

# Greece

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"[...] we now know that a baby starts the journey an innately musical/ poetical being, moving and hearing with pulse and rhythm, immediately sensitive to the harmonies and discords of human expression, in the Self and in companionship with close Others."

~Powers & Trevarthen

## Snapshot

### Area

Situated in Southeast Europe, Greece covers an area of 131,957 square kilometers with 13,676 km coastline and over 2,000 islands.

### Population

10,787,690 (2011 census)

### Official Language

Greek

### Ethnic Groups

Greek 93%, other 7% (including Albanians 4.32%, Bulgarians 0.39%, and Romanians 0.23%) (2001 census)

### Median Age

42.5 (2011 estimate)

### Children under 5

1,666,888 (15.20%) people are between 0-14 years old (2011 census)

### Sources

Encyclopedia of the Nations, [www.nationsencyclopedia.com](http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com)  
European Union National Language, [www.eurfedling.org](http://www.eurfedling.org)  
Hellenic Statistical Authority, [www.statistics.gr](http://www.statistics.gr)  
World Health Organization, [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

### Demographics

Today, there are approximately 40 certified music therapists practicing in Greece (Tsiris, 2011a). According to the 2008 statistics (Papanikolaou, 2011), almost 60% of the music therapists work in special educational settings, 30% work in mental health, and less than 10% work in medical and hospital settings. A small number of music therapists work in early childhood. More than 70% of music therapists are employed part-time; the majority work in large urban areas.

### Background Information

Music therapy is in formative stages of development in Greece. In 2004, the Hellenic Association of Certified Professional Music Therapists (ESPEM, [www.musictherapy.gr](http://www.musictherapy.gr)) was founded and serves as the official professional body of music therapists in the country. Music therapy is not part of the National

Health System. Despite its inclusion in the special education law (Law 3699/2008), no state registration for the profession has been achieved yet (Tsiris, 2011a). Most music therapy posts have been established through independent and local initiatives. Currently, there is no full music therapy training program at the state university level, and research is very limited (Tsiris, 2011b). *Approaches: Music Therapy & Special Music Education* (<http://approaches.primarymusic.gr>) is the only Greek journal dedicated to music therapy and special music education.

Emphasis on early childhood intervention is increasing. In 2000, Diagnostic, Assessment and Support Centers (Law 2817/2000) were established and provided early childhood intervention services. Expanding the remit of their work and their multidisciplinary teams, in 2008 these centers were renamed as

Centers for Differential Diagnosis and Support (Law 3699/2008).

Although the law defines that music therapists can work as part of these centers' multidisciplinary teams, to date no music therapy services have been established in these centers.

#### Sources:

Papanikolaou, E. (2011). Salutation and introductory speech. Proceedings of the 1st conference of ESPEM. *Approaches: Music Therapy & Special Music Education, Special Issue 2011*, 9-13.

Tsirir, G. (2011a). Music therapy in Greece. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*. Retrieved from <http://testvoices.uib.no/?q=country-of-the-month/2011-music-therapy-greece>

Tsirir, G. (2011b). Music therapy in Greece: Developing indigenous knowledge and research. In Proceedings of the 1st Conference of ESPEM. *Approaches: Music Therapy & Special Music Education, Special Issue 2011*, 5-6.

### Common Approaches

Early childhood music therapy is a new and growing field of practice in Greece. Services are offered mostly to infants and children with learning disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder and other developmental disorders. Where appropriate, music therapists work not only with the child, but also with the parents to support healthy parent/child relationships.

Music therapy early intervention services are offered mainly in the private sector: in specialized music therapy centers, or in other educational/therapeutic centers. Music therapists collaborate, where possible, with psychiatrists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, psychologists and other professionals.

The use of improvisational, participatory approaches to music therapy is common. Sessions are

offered both in individual or group formats. Most practitioners are qualified as music-centered or psychodynamic music therapists, and their work is informed by relevant theories and approaches. The Dalcroze method and the Orff-Schulwerk approach to music making are also used in early childhood, but mainly by special music educators working in the field.

Although funding music therapy services is currently a crucial challenge in Greece, recent developments in the field are encouraging. A collaborative research project on music therapy for young children with autism spectrum disorder by the *Musical Movement Foundation*, a charity dedicated to music therapy and early child development, as well as other current initiatives are promising.

### Prominent Literature

Georgiadi, E. Adamopoulou, C. Papanikolaou, K. Giachni, A. Giouroukou, H., & Dre, V. (2009). *The 'Support and Care through Music' project: Music therapy as a means of therapeutic intervention for children with autism, with concurrent support of their families*. 6th Pan-Hellenic Child's Psychiatry Congress, Athens, 2009.

Papailiou, C. (online). *Music therapy in early intervention: Theoretical background and practical applications*. Panhellenic Association of Music Teachers in Public Education. Available at [http://langcogdev.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/blog-post\\_23.html](http://langcogdev.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/blog-post_23.html)

Psaltopoulou, D. (2005). *The music creative expression as a therapeutic means for emotionally disturbed children*. Unpublished Thesis. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.  
Etmektsoglou, I. & Adamopoulou, C. (Eds.) (2006). *Music therapy and other music approaches for handicapped children and adolescents*. Athens: Nikolaidis.

### About the Authors



Giorgos Tsiris is the founding editor of *Approaches: Music Therapy & Special Music Education*.

Since 2011, he is the

representative of the Hellenic Association of Certified Professional Music Therapists. Currently, Giorgos works at the Research Department of Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy, and at St Christopher's Hospice in London, UK.

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Elizabeth Georgiadi is a pianist, music therapist and children's songs composer. She is the founder of the *Musical*

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