03.2016: Signing Ceremony of the Memorandum of Cooperation for the Municipalities and Regions of South Greece in Acropolis Museum with representatives of: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Embassies of Argentina, Vietnam, China, Kuwait, Panama, Slovakia, Turkey and Tunisia, Ministries of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, Culture and Sports, Economy, Development and Tourism, Regions of Attica, Crete, South Aegean, Central Greece, Central Union of Greek Municipalities (KEDE) (83 municipalities from Regions of South Greece signed).

20.05.2016: Signing Ceremony of the Memorandum of Cooperation for the Municipalities and Regions of North Greece in Acropolis Museum with representatives of: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Embassy of China, Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction, Region of Central Macedonia, Central Union of Greek Municipalities (KEDE) (73 municipalities from Regions of North Greece signed).

11.11.2016: The 1st Hellenic – Chinese Cities Forum took place in Athens. The Greek-Chinese Cities Forum, a new platform for Sino-Greek dialogue, was co-organized by the Amphictyony of Ancient Greek Cities and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC). Greek and Chinese officials, entrepreneurs and representatives of academic and cultural institutes gathered at the historic Zappeion exhibition hall in Athens for the inaugural Greek-Chinese Cities forum.

Addressing the event, Mr. Ilias Psinakis, President of the Amphictyony of Ancient Greek Cities and Mayor of Marathon, explained that the institution of the modern Amphictyony follows the tradition of the association of cities in ancient Greece aimed at promoting peace and prosperity. China was chosen as the first partner because Amphictyony's objective is aligned with the China-proposed initiative to revive the Silk Road to enhance economic development and stability along the way. As China and Greece have entered the second decade of their comprehensive strategic partnership and the two governments strongly support further cooperation in many fields and levels, the new initiative contributes to the effort to accelerate practical people-to-people cooperation.

Mr. Song Jingwu, vice president of Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), noted that the association he represents has already built bridges of friendship and cooperation in 100 countries worldwide and warmly supports closer collaboration with Greece. A delegation of 80 members from 14 Chinese cities attended the forum. The second forum will be held next year in Beijing.

### **3.4 THE WESTERN SILK ROAD SWOT ANALYSIS OF GREECE**

The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis tool is critical for developing an understanding of an organization, situation and decision-making for all sorts of situations in businesses, organizations, and for individuals. Moreover, the SWOT analysis headings provide a good framework for reviewing a strategy, position and direction of a region, company, product, project or person (Popa 2010). The purpose of the analysis of external opportunities and threats is to evaluate whether a project can seize opportunities and avoid threats when facing an uncontrollable external environment (such as political destabilization, social transition, change in role of law, etc.), while the purpose of analysis of internal strengths and weaknesses is to evaluate how a project carries out its internal work (such as management, work, efficiency, research and development) (Chang & Huang 2006). When used appropriately, the SWOT Analysis can provide a valuable basis for successful strategy formulation.

The SWOT Analysis of the Greek tourism industry with regard to the Silk Road cultural heritage has been conducted based on the extensive research results on primary and secondary sources, and is presented below in order to evaluate the Greek experience in developing WSR tourism Initiatives, to demonstrate its position, to identify and highlight crucial issues and related challenges and to assess their present and forecasted competitiveness.

For the preparation of the WSR SWOT Analysis of Greece, the main objectives of WSR Initiative have been considered, to include the following:

- One of the key sections of the assessment of the current situation that has been included in the Analysis is the evaluation of demographic, social and economic structure of regions, considering that the basic ultimate aim of the WSR Initiative is the contribution to the local economy and community development.
- The research has also included an assessment of the existing tourism supply and demand. Actually, according to the research conducted by TripAdvisor (2016), the

activities for which the travelers are more interested in the Silk Roads are: 62% explore ancient Silk Road cities, 60% visit UNESCO World Heritage Sites on Silk Road, 50% try local Silk Road gastronomy, 44% shop in local bazaars and markets, 41% visit art galleries and museums.

- Since one of the objectives and benefits of WSR Initiative is to “*provide the foundation for the Western Silk Road to function as a fully operative tourism brand*”, as well “*the first activity is the development of a Western Silk Road Brand Study and Handbook*”, exploring the tourism destination image is essential. Thus, a brief tourism profile of the regions has been included in the Analysis.
- Furthermore, another important module that was included in the assessment of the current situation is the evaluation of the role of institutions, organizations and generally of Greek tourism stakeholders, given that one of the main WSR Initiative recorded benefits is to “*Enhance the capacities of tourism stakeholders willing to explore new markets and to engage new partners*”.
- Moreover, due to the fact that WSR Initiative is part of the “Silk Road” programme of WTO promoting the growth of Silk Road tourism since 1994, it is proposed to draw conclusions in the Analysis concerning the following “keys” thematic areas: marketing and promotion, capacity building and destination management, and travel facilitation, as specified in the recent Action Plan “Silk Road Action Plan 2016/2017”.
- Finally, given that it is of critical importance to explore the policy, planning and management of the “Silk Road Tourism”, a section has been also included in the Analysis of each region for the assessment of these issues at the regional level as well.

Last but not least, it is worth noting that this SWOT Analysis was conducted with the following principle: The research does not relate exclusively to the resource/ product associated with the “Silk Road” but to the wider region that (the resource) is part of, ensuring in that way the research’s contribution to the achievement of the pursuit of the WSR Initiative: “*Combine available tourism assets to increase visitor length of stay, regional dispersal and yield across the region*”.

The SWOT analysis also demonstrates that the Greek tourism industry faces problems and threats that may jeopardise its potential to provide competitive WSR tourism products in the future. Nonetheless, a wide range of opportunities and challenges emerge and they need to be dressed in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the tourism industry, through the WSR Initiatives.

The following table shows the SWOT Analysis of Greece for the WSR Initiative<sup>156</sup>:

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<sup>156</sup> Apart from the conclusions of Primary Research, some of the secondary sources that are used to draw the following SWOT Table are: a) Sotiriadis, M., Varvaressos, S. (2015) “A Strategic Analysis of the Greek Leisure Tourism: Competitive Position, Issues and Challenges”, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. Retrieved from <http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/viewFile/5543/5346>, b) Efthymia Sarantakou, E., Kontis, A. (2015) “The development of enriched mixtures of cultural tourism, for the re-promotion of Greek mature destinations: Experiential tourism as a Challenge”, *1st International Conference on Experiential Tourism*. Retrieved from [http://imic2015.conferences.gr/wp-content/uploads/SARANTAKOU\\_KONTIS.pdf](http://imic2015.conferences.gr/wp-content/uploads/SARANTAKOU_KONTIS.pdf).

## THE WESTERN SILK ROAD SWOT ANALYSIS OF GREECE

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Greece</b>  <b>Development and Tourism Profile</b>  <i>(demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad range of economic activities providing growth opportunities</li> <li>• Established universities and research centers</li> <li>• Innovative entrepreneurship activities of R&amp;D organisations</li> <li>• Adequate transport infrastructure and network, mainly in Athens and major tourism destinations (i.e. low-cost carriers developments)</li> <li>• Richness, diversity of scenery/ Variety of tourism destinations (coastal/rural/protected areas, islands, mountain resorts, historical settlements and towns)</li> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic crisis</li> <li>• Financial constraints</li> <li>• High unemployment rate</li> <li>• Intense regional disparities</li> <li>• Economy based on labor-intensive activities in low-tech sectors (agriculture)</li> <li>• Urban concentration – Depopulation of rural areas.</li> <li>• High cost of living in metropolitan urban centers</li> <li>• Low level of ICT diffusion</li> <li>• Large number of SMEs lacking R&amp;D potential</li> <li>• Non satisfactory ground transport infrastructure and accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding opportunities, especially within European Union programmes (actions supporting SMEs and infrastructure development in peripheral regions)</li> <li>• Public / private funding opportunities for innovation</li> <li>• Information and communication technologies (ICTs)</li> <li>• Modernisation of transport infrastructures</li> <li>• Proximity with neighbor markets (i.e. Balkans) providing opportunities for further economic development and cooperation</li> <li>• Cooperation activities between public and private sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debt crisis, economic recession</li> <li>• Growing unemployment, especially youth unemployment</li> <li>• Brain drain of highly qualified young people going abroad</li> <li>• Aging population</li> <li>• Development obstacles (i.e. delays in infrastructure)</li> <li>• Competitive tourism markets in neighboring countries</li> <li>• High cost in introducing new technologies and innovation</li> <li>• Urban concentration and globalization threatens the ability of SMTEs to survive</li> <li>• Environmental degradation through inappropriate waste</li> </ul>

	<p>Protected Areas/ Great Biodiversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plethora of cultural resources (registered and protected monuments, archaeological sites, numerous museums and traditional settlements)</li> <li>• SMTEs' flexibility and ability to tailor products to new tourists' needs</li> <li>• SMTEs' personalized relationships with suppliers, consumers and employees enhancing service quality</li> <li>• Family involvement in local entrepreneurial activity enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction</li> <li>• Continuous increase in tourism arrivals</li> <li>• Challenging tourism policy targets, such as increase in inbound</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low level of facilities and services in remote areas</li> <li>• Intense tourism seasonality</li> <li>• Tourism monoculture in specific areas e.g. islands</li> <li>• Lack of quality standards (i.e. quality management systems ISO 9001: 2000 / ISO 9001: 2008, environmental management EN ISO 14001, food safety ISO 22000: 2005 and HACCP, new quality signals Q (total quality), ecological quality label Green Key).</li> <li>• Lack of a comprehensive and rational national tourism policy and planning</li> <li>• Unsuccessful and inconsistent spatial plans, strategies and policies in tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous growth of global tourism demand and new trends</li> <li>• Increasing demand for cultural heritage tourism, religious tourism</li> <li>• New emerging markets: China and Russia</li> </ul>	<p>management methods and excessive usage of natural resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism oversupply and demand and lack of well-defined carrying capacity limits in several destinations</li> <li>• Lack of visibility in Global Distribution Systems</li> <li>• Globalized terrorism</li> </ul>
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	<p>tourism arrivals and receipts, in competitiveness of tourism product, extension of tourism season, attraction of high income and alternative types of tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bodies and agencies intensely active in protecting and promoting the cultural heritage and environment.</li> </ul>	<p>development and promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequacy of tourism infrastructure to serve an ever-expanding tourism demand</li> <li>• Lack of efforts and resources toward environmental sustainability</li> <li>• Tourism infrastructure does not meet the needs of a market less sensitive to price and more concerned with quality and value for money</li> <li>• Promotional campaigns and activities lack long-term strategic marketing approach, including feedback and evaluation of effectiveness of plans</li> <li>• Plethora of tourism SMTEs, targeting mainly short-term profitability, oversupply of tourism amenities inconsistent with tourism demand</li> </ul>		
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		<p>and fierce price competition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of SMTEs clustering and cooperation on a destination basis, lack of professionalism in small family tourism units, lack of investment in long-term tourism projects, lack of partnerships among destination stakeholders</li><li>• Lack of highly qualified personnel in the tourism sector.</li><li>• Dependence upon tour operators</li><li>• Inadequate training procedures in the tourism sector</li><li>• Lack of tourism information mechanisms expertise (advanced tourism statistics on supply / demand)</li></ul>		
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease of inbound tourism expenditure per capita</li> <li>• Uninsured labor in the tourism sector</li> <li>• Lack of adequate differentiation of the Greek tourism product</li> </ul>		
<b>Determining Factors of Tourism Development</b>				
<b>Tourism Supply</b> <i>Silk Road's unique natural and cultural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic geographical location on east-west crossroads</li> <li>• Unique characteristics of cultural supply in Greek tourism destinations (diversity, dispersion)</li> <li>• New cultural resources: local gastronomy, cultural landscape, festivals, industrial heritage</li> <li>• Links with the history of Silk Road (e.g. Soufli, Edessa, Goumenissa, Messinia, Kos etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notable unexploited resources directly and/or indirectly related to the Silk Road</li> <li>• Undiscovered links with the history of Silk Road Routes (many regions with history in silk and textile production)</li> <li>• Low level in tourism investments related to Silk Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Untapped Silk Road heritage, ready to utilization</li> <li>• Unexploited potential for differentiation of tourism supply towards higher-value added and 365 days attractions, through WSR based experiences</li> <li>• Greece to be established as one of the most important WSR destinations</li> <li>• Contribution of the Information and communication technologies (ICTs) to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External obstacles to the exploitation and tourism development of the WSR cultural resources</li> <li>• Potential reduction in domestic tourism (due to economic crisis)</li> <li>• Potential economic crisis to countries of origin of WSR tourists</li> <li>• Absence of European and national funding sources</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeless experience in the maritime trade on the Silk Routes</li> <li>• Notable destination-based WSR experiences</li> <li>• In some regions young people turn towards silkworm sector</li> </ul>		<p>sustainable tourism development UNWTO and EU Projects concerning Silk Road Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for funding from European, national and regional Programmes</li> <li>• The increase of organised and individual foreign tourists supplies cultural consumption and networking.</li> </ul>	
<i>Natural resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural resources of great ecological importance and Protected Areas by international agreements (e.g. Natura 2000, Ramsar Convention)</li> <li>• Rich Biodiversity</li> <li>• Mild weather conditions</li> <li>• Great energy resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None relevant policy/plan between natural resources and Silk Roads</li> <li>• Limited development of natural resources as tourism products</li> <li>• Wrong development policies (economic development vs environmental protection) during the last decades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU policies in favor of sustainable tourism development</li> <li>• Increasing awareness for environmental protection</li> <li>• Significant development prospects of special and alternative forms of tourism</li> <li>• Technology improved cultivations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change, environmental pollution and degradation of natural resources</li> <li>• Low level of political long-term commitment safeguarding environmental protection</li> <li>• Low public/community participation in initiatives for environmental protection (e.g. recycling)</li> </ul>

<p><i>Cultural Heritage</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich multicultural resources</li> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments in UNESCO World Heritage List</li> <li>• Numerous industrial heritage buildings, linked to silk production (e.g. Metaxourgio, Chrysallis)</li> <li>• Rich tradition in creative sectors (Art, Crafts and Design)</li> <li>• Significant intangible cultural heritage linked to WSR (mythology, fairs, music/ dance/ theater festivals and cultural events – e.g. International Fair of Thessaloniki as a node of international cooperation)</li> <li>• Significant cultural tangible heritage linked to WSR (historical sites, architectural heritage and modern culture)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None relevant policy/plan between cultural resources and Silk Roads</li> <li>• Weakness in creating new cultural tourism products.</li> <li>• Incoherence of innovative efforts</li> <li>• Local culture/ intangible cultural heritage is unnoticeable in the dominant tourism image</li> <li>• Delays and shortcomings in the development of complete tourism products and services for the cultural experience</li> <li>• Lack of long term policy initiatives towards integrated revitalization plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many areas across the country have strong historical connection with Silk Road and can become nodes in a Greek Silk Road route (e.g. Soufl, Goumenissa, Thessaloniki, Edessa, Pelion, Athens etc.)</li> <li>• Activities related to gastronomy and local traditional cuisine are good opportunities for revitalizing local economy and employment</li> <li>• E.U. funds for cultural protection and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degradation of local identity in mass tourism destinations</li> <li>• Climate change/ environmental threats to cultural heritage monuments</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant poles of silk production with economic benefits of silk exports (i.e. Soufli)</li> <li>• Existence of infrastructure connected with silk road tourism still operating/ Modern silkworm units (e.g. Rizia Evros)</li> </ul>			
<i>Services – Infrastructure - Accessibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth accessibility of Silk Road areas, through International airports, harbors, railway network main road axes (i.e. Egnatia Motorway)</li> <li>• Modern communication and transport hubs</li> <li>• Reduced time travel</li> <li>• Most regions have not exhausted their infrastructure capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delays in completing infrastructure projects</li> <li>• Non-complete transportation facilities drain the exports</li> <li>• Low level of transport services (delays, cancelations)</li> <li>• Lack of accessibility in less developed regions</li> <li>• In some regions ports are degraded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investments in quality tourism infrastructure</li> <li>• Numerous existing bilateral cooperation agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited transportation options in remote areas</li> <li>• Need for an integrated national transportation system connecting all modes of transport</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism Demand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the most researched Silk Road countries by global travelers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greece’s position in the Silk Road is vague</li> <li>• Low level of familiarity with the new emerging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More diverse tourism demand</li> <li>• Increase of tourists looking for authentic tourism experiences to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in European-international tourism demand for Greek tourism products due to geopolitical changes in the broader region,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the highest rated Silk Road countries</li> <li>• One of the countries historically associated with the Silk Road</li> <li>• Attractive Silk Road destinations all over the country</li> </ul>	<p>markets (especially China)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak update of tourism products on new tourism trends</li> <li>• Mass tourism with high price elasticity of demand and low income elasticity</li> </ul>	<p>share the life style of local communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in demand for personalized and customized holidays and tailored tourism products and services according to the needs of highly competitive market</li> <li>• Increasingly sophisticated travelers, experienced, well-educated, becoming less destination-oriented and more experience-oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugees crisis</li> <li>• Globalised terrorism threats</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tourism Image</b> (focus on Marketing and Promoting the Silk Road)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some areas have already well established brand name as Silk Road destinations (i.e. Soufli)</li> <li>• Some areas have already well established brand name as textile production destinations (i.e. Kastoria, Kozani)</li> <li>• Relatively high attractiveness (i.e.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack in tourism promotion targeted in the WSR</li> <li>• Low awareness of local silk road roots</li> <li>• Existence of a blurry image of the relation between tourism – culture</li> <li>• Low usage of the existing Silk Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiation of the tourism product, according to regional comparative advantages, by strengthening the Silk Road Tourism</li> <li>• Broadening and adopting sustainable tourism and best WSR tourism practices More cohesive marketing and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic crisis may deprive of resources necessary for the operation and maintenance of cultural infrastructure.</li> </ul>

	<p>Soufli Silk Feast is important for silk cultural heritage promotion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some areas have developed strong local character related to their tourism image</li> <li>• Variety of quality local gastronomy products (e.g. olive oil, wine, etc.)</li> <li>• Name of origin local products</li> </ul>	<p>identity across the country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism image of Greece mainly as a sun-sea destination</li> <li>• Many of the old silk build heritage is rather degraded (i.e. Edessa mills)</li> </ul>	<p>promotional campaigns to include territorial diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human resources strategies to attract and retain qualified employees in the industry</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Tourism stakeholders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism stakeholders interested in cross-border partnerships, willing to explore new markets and engage new partners</li> <li>• Bodies and agencies intensely active in protecting and promoting cultural heritage and the environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty of local authorities in their leading the development of best practices for cultural tourism and WSR initiatives Difficulty by local authorities in adapting a tourism development model with differentiated structural characteristics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive research to better understand the expectations of travelers</li> <li>• Gradual activation of private sector initiatives</li> <li>• Strong public/ private partnerships</li> <li>• Further research analysis of niche markets and specific strategies to be undertaken by both public and private sector tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing demographics, shifting travel patterns and volatile economic conditions are increasing the pressure on industry stakeholders to develop effective campaigns and business strategies</li> <li>• The fact that requirements of high level coordination and cooperation and innovative partnership arrangements are difficult to achieve</li> </ul>

			<p>stakeholders to upgrade the WSR position within these markets</p>	<p>between tourism stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of the necessary know-how and the adequate coordination and networking of local public and private bodies may lead to ineffective initiatives for the conservation of cultural resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tourism Policy, Planning and Management</b> (at national, regional, local level)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The promotion and creation of a "silk land" network to be included in regional plans, as one of the main axes of regional strategic frameworks</li> <li>• The ongoing restoration programmes of historical industrial heritage buildings (i.e. Chryssalis silk industry restoration in Central Macedonia)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of a comprehensive and rational tourism policy and planning for Greek tourism towards WSR</li> <li>• Lack of a long-term regional strategic vision towards WSR tourism activity</li> <li>• Unsuccessful and inconsistent spatial plans, strategies and policies in tourism development and promotion</li> <li>• Lack of an integrated tourism planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrading tourism in the political agenda at the national, regional and local level</li> <li>• Tourism and cultural development as main national and regional strategic planning objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety issues such as global security concerns have increased the urgency for tourism industry actions</li> <li>• Difficulty in establishing the necessary linkages to ensure the development of collaborative strategies in conjunction with WSR initiatives may lead to critical weakening of a high development potential</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deficiencies in tourism education</li><li>• Bureaucracy obstacles in new entrepreneurial activities and start-ups</li><li>• Lack of cooperation practices in culture and tourism management at the regional and local level.</li><li>• Delays in national and regional planning for the realisation of projects on the revival of mature tourist destinations</li><li>• Lack of institutional inclusion of the cultural product in the processes of tourism development</li></ul>		
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**ANNEX**



**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**“Western Silk Road Tourism Development Initiative”**

**Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**

**Department of Economics**

**Academic Responsible: Stella Kostopoulou, Associate Professor**

**Personal Information**

Name and Surname: .....

Organisation: .....

Position: .....

Organisation’s area of interest / responsibility: .....

Contact details: E-mail .....Tel..... Fax .....

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. According to you, what is «The Silk Road»? Write three representative keywords or phrases that come to mind:

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

2. How would you assess your knowledge on «The Silk Road»?

	No Knowledge	General Knowledge	Specialized Knowledge
History			
Geography			
Tourism products			
Tourism destinations			

3. Share any destination in your organisation’s area of responsibility that has any relation to the Silk Road.

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....

4. How important do you consider the factors below for Silk Road tourists to select your organisations area of responsibility?

	None	Little	Enough	Very	Very much	No relation
Monuments / archaeological sites						
Cultural events (festivals, dance, etc.)						
Gastronomy						
Experience in local communities						
Natural environment / landscape						
Volunteerism/participation in local events						
Extreme sport						
Tourism infrastructure						
Other						

5. Has your organisation any relation to the World Tourism Organisation’s program for the Silk Road? YES  NO

5α. If YES, please describe:  
 .....  
 .....

6. Has your organisation introduced Silk Road promotion into tourism actions/plans/policies within its area of responsibility? YES  NO

6α. If YES, please describe:  
 .....  
 .....

7. Please share any study/research elaborated by your organisation in relation to the Silk Road.

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....

8. Which ones do you consider being the three main positive elements from the development of the Silk Road as tourism product / cultural route in your organisation's area of responsibility?

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....

9. Which ones do you consider being the three main negative elements from the development of the Silk Road as tourism product / cultural route in your organisation's area of responsibility?

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

10. Which ones do you consider being the three main opportunities from the development of the Silk Road as tourism product / cultural route in your organisation's area of responsibility?

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

11. Which ones do you consider being the three main threats from the development of the Silk Road as tourism product / cultural route in your organisation's area of responsibility?

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

12. Which ones do you believe being the three key characteristics to form the tourism image of the Silk Road in Greece?

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

13. Do you wish to participate in initiatives and networks in relation to the Silk Road?

YES  NO

14. Would you like to add anything? (e.g. propositions to promote the Silk Road as an alternative development perspective for country's tourism development?)

.....  
.....

**Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**  
**Department of Economics**  
**Laboratory of Applied Economics and Development**  
**Thessaloniki, December 2016**