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Greece

Declaration of the Central Committee of OKDE-Spartakos on the electoral result and the political situation

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**This statement by the Central Committee of OKDE-SPARTAKOS,
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Social and political polarization

In spite of the inevitably distorted way social formations and phenomena are reflected in the elections, those of May show clearly the constantly increasing polarization between capital and labor. At the same time, we can see the stabilization of a political geography characterized by two elevated wings close to approximately 40% each, the Left and the Right, and a weak and unstable centre.

Social polarization is not directly reflected on politics. The Left, of course, is clearly registering its best results among employees, small business owners and the unemployed, whilst the governmental block, especially Nea Dimokratia (New Democracy, from now on ND) is mainly supported by the bourgeois class and the employers, as well as an important part of the middle and higher rural social strata. The popular and working class districts that traditionally used to vote for PASOK have passed to SYRIZA. The middle strata are in conflict with the governmental block, so SYRIZA has taken the (borderline) lead there as well. The youth and longterm unemployed vote for the Left, while the older layers, who still have important material relationships with the old-time political system and their favor, vote for the Right. On the other side, there is political polarization even inside working class and popular districts: the highest percentages for the Left come together with the highest ones for Golden Dawn (GD) and sometimes of the Independent Greeks. [1] GD is recording its lowest percentages among employees and organized workers spaces (civil servants) and its peak is among employers and businessmen. Apart from these strata, GD also gathers young unemployed people and individualistic lower classes, showing that they can convert the anger and the disappointment of a part of the popular layers towards the reactionary direction of hatred against immigrants, the Left and the different or weakest ones, from a class point of view.

The continuous crisis of the bourgeois political system is a dominant characteristic of the political scene, with its highlight to be the decomposition of the governmental block. Within two years, the government (including Democratic Left-DL [2]) has lost more than 15% of the overall voters. The crisis has to do mainly with PASOK, who are celebrating that they lost only the 1/3 of their 2012 votes with their decision to participate in the European Parliament Elections as ELIA. [3] PASOK collapsed for 40 to 8% within 5 years, due to the fact that the social compromise (always under the dominance of the capitalist class interests) on which they based their power for decades. The working class abandoned it massively, as it became obvious that PASOK is no more willing to do any sort of allowances towards the workers, even compared to ND. The biggest part of the voters and ex-members of PASOK turn to the Left, even in an unstable way with unclear intentions, although another part of it, which is mostly socially and politically ruined, turn to the far right.

ND is mainly losing votes towards GD, although there are parts of their voters turning to the left, but obviously in a slower and more hesitant way in comparison to the ones of PASOK. ND continues to be the first choice of the national bourgeois class and their European allies. They have a more clear class functionality in comparison to PASOK and is bound to remain the basic bourgeois political point of reference in the future. This is the reason why, in spite of their 7% overall decrease, ND does not collapse. However, their mid-term perspective is not so favourable and the ruling class has to find alternatives.

The hybrid formations that cannot enter the two political poles in a clear way are vanishing. DL's crash was the result

of their opportunism. Their leadership is interpreting the electoral result as a sign for a right turn and firm integration of their majority to the centre-left. The IG are surviving, but with severe losses, as the part of the bourgeois class that used to support them has turned back to ND, while their popular base is attracted by GD. Potami [4] recorded an important percentage, however did not achieve its declaration goal, which was for them to be the third party of the political scene and participate in the political life in the next period. The future of this newborn liberal centre-left formation is more than uncertain.

An important aspect of the political crisis, of the crisis of the bourgeois parties and the social polarization is the victory of the minoritarian Party of Equity, Peace and Friendship in Thrace (Northern-Eastern Greece), as well as the fact that their candidates in a series of municipalities. The attachment of the Thrace minority on the ruling parties, especially PASOK, is no more, and the minority issue is returning in explosive terms on the political map. The historical and systemic oppression of the Greek State on the national groups of Turks, Pomacs and Thrace Rom can no longer stay in the shadows, although the media are doing their best to silence their yelling and given the indifference of the parliamentary left. The anticapitalist left cannot allow for nationalist propaganda on the issue, such as the rumors on the financial support of the Turkish embassy and government on the minority party, as this conceals the political essence, which is the oppression of the minority. It is not possible to organize real political work in Thrace while ignoring the vote of Muslim people and without clear positions for their rights.

As a result, it is clear that the system is not stabilizing itself at all, in spite of any governmental or EU declarations for the opposite. The rupture opened by the crisis and the big class confrontations is not closed at all, despite the relative stagnation of workers' and social struggles during the last two years. The political situation of the days cannot be solved without important political and social confrontations, without confrontation between the block of the bourgeois power and the organized labor and popular movement. So, the political guidelines of offensive strategy chosen by the anticapitalist and revolutionary left during the period that followed the imposition of the memoranda are still valid.

First of all, the need for the development of an overthrowing movement, a labor and popular uprising that will overthrow the government of Samaras-Venizelos, thus casting aside the illusions of SYRIZA's motto "we vote on the 25th, they leave on the 26th".

Forces and limits of the Left

The victory of SYRIZA in the elections for the European Parliament as well as a series of municipalities of Athens has a big symbolic importance, as it discourages the bourgeois class and intensifies the crisis of their political hegemony. At the same time, the rapid social-democratization of SYRIZA, their often and warm meetings with the Association of Greek Industry Owners, the statements of R. Dourou on the EU grants, the agreement with ship-owner and alleged oil smuggler Mellissanidis of the construction of (his team) AEK stadium may show that under some conditions a part of the bourgeois class could trust SYRIZA, but these are not yet enough for the capitalists. Contrary to PASOK of the '80's, SYRIZA is not in the position to control the unions in a political and organizational way, which makes them less attractive in the eyes of the bourgeois class as a tool for class control. And of course, the bourgeois class has no reason to accept them so long as the pressure of the movement remains minor. So, the Greek capital did not welcome the victory of SYRIZA and they definitely did not welcome the decline of the electoral power of the government.

However, neither the immediate political results nor the overthrowing potential of SYRIZA's victory should be overestimated. First of all, the government does not face an immediate stability problem, as they have enough members of the parliament and under some terms they can even add to them some of the many "independent" members of the parliament. [5] Although it is notable for a government to elect only one third of the European Parliament representatives, the election results, especially those of the regional elections, have not created an

immediate problem of survival for them. We voted against them on the 25th, but they didn't leave on the 26th: the main motto of SYRIZA's campaign was more of electoral blackmail for gathering the vast majority of the anti-governmental votes than an actual plan.

ND's boast that SYRIZA surpassed them without achieving more votes or percentage is comical. However, it is a fact that a massive left current was not formed and the greatest part of the increase in left votes was directed to KKE and ANTARSYA. The middle layers have not abandoned the governmental parties in an organized way and in a generally left-oriented direction, but show a tendency to disperse themselves in all directions, integrating into the far-right as well and allowing for the efforts to regroup the centre to survive. Thus, the general result of the elections cannot be described as a "turn to the Left".

The political responsibility of the leaderships of KKE and SYRIZA for decelerating the social movement towards the Left is huge. During the previous summer, the workers' movement had the chance to overthrow the government through the climax of their struggles. The decision of secondary education professors to strike during the exams of May 2013, despite the government's Acts who forced them to work on legal terms and under the threat of massive layoffs, the workers' uprising after the closing down of the public TV broadcast that forced DL to exit the government in June 2013, the second strike of the professors in September, the mobilization against public-sector layoffs during September and October and of course the antifascist explosion that followed the murder of Pavlos Fyssas, which offered the chance to link antifascism with the workers' uprising, had created an explosive social concoction for Samaras and Venizelos. SYRIZA's leadership kept a stance of expectation for the elections, while the KKE leadership's tactic of avoiding a climax of the movement so that does not benefit SYRIZA, thus allowing for the federation bureaucracy to declimax the struggle. The barrage of general strikes that the public TV workers needed never happened. The antifascist movement's need for a nation-wide antifascist strike was never posed by the unions.

This is why the political polarization may be intense, but is increasing in a moderate tempo in the last months. This shows the limits of the enthusiasm caused to the workers and the oppressed the main part of the Left, SYRIZA, and their plan. SYRIZA was voted for in the European Parliament elections and in the Athens district county, that is in the elections that were seemingly more directly linked to the central political scene, but did not manage to mobilize people under the motto "three elections – one vote". [6] Although they won the biggest county, they lost 11 out of 13 overall and managed to enter the second round of the elections only in two of them. Respectively, although they won in a series of municipalities in the different districts of Athens, in a series of other local elections their participation was a mediocre one. This phenomenon is not irrelevant with the survival of material relationships and reconciliations with local authorities, which re-increased after the allowance of the distribution of EU grants by the counties. In local levels the political system is seemingly much steadier than in a central level. But that is not enough to explain the inconsistency of SYRIZA's electoral results. It is obvious that the vote to SYRIZA is considered by an important part of the popular layers as the least bad vote, no more than a tool to overthrow the government. The demands for SYRIZA are relatively low and the vote to them is not linked to an active orientation in the movement, as was clear in the pre-electoral period. The same person who votes for SYRIZA in the central elections may support or even mobilize for KKE or the anticapitalist left in the counties, the municipality, their workers' or student union. This means that the support of the working class and the oppressed to SYRIZA is not definitive, class conscience is still fluid and constantly changing and the potential for the anticapitalist left still remains big – but this has to do with the policy they will follow.

KKE is apparently satisfied with their partial regaining of the lost votes of June 2012 [7], as well as the victory of their municipal candidates in 4 big municipalities. [8]KKE seems to resist the pressure, despite their sectarian and defeatist policy of their leadership, showing that the party still has important popular roots. Given the poor results in a series of peripheral elections, without the pressure of SYRIZA, the optimism of KKE's leadership is not justified at all.

In any case, the Left is in control of two counties and some important municipalities. This will definitely lead to important pressure for political adjustment to the level of the bourgeois parties through the need for managing the

local authorities. The anticapitalist left has to keep the right to support any progressive act of the left municipal and county authorities and although they did offer a critical support in favor of the reformists in the second round of the elections, should not undertake the political responsibility of the administration of bourgeois institutions, or bind to support a priori any left mayor. In this point of view, the case of Chalandri [\[9\]](#) needs special attention.

Golden Dawn

GD's rise as the third party of the political scene, although expected by the polls, is a phenomenon which demands immediate and radical treatment. The nazi current has gained depth in the society, giving expression to petit-bourgeois rage and will for revenge, as they see their financial power declining and their links to the power and their traditional political representation to be cut violently, while their conservative traditions and individual situation does not allow for them to turn left. Sociologically, GD represents a league of businessmen and employers of all levels, as well as unemployed people and impoverished self-employed. Their emphasis is shown in the middle ages and the part of the youth that abandons education and does not enter the university, that is found more in the popular than the richer districts. In this point of view, GD is the agent of capital in the petit-bourgeois and lower classes.

It is obvious that the legal accusations the government was forced to adopt against the Nazis, did give an important blow to the mechanisms of GD, but are not enough by themselves to cast the fascist danger aside. The strategy of "constitutional" or "democratic alliance" against the Nazis, that is the alliance with the government, the State and the police, who fostered the Nazis in a systematic way, is not only an illusion, not only binds the Left on bourgeois legality and renders it politically neutralized by making it a follower of the Right and Social-Democracy, but also tends to aid the Nazis show that they are truly the only political power that is against the political system.

The rise of GD underlines the urgency for bringing antifascist activity to a climax. After all, it is the victories of the antifascist movement that did not allow for the fascist threat to thrive. GD was forced to an electoral campaign without offensive mottos and relatively less racist rhetoric, in relation to the past. They were incapable of making public appearances, or take their squads on the street. Their offensive activity was diminished to a few attacks, mainly against ANTARSYA. It is logical to assume that without the great antifascist movement of the autumn of 2013 that their electoral result would be even higher and they would achieve their basic electoral objectives, which were an overall percentage higher than 10% in the European Parliament elections and their candidate to enter the second round in the elections for the Municipality of Athens.

Fascism cannot be treated with calls for the government and "justice", or with positive statements for the voters of GD, who can no longer call upon their unawareness of the murderous nature of the organization. What we need is a united front of all workers' organizations and left parties in action, with combative wide antifascist committees in every workspace and neighborhood, massive mobilization along with systematic antifascist propaganda in all levels. The anticapitalist left, which has shown very good reflexes at times, continues to carry the Stalinist tradition of undermining the duty of antifascist struggle, needs to lead a new round of assemblies, interventions and mobilizations that has to begin as soon as possible.

European Elections in the rest of Europe

On a European level, the elections were marked by a similar, but not of the same size, decomposition of the bourgeois coalitions which imposed and managed austerity as a class offensive of capital against labor. Again the social-democrats are the parties under the highest pressure, however the European Popular Party has important losses, although they remain the first party of the European Parliament. The most impressive and dangerous issue is

of course the rise of the far-right, who prove to be the first parties in France, Denmark and Austria and has neonazis elected in Greece and Germany. At the same time, the right-orientated euroscepticism of N. Farage wins the election in Great Britain. These currents manage to get anti-governmental votes, but also reflect a sharpening of national contrasts inside the EU framework.

The left has benefited in few countries. In some cases (Spanish State, Portugal, Ireland, Czech Republic) the reformist left has managed to achieve important results. On the left of reformism we note the case of PODEMOS in the Spanish State (where the section of the Fourth International has one member elected in the European Parliament), the coalition against the EU in Denmark, with the participation of the Red-Green Alliance [10], as well as the election of a CWI section member in Ireland. In general however, the vague character of these formations, the very bad result for the NPA and LO in France and the crisis of the British SWP reveal a crisis of the anticapitalist left, despite the important chances offered by the period. In this harsh environment, the discussion started between ANTARSYA and NPA is important, as these two collectivities carry the burden of regrouping the anticapitalist left in a European level.

It is a fact that the position towards the EU was one of the most crucial political questions of the elections. The Left, a part of which is trapped in a pro-EU old-time shake eurocommunist strategy, tends to undermine the question. The explanation of a rise of the far-right as a consequence of the negligence of the Left to pose anti-EU questions and demands is too shallow and ignores the class basis for their political rise. The different examples of each country are, after all, quite contradictory: GD rose without anti-EU positions, while the long-lasting anti-EU tradition of the Danish Left did not prove to block the rise of the far-right. It would be even more arbitrary and biased to suggest that what the anticapitalist left actually lacks, in Greece and in other countries, is a direction towards national independence, especially at the point it has become clear that the Left has failed (willingly or not) to highlight the social, class source of crisis and austerity.

ANTARSYA and the anti-capitalist formations

ANTARSYA took part in the elections being in a difficult position. First, because of an extraneous factor: the workers' tendency to vote for 'the lesser of two evils', which in this case is SYRIZA, in order to cause the collapse of the government, a choice made not only in parliamentary elections, the second reason being on the inside of ANTARSYA, having to do with the bad mood and the political division within the coalition. Actually, the gap from the process of joining with Plan B 12, a strategic debate, had not narrowed neither before nor after the elections. Regardless of this situation, ANTARSYA's participation in the elections was independent, while a significant part of the coalition along with member –organisations disagreed, a fact that could have nothing but consequences.

Additionally, in the previous period, ANTARSYA posed insufficiently and unsuccessfully at times the transitional programme that is necessary in the crisis. The one-sided manifestation of the EU and the euro currency issue, regardless of the political importance included in the inconsistency with these international capitalist and imperialist mechanisms, not only is programmatically vague, but proved to be unattractive as well. Overemphasis on leaving the euro and the EU doesn't counterbalance the lack of slogans, on the one hand, such as pay rise and prohibition of dismissal that should be immediate and of demands that bring out the issue of power on the other. The slogan 'power and wealth to workers' was only in the last poster and that not before the complaints of OKDE-SPARTAKOS. The workers' control which was the centre point in the previous campaigns was now overshadowed. The anti-capitalist left cannot hope that a magical slogan will make people come close. On the contrary, it must promote all the axes of the transitional programme and the revolutionary plan with clarity and perseverance, particularly in a period that the working class is seeking overall answers.

Nevertheless, in the elections for the regions and in some municipalities as well, the forces ANTARSYA,

collaborating in some cases with other revolutionary and anti-capitalist organizations, had a very positive result.

12: a small organization set up by Alekos Alavanos in 2012, the former leader of SYRIZA that our comrades in ANTARSYA wanted to co-operate with.

The 2,4% and the about 130.000 votes (30.000 more than in 2010) in the regional elections, show clearly that an anti-capitalist current is for the first time recognizable and of a wide range all around Greece. In spite of SYRIZA supporters' opinion, it seemed that the working class is not frustrated with ANTARSYA because of not voting for SYRIZA in June 2012. Moreover, despite the disunion of the forces, the unwillingness of an ANTARSYA's part to mobilize themselves and the delay of the election campaign, the experience we had was positive if we take into account our communication with the workers, the unemployed and the lower classes, the political discussions we had with them and the spread of the anti-capitalist Marxist views. The opinion that ANTARSYA is a sincerely militant and anti-systemic force which broad parts of these classes share, is favourable and the political attempt is more widely known than before.

In municipal elections the picture was more complicated. In general, the point of view claiming that the formations characterized by grounding in local fights and a consistent participation in the movement are rewarded in the elections, is correct. In these particular circumstances, this was reaffirmed in some cases (Peristeri, Dafni). [11] However, in some other cases, electoral pressure was exercised on formations with important fights in the past, although they managed to elect delegates for the local councils again (Vironas, N. Smirni, Zografou). On the other hand, several formations emerging for the first time, got very good results, although they had various different characteristics depending on the case. Actually, the factors defining each formation's progress were even more complicated: not only the actual involvement in the movements, but the opponents' ballot papers in the area, the situation in the inside, whether it had the support by the whole of ANTARSYA or not, whether they responded to existing local needs, regardless of the problems during their creation (e.g. Nikaia) etc. Unfortunately, the battle for the municipal elections, although in some cases it had very good results, was not united. Every organization issued their own list of the formations to be supported, and sometimes these formations had absolutely no connection with ANTARSYA; just the title was unilaterally and unfairly used.

In Giannena [12] and Patra [13], the forces of ANTARSYA not only voted for but also were on the opponents' ballot papers. The battle for the heads of the formations, apart from having as an outcome the vast majority of the elected to belong to one particular organization, in several occasions ended up in a situation where half of ANTARSYA didn't practically support its local formation. The most problematic phenomenon, however, was that in various cases, comrades and whole constituent organizations of ANTARSYA took part in SYRIZA's ballot papers or officially co-operated SYRIZA (Mytilene, Halandri). Even so, however, the result of the municipal elections, especially in the region of Attiki [14] is favourable.

Nonetheless, in the European Parliament Election, ANTARSYA, couldn't hold but a small percentage of votes compared to those of the regional election, which is not interpreted only from the fact that there were a great deal of ballot papers. The result of 0.74% is not good, even if it is improved in comparison with the previous European elections and Parliamentary elections as well in June 2012. The way in which the anti-capitalist left will persuade the militants who join it in the movement to support its proposal in the elections too, when they choose the "useful vote" for SYRIZA to a great extent, is in question. The stabilization of ANTARSYA's political influence in all levels is a real problem to be solved. However, it wasn't such a negative result so as to bring the future and the use of an independent front of the anti-capitalist left into question.

Joining (with Plan B) and perspectives of the anti-capitalist left

Despite the several desires or scenarios over the plan of joining, which dominated the political debate of ANTARSYA during the last year, this plan is emphatically disproved. Plan B's election campaign does not allow approaches. Alavanos chose a personalized campaign, with slogans that fall short not only of the necessary anti-capitalist transitional programme in a period of financial crisis, but of the negotiations during the previous time with ANTARSYA. Furthermore, this campaign could not have a chance in the elections. The unsuccessful negotiations concerning the joining had some cost for ANTARSYA.

However, the cost ANTARSYA would have to bear, if the negotiations succeeded leading the coalition to take the political responsibility for Plan B, would be bigger. A possible reintroduction of the proposal for a new round of negotiations about the joining would be disastrous and disruptive. The political and programme prerequisites posed by the conference of ANTARSYA about the joining were examined and proved to be unreal. It is taken for granted that the unsatisfactory electoral result in the European elections will reintroduce points of view according to which the anti-capitalism is limited and requires a wider left front.

The discussion about the programme and the pursuit of a proper revolutionary strategy today is not only rightful but essential too. The idea, though, that we need a moderate adaptation, a front intervening between the present ANTRASYA and SYRIZA or a political orientation not "closely anti-capitalist" any more would be absolutely wrong. The conclusion of the political advances is totally different: in the environment of a financial and political crisis which cannot be healed, in a situation of unstable and unsettled conscience and in a political correlation where the left realism and every reformative and managerial proposal is dominated by SYRIZA's attempt, the duty of the revolutionary Marxists is to develop an alternative and distinctly anti-capitalist means. A means that will not refuse the militant unity in the streets, but it will preserve its political and organizational independence on the basis of an anti-capitalist programme and the revolutionary methodology and will prepare a minor but existing part of the workers and the repressed for the next stages, building the fights and the social resistance.

ANTARSYA's report on the elections must not be based on the criteria of "parliamentary cretinism" (this does not mean, of course, that the electoral results do not play any role at all), but mainly on the criterion of the political efficiency concerning the participation during the election campaign, the spread of the anti-capitalist ideas, the picture that the workers have about the front, the political bonds that were forged during this political experience, the possibilities for political initiatives that arose regarding the period after the elections. In the next period, ANTARSYA should immediately take political initiatives for the movement as well and fight practically against the parliamentary illusions which immobilize the workers' movement in anticipation of the governmental change through the elections and paralyze its action today. In order to manage this, ANTARSYA must get rid of its own illusions too.

Above all, ANTARSYA must build political relations with the militants who voted for it in the elections. The answer to the way in which ANTARSYA's electoral influence will be stabilized lies in the transformation of its relation with the people from electoral to political, in people's acquisition of the sense that ANTARSYA is the tool that they will use to take political action themselves.

OKDE-SPARTAKOS and the elections

OKDE-SPARTAKOS took part in the political process of the elections actively, participating in the ballot for the European parliamentary election, for 8 regional and several municipal anti-capitalist slates as well. It did not intend to fill in the lists with candidates to boost its status as if there was a runway. On the contrary, it proposed particular comrades who were politically related to the elections and could be actively occupied with them. The picture of the candidates' participation was positive.

Declaration of the Central Committee of OKDE-Spartakos on the electoral result and the political situation

Although OKDE-SPARTAKOS stated its opinion about the content, the slogans and the heads of the slates wherever it had forces to interfere, and in some cases this opinion was strongly supported, OKDE-SPARTAKOS did not selectively support the slates of ANTARSYA. Whether its opinion outvoted or not, whether it had its own candidates or not and whether the heads of the slates were of OKDE-SPARTAKOS' choice or not, the organization invested its forces, taking into consideration the limits of its potential, in the success of these lists. So, this enables us to criticize strongly the organizations and the members that did not have such an attitude.

Finally, OKDE-SPARTAKOS, in accordance with ANTARSYA's decisions, tried at the same time to propagandise its own particular views. These views about the progress of the class struggle, the duties of the anti-capitalist left and the perspectives of ANTARSYA will be stated in all the processes of the front as well during the next period.

[1] Populist split of ND, anti – memoranda rhetoric, looking into supporting a possible SYRIZA government. From now on IG.

[2] Dimokratiki Aristera – Democratic Left is a right wing split from SYRIZA that joined the government from June 2012 to June 2013, when the government closed the public tv broadcast. Since then they support critically parts of the governmental policies.

[3] ELIA, i.e. Olive, symbol of the social-liberal coalition of PASOK and splits of PASOK that participated in the European Parliament elections as the Greek section of the European Democratic Party.

[4] Potami, i.e River, is a newly-formed liberal party controlled by media people and other well-known liberals who had no important success in Greek politics so far.

[5] More than 20 members of ND, PASOK and IG have split from them after being elected in the elections of June 2012 and remain in the parliament as "independent". Their links to ND and PASOK mainly make them a good "transfer" target for the two parties whenever some other members of their parliamentary teams resign/split, so that the government keeps the 150+1/300 parliamentary members support. ND now counts 125 and PASOK 29.

[6] On 18 May 18 there was the vote for counties and municipalities and on 25 May the vote for the European Parliament.

[7] They rose from 4,5% (June 2012) to 6%, although they recorded an actual 8,5% in May 2012.

[8] In Patra, Chaidari (western Athens), Petroupoli (same), Ikaria.

[9] The Mayor elected comes from SYRIZA, with members of ANTARSYA participating in the same municipal formation and elected in the Municipal Council.

[10] Both formations scored around 8%.

[11] All these are suburbs of Athens and municipalities as well.

[12] also: Ioannina the largest city in Epirus; the 8th in Greece

[13] The third largest urban area in Greece; it lies in the northern Peloponnese

[14] Attiki is the biggest region of Greece, where Athens, the capital of Greece is located.