YOUR CONFIDENCE
ACCOUNTING & ADVISORY

YC INSIGHTS

Doing Business in Greece

A Practical Guide for International Businesses & Investors

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Executive Summary

Greece has established itself as one of Southern Europe's most attractive destinations for international investment, combining political stability, European Union membership and a modern, business-oriented regulatory environment.

Strategically located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa, Greece provides direct access to the European Single Market while serving as a regional hub for Southeast Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean. Continuous economic reforms, digital transformation and an increasingly investment-friendly legislative framework have significantly enhanced the country's competitiveness and ease of doing business.

Today, international investors are increasingly choosing Greece not only for its globally recognised tourism industry, but also for its expanding opportunities in real estate, shipping, renewable energy, logistics, technology, professional services and infrastructure.

This publication provides a concise overview of the principal legal, tax and regulatory considerations for establishing and operating a business in Greece. Rather than providing an exhaustive legal analysis, it highlights the practical issues that business leaders, entrepreneurs and investors should consider before entering the Greek market.

Why Greece?

Greece offers a compelling combination of strategic location, political stability and access to one of the world's largest economic markets through its membership of the European Union and the Eurozone.

Over the past decade, the country has implemented significant structural reforms, modernised its corporate and tax framework and accelerated the digitalisation of public administration, creating a more transparent and efficient business environment.

Beyond its traditional strengths, Greece has emerged as a regional investment hub, attracting multinational groups, family offices, institutional investors and entrepreneurs seeking sustainable growth opportunities.

Particular investment activity continues to be recorded across sectors such as tourism and hospitality, real estate development, shipping and maritime services, renewable energy, logistics, technology and digital infrastructure.

For international businesses seeking a stable European jurisdiction with competitive operating costs, highly qualified professionals and an extensive network of Double Taxation Treaties, Greece represents an increasingly attractive destination for long-term investment.

Why International Investors Choose Greece

- Strategic location connecting Europe, Asia and Africa
- Member of the European Union, the Eurozone and the OECD
- Stable legal and regulatory framework aligned with EU legislation
- Competitive corporate tax environment
- Extensive Double Taxation Treaty network
- Attractive holding company and participation exemption regime, subject to applicable statutory conditions
- Highly skilled and multilingual workforce
- Modern digital public administration and tax compliance systems
- One of the world's leading tourism destinations, offering significant investment opportunities in hospitality, luxury real estate and tourism infrastructure
- Global leadership in shipping and maritime services
- Expanding renewable energy, logistics and technology sectors
- Excellent quality of life for executives, entrepreneurs and expatriates

Practical Insight

While tax considerations remain important, international investors increasingly select Greece for a broader combination of advantages, including political stability, EU market access, a strategic geographic position and attractive opportunities across high-growth sectors.

Successful investments are typically driven by sound corporate structuring, effective governance and careful long-term planning, rather than tax considerations alone.

At a Glance

KEY FACTS

Capital	**Athens**
Currency	**Euro (€)**
Official Language	**Greek**
Legal System	**Civil Law**
EU Membership	**Since 1981**
Eurozone Membership	**Since 2001**
Corporate Income Tax	**22%**
Standard VAT Rate	**24%**
Accounting Framework	**Greek GAAP / IFRS (where applicable)**
Double Tax Treaties	**50+ jurisdictions**

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We help businesses establish, operate and grow in Greece with confidence.

Which Business Structure Is Right for You?

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE	RECOMMENDED STRUCTURE
Small and medium-sized businesses	**Private Company (IKE)**
Medium and large enterprises	**Société Anonyme (S.A.)**
International groups expanding into Greece	**Branch**
Regional shared service centres	**Law 89 Company**
Regulated activities (banking, insurance, investment services)	**S.A.**

Overview of the Main Legal Entities

PRIVATE COMPANY (IKE)

The IKE is the most widely used corporate vehicle for new businesses established in Greece.
It combines limited liability with operational flexibility and does not require a minimum share capital, making it particularly attractive for start-ups, SMEs and foreign-owned businesses.

Key Advantages

- No minimum share capital
- Limited liability
- Fast incorporation process
- Flexible corporate governance
- Suitable for most international investors

SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME (S.A.)

The S.A. is Greece's principal corporate vehicle for medium and large-sized businesses.
It is generally preferred by businesses seeking institutional investment, external financing or more sophisticated corporate governance structures.

Key Advantages

- Enhanced corporate credibility
- Suitable for larger investments
- Strong governance framework
- Preferred for regulated sectors
- Appropriate for complex ownership structures

BRANCH OF A FOREIGN COMPANY

A branch allows an existing foreign company to establish a commercial presence in Greece without creating a separate legal entity.
It is commonly used by multinational groups expanding their international operations.

Key Advantages

- Direct extension of the parent company
- No share capital requirement
- Suitable for international groups
- Simplified organisational structure

LAW 89 COMPANY

Companies established under **Law 89/1967** may provide specific services exclusively to affiliated companies located outside Greece, subject to the applicable legal framework. This regime is frequently used by multinational groups establishing regional service or support centres.

Practical Insight

In our experience, the choice between an **IKE** and an **S.A.** is rarely driven solely by tax considerations. Governance, financing requirements, shareholder structure, future expansion plans and exit strategy often have a greater long-term impact on the success of an investment.

For the majority of foreign-owned SMEs entering the Greek market, the **IKE** provides the most flexible and cost-effective solution. Larger investment projects, regulated activities and businesses seeking institutional financing generally favour the **S.A.** structure.

At a Glance

Before establishing your business in Greece, we recommend evaluating the following:

- The most appropriate legal vehicle
- Shareholding and ownership structure
- Corporate governance requirements
- Tax implications
- Financing strategy
- Accounting and reporting obligations
- Payroll and employment requirements
- Long-term expansion and exit strategy

Key Takeaway

Selecting the right legal structure is not simply a legal decision—it is a strategic business decision that will influence taxation, governance, financing, operational flexibility and future growth.

Corporate Tax Framework

A Competitive Tax Environment for International Business

Greece offers a modern corporate tax framework fully aligned with European Union standards, providing a transparent and predictable environment for both domestic and international businesses.

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Beyond the standard corporate tax regime, Greece offers a number of tax provisions that may enhance the efficiency of international business structures, particularly for holding companies, regional headquarters and cross-border investments.

While tax should never be the sole driver of an investment decision, appropriate structuring from the outset can significantly improve operational flexibility and long-term tax efficiency.

Corporate Tax at a Glance

TAX	RATE / OVERVIEW
Corporate Income Tax	**22%**
Dividend Withholding Tax	**5% (subject to domestic exemptions and applicable Double Taxation Treaties)**
Standard VAT	**24%**
Transfer Pricing	**OECD arm's length principle applies**
Accounting Framework	**Greek GAAP or IFRS (where applicable)**
Digital Tax Administration	**Mandatory electronic reporting through myDATA**

STRATEGIC TAX CONSIDERATIONS

Rather than focusing solely on headline tax rates, international investors should also consider the broader tax framework available under Greek legislation.

PARTICIPATION EXEMPTION

Qualifying dividend income received by Greek companies may benefit from participation exemption provisions, subject to the applicable statutory requirements, including minimum participation thresholds and holding period conditions.

CAPITAL GAINS EXEMPTION

Capital gains realised on the disposal of qualifying participations may also be exempt from Greek corporate income tax, provided the relevant legislative conditions are satisfied.

For international groups, this regime may represent an important consideration when designing long-term holding and investment structures.

HOLDING COMPANY OPPORTUNITIES

Greece has become an increasingly attractive jurisdiction for international holding structures, combining:

- Participation exemption provisions
- Capital gains exemption (subject to applicable conditions)
- Extensive Double Tax Treaty network
- EU Parent-Subsidiary Directive benefits
- EU Interest & Royalties Directive (where applicable)

Careful planning should always be undertaken before implementation to ensure compliance with both domestic legislation and international anti-abuse provisions.

DOUBLE TAX TREATY NETWORK

Greece maintains an extensive network of Double Taxation Treaties designed to minimise double taxation and facilitate cross-border investment.

These treaties may reduce withholding taxes on dividends, interest and royalties while providing greater certainty for international investors operating across multiple jurisdictions.

TRANSFER PRICING

Transactions between related parties must comply with the OECD arm's length principle and Greek transfer pricing legislation.

Businesses engaging in cross-border intragroup transactions should ensure that appropriate documentation and supporting evidence are maintained.

DIGITAL TAX ADMINISTRATION

The Greek tax administration has undergone significant digital transformation.

Businesses are expected to comply with electronic bookkeeping and reporting obligations through the myDATA platform, while electronic invoicing is becoming increasingly common across many sectors.

Digital compliance should therefore be incorporated into the accounting and reporting framework from the commencement of operations.

Practical Insight

International investors often compare jurisdictions primarily on the basis of corporate tax rates. In practice, however, the overall efficiency of an investment structure is frequently influenced by a wider combination of factors, including participation exemption provisions, treaty protection, financing arrangements, governance requirements and future exit strategy.

A well-designed corporate structure should therefore be evaluated holistically rather than solely from a tax perspective.

Key Takeaway

Successful international tax planning is achieved through sound corporate structuring rather than low tax rates alone.

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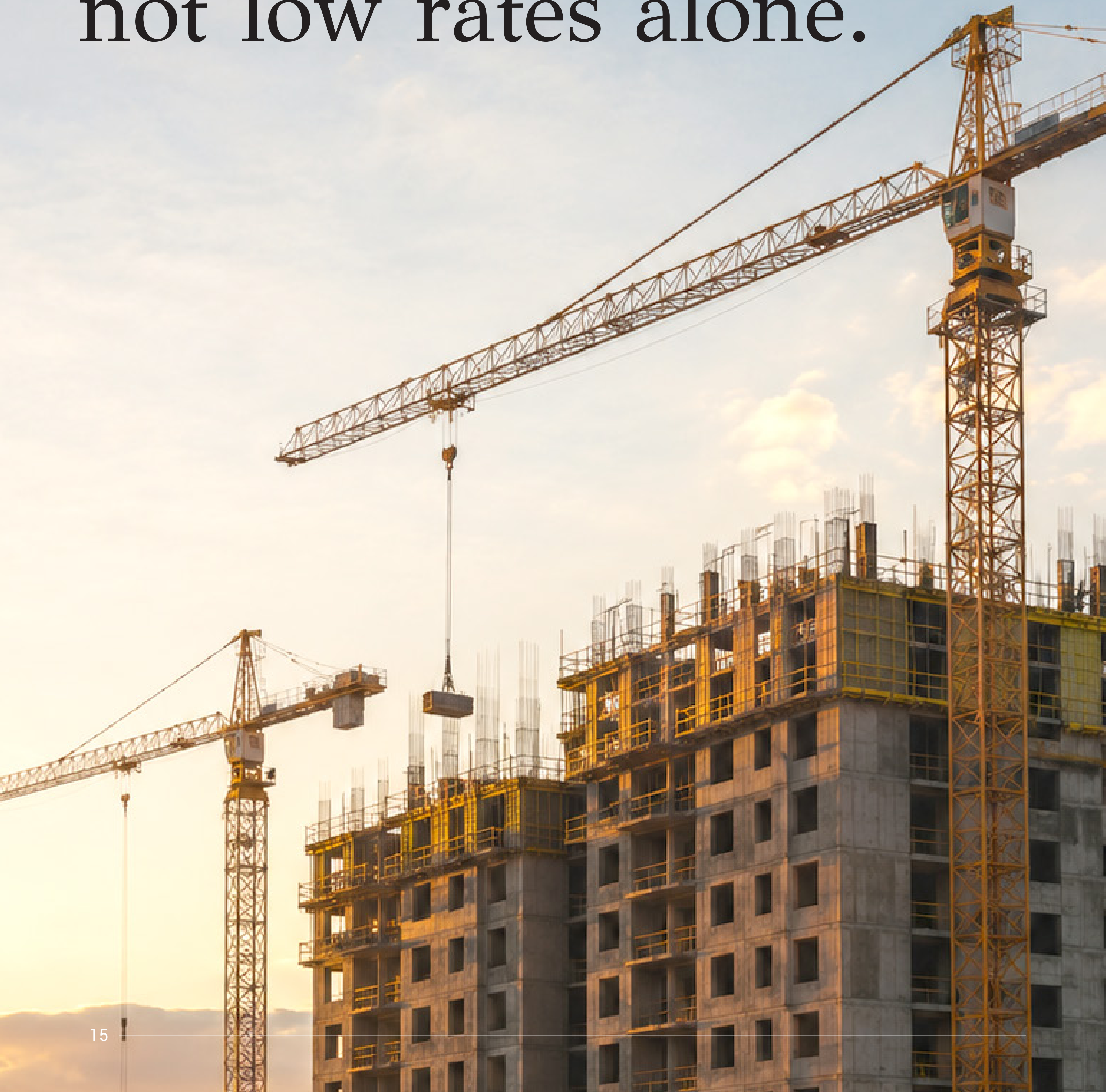
We believe tax efficiency comes from smart structuring, not low rates alone.



Accounting, Financial Reporting & Business Compliance

Building a Business on Strong Foundations

Establishing a company is only the beginning of a successful investment. Long-term success depends on maintaining robust accounting processes, ensuring ongoing tax and regulatory compliance and providing management with reliable financial information to support strategic decision-making.

Greece has significantly modernised its regulatory environment through the digitalisation of tax administration and corporate reporting. Businesses are expected to maintain accurate accounting records, comply with tax filing obligations and meet financial reporting requirements in accordance with the applicable accounting framework.

A well-organised finance and compliance function not only reduces regulatory risk but also enhances transparency, supports business growth and strengthens investor confidence.

ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL REPORTING

Businesses operating in Greece are required to maintain accounting records in accordance with the Greek Accounting Standards (Law 4308/2014) or, where applicable, prepare financial statements under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The applicable reporting framework depends on factors such as the legal form, size and regulatory status of the entity.

Professional accounting and financial reporting ensure compliance with statutory obligations while providing management with meaningful financial information to support informed business decisions.

TAX COMPLIANCE

Businesses are generally required to comply with a number of ongoing tax obligations, including:

- Corporate Income Tax Returns
- VAT Returns
- Withholding Tax Reporting
- Digital Tax Reporting (myDATA)
- Intrastat & VIES Reporting (where applicable)
- Transfer Pricing Documentation (where required)

Timely compliance is essential to minimise tax risk and ensure the smooth operation of the business.

PAYROLL & EMPLOYMENT COMPLIANCE

Employers operating in Greece must comply with employment, payroll and social security legislation from the commencement of their activities.

Key obligations include:

- Employee registration
- Monthly payroll processing
- Social security contributions
- Payroll tax withholding
- Employment reporting through the ERGANI II platform
- Labour law compliance

Efficient payroll administration contributes to regulatory compliance while supporting employee confidence and operational continuity.

DIGITAL COMPLIANCE

Digitalisation has transformed the interaction between businesses and the Greek tax authorities.

Companies are increasingly required to submit accounting data electronically through the myDATA platform, while electronic invoicing and digital reporting continue to expand across the economy.

Businesses should therefore ensure that their accounting systems are capable of meeting current and future digital reporting requirements.

Practical Insight

Many international investors initially view accounting and compliance as purely statutory obligations. In practice, an effective finance function provides valuable management information, strengthens corporate governance and supports strategic decision-making throughout the life cycle of the business.

Key Takeaway

Effective accounting, tax and compliance processes do more than satisfy regulatory requirements—they provide the financial transparency and governance necessary for sustainable business growth.

At a Glance – Ongoing Business Obligations

AREA	TYPICAL REQUIREMENT
Accounting	**Bookkeeping under Greek GAAP or IFRS (where applicable)**
Tax	**Corporate income tax, VAT and withholding tax compliance**
Payroll	**Monthly payroll processing and social security reporting**
Digital Reporting	**myDATA electronic reporting**
Financial Statements	**Annual statutory financial statements**
Audit	**Statutory audit requirements, where applicable**

Planning Your Investment in Greece

Investing with Confidence

Successfully entering a new market requires more than understanding the applicable legislation. It requires careful planning, commercial awareness and a clear understanding of the legal, tax and operational framework within which the business will operate.

Decisions taken at the early stages of an investment—such as selecting the appropriate legal structure, determining the ownership model or designing the financing strategy—often have a lasting impact on operational flexibility, tax efficiency and future expansion opportunities.

A well-planned market entry strategy can significantly reduce implementation risk while providing a solid foundation for sustainable business growth.

BEFORE YOU ESTABLISH YOUR BUSINESS

Before commencing operations in Greece, investors should carefully consider the following:

- Selecting the most appropriate legal entity
- Designing an efficient ownership and governance structure
- Assessing corporate tax implications
- Evaluating VAT registration requirements
- Establishing accounting and financial reporting processes
- Implementing payroll and employment procedures
- Assessing IFRS or group reporting requirements
- Reviewing transfer pricing obligations (where applicable)
- Planning future financing and exit strategies
- Obtaining professional legal, tax and business advice before implementation

COMMON CHALLENGES FOR INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS

Although Greece offers a modern and competitive business environment, international investors frequently encounter practical challenges during market entry.

These may include:

- Selecting the appropriate corporate structure
- Coordinating legal, tax and accounting requirements
- Understanding local regulatory procedures
- Implementing digital tax reporting (myDATA)
- Managing payroll and employment compliance
- Aligning Greek reporting requirements with group reporting standards
- Structuring investments efficiently from both a commercial and tax perspective

Early planning and integrated professional support can significantly simplify the establishment process and minimise implementation risks.

How YC Supports International Businesses

YC provides integrated business advisory services to international investors, multinational groups, entrepreneurs and family offices establishing or expanding their presence in Greece.

Rather than offering isolated professional services, we work alongside our clients throughout the entire investment lifecycle, combining technical expertise with commercial understanding and practical execution.

Our multidisciplinary team supports businesses in every stage of their investment journey—from initial market entry and corporate structuring to ongoing accounting, tax, payroll, financial reporting and corporate compliance.

Our Services

- Business Advisory
- Company Incorporation & Corporate Services
- International Tax Advisory
- Corporate Tax Compliance
- Accounting & Bookkeeping
- Payroll & HR Administration
- Financial Reporting (Greek GAAP & IFRS)
- CFO & Finance Function Support
- Corporate Governance
- Mergers & Acquisitions Support
- Family Office Services
- Real Estate Advisory

Why Clients Choose YC

International clients choose YC because they require more than technical expertise.

They seek a trusted advisor capable of combining business strategy, tax planning, accounting, financial reporting and regulatory compliance into one integrated solution.

Our objective is simple:
To help businesses establish, operate and grow in Greece with confidence.

Final Thought

Every successful investment begins with informed decisions.

Understanding the legal and tax framework is only the first step. Long-term success depends on careful planning, efficient implementation and trusted professional support throughout the investment lifecycle.

At YC, we are committed to helping international businesses transform investment opportunities into sustainable business success.

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We bring technical expertise and commercial understanding together, for real results.

YOUR CONFIDENCE

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