

The sports policy in Greece: The case of e-Kouros

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ABSTRACT

Sport has evolved from a personal leisure activity into a complex social institution heavily tied to public policy and state intervention. Operating within the European Model of Sport, the Greek state serves as the primary regulator and financial guarantor of its athletic ecosystem, a mandate rooted in Article 16 of the Greek Constitution and operationalized by Law 2725/1999. To record the entirety of Greek sports (sports, federations, athletes e.t.c.) and to avoid issues of political favoritism, lack of data, and fiscal opacity, the Greek Ministry of Sports recently introduced the "e-Kouros" digital platform, an innovative system which is based on "Chilon" evaluation system. This paper demonstrates how this transition to an algorithmic, data-driven matrix and a mandatory Register of Sports Clubs represents a major paradigm shift, professionalizing grassroots sport governance and enforcing unprecedented transparency within the contemporary Greek sports ecosystem.

Keywords: Sport Policy, Greek Sport Policy, European Sport Policy, e-Kouros, Chilon System

Introduction

Sport is no longer viewed merely as a leisure activity or a matter of personal physical fitness; it has evolved into a complex social institution with significant economic, cultural, and political dimensions. In the contemporary era, national governments increasingly recognize sport as a vital instrument for achieving broader public policy objectives (Houlihan & Green, 2008). From promoting public health and social cohesion to fostering national identity and projecting "soft power" on the global stage, the state's involvement in sport development has become both systemic and strategic. Consequently, the intersection of state policy and sport development represents a crucial area of academic inquiry within public administration and sociology.

Welfare frameworks suggest that while the theoretical benefits of state-led sport development are widely acknowledged, the implementation of effective sport policies often faces structural challenges (Henry, 2001). Governments are frequently forced to balance two competing priorities: the promotion of "Mass Sport" (Sport for All), which aims at public health and social inclusivity, versus the funding of "Elite Sport," which focuses on podium success and international prestige.

The importance of physical activity and sport has been recognized by the United Nations, the European Union and the Council of Europe. An increasing body of research highlights the essential role of sport as a major creator of social capital and benefits in a wide range of social parameters, such as health, education, the development of children and youth, the integration of the prevention of delinquent behaviors, environmental protection and economic development. (Gargalianos, 2023).

In European Union, the White Paper for sports in 2007 was one of the European Commission's main contributions to the issue of sport and its role in the daily lives of European Union (EU) citizens. It confirmed the impact that sport can have on other EU policies. It also identified the needs and specificities of the sport sector. It opened up future perspectives for sport at EU level, while respecting EU law, the principle of subsidiarity and the autonomy of sports organizations (White Paper on Sport, 2007).

In Greece, the state operates fundamentally within the overarching framework of the European Model of Sport. As articulated in the European Commission's White Paper on Sport (2007), this model is characterized by a hierarchical structure, a system of promotion and relegation, and the principle of financial solidarity between elite and grassroots levels. This means that there are state intervention, public funding, and legislative regulation. The state acts not merely as a passive facilitator but as the primary regulator and financial guarantor of the entire athletic ecosystem. The aim of this article is to show and present the latest effort of Greek state for the sports, which the plan of e-Kouros, the first comprehensive and constantly evolving digital footprint of the country's sports ecosystem.

Literature Review

The foundational architecture of sport policy in Greece is rooted in the country's supreme legal text. Article 16, Paragraph 9 of the Greek Constitution (1975) explicitly dictates that "Sport shall be under the protection and the ultimate supervision of the State". This constitutional mandate establishes sport as a public good and a social right, obligating the government to provide infrastructure, fund athletic programs, and supervise sport's governing bodies (Venizelos, 2015).

To operationalize this constitutional mandate, the Greek parliament enacted Law 2725/1999, which remains the cornerstone of modern Greek sports law. This legislative framework regulates the internal structures of sports clubs, establishes the criteria for state recognition and funding of national federations, and sets strict boundaries for commercial activities within sports (Panagiotopoulos, 1994). However, this high degree of state oversight creates an inherent institutional tension. International governing bodies, such as FIFA and the International Olympic Committee (IOC), strictly mandate the "autonomy of sport" from political interference. Consequently, Greek sport policy has historically been characterized by a delicate balancing act between necessary state supervision (to ensure transparency and public accountability) and the preservation of federation autonomy (Panagiotopoulos, 2005).

The Greek state operates fundamentally within the overarching framework of the European Model of Sport. As articulated in the European Commission's White Paper on Sport (2007), this model is characterized by a hierarchical structure, a system of promotion and relegation, and the principle of financial solidarity between elite and grassroots levels. However, unlike some liberal or commercialized sports systems (such as the North American model), the European model—and specifically the Mediterranean variant found in Greece—relies heavily on state intervention, public funding, and legislative regulation (Henry, 2001). The state acts not merely as a passive facilitator but as the primary regulator and financial guarantor of the entire athletic ecosystem.

According to Gargalianos (2023), the Greek state contributes to the country's sports development through the General Secretariat of Sports (GSS), an entity operating under the Ministry of Sports, which now is a part of Education Ministry. In cooperation with sports Federations, scientific sports centers, Local Government Organizations (OTA), and clubs, the GSS provides financial, logistical, and scientific support for sports of all types and levels. Special emphasis is placed on the "Sports for All" program at central and regional levels, as well as on preserving and promoting the country's cultural and athletic heritage. Gargalianos (2023) added that the GSS is responsible for the strategic planning and implementation of the country's sports policy, fulfilling the State's constitutional obligation for the protection, supreme supervision, and financial support of sports. Its specific mission includes safeguarding athletes' health; cultivating the athletic spirit and Olympic values; academically documenting national sports needs to shape strategy; supporting supervised public and private sports entities; and supervising and evaluating their performance. The GSS is funded by the State's regular budget and the Public Investment Program, which finances the construction of athletic infrastructure projects.

Sports in Greece are organized into three levels: 1st Level: Composed of sports clubs for each sport. 2nd Level: Composed of sports Associations, which are local organizations of sports clubs and constitute Private Law Legal Entities (NPID). In each former Prefectural Administration, only one Association is allowed to be established for each sport or discipline. By exception, an

Association may include clubs based in more than one prefecture, provided this is foreseen in the statute of the relevant Federation. The minimum number of members an Association can have is 10, while any distinction into regular, probationary, or associate members is prohibited. An Association is established by a decision of a constituent assembly, following a decision by the Boards of Directors of the interested clubs. 3rd Level: Composed of sports, which constitute the highest organization of clubs and Associations that cultivate the same sport or discipline, and are Private Law Legal Entities (NPID). Their purpose is the cultivation and development of this sport throughout the country. A fundamental principle of the sports legal order is the rule of one Federation per sport. To establish a Federation, decisions by the Boards of Directors (BoD) or General Assemblies (GA) of at least 20 clubs or five Associations are required, which cultivate the same sport or discipline and demonstrate active sports activity. The registration of each member into a Federation is made by decision of its BoD, and deletion by decision of the GA. Distinctions into regular, probationary, or associate members, or other similar differentiations are not permitted. The conditions for exercising the voting right of the clubs or Associations registered under the Federation's power are determined by its statute (Gargalianos, 2023). According to sports Law 2725/1999 (Article 1, Concept - Purpose), a sports club is an association of natural people, in accordance with the provisions of Article 78 and subsequent articles of the Civil Code, whose primary purpose is the systematic cultivation and development of its athletes' capabilities for participation.

The Pre and Post 2004 Evolution of Sport Development in Greece

The Olympic Games of 2004 was a landmark for sports in Greece, and the historical trajectory of contemporary Greek sport development can be divided into two distinct eras: the pre-2004 expansion and the post-2004 contraction. In the years preceding the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, Greek state policy underwent an aggressive ideological shift toward elite sport development and urban modernization (Chappelet, 2012). The state injected unprecedented public capital directly into National Sport Federations (NSFs). These funds were earmarked to secure elite coaching talent, establish state-of-the-art training camps, and optimize the physiological preparation of national squads (Houlihan & Green, 2008). The structural objective was straightforward: to maximize the nation's medal tally on the global stage, leveraging athletic success as an index of domestic prosperity and modernization. Simultaneously, the state embarked on massive, capital-intensive construction projects to deliver state-of-the-art Olympic venues (e.g., OAKA, Hellinikon Olympic Complex, Goudi). As Chappelet (2012) notes, these facilities were highly technical, specialized, and predominantly centralized within the Attica basin. They were designed primarily to meet the stringent criteria of International Federations (IFs) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC), rather than being engineered for long-term community or grassroots utility.

In the years leading up to the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, state policy was heavily skewed toward elite sport development and mega-infrastructure projects. The government injected unprecedented public funds into constructing state-of-the-art facilities and supporting elite athletic preparation, aiming to maximize national prestige on the global stage (Chappelet, 2012). Following the conclusion of the Games and exacerbated by the severe Greek government debt crisis that began in 2009, sport policy underwent a drastic structural shift. Public funding for national sports federations was severely reduced, and many of the specialized Olympic venues suffered from abandonment due to lack of municipal maintenance budgets (Chappelet, 2012).

After the Olympic Games and following the conclusion of the 2004 Games, the structural flaws of this top-heavy, elite-centric model began to manifest. However, the true catalyst for institutional collapse arrived in 2009 with the onset of the severe Greek sovereign debt crisis. Bound by international bailout agreements and mandated structural adjustments, the Greek state was forced to implement drastic public expenditure cuts, pushing the sports sector into an unprecedented contraction.

A critical dimension of this contraction was the physical and financial abandonment of specialized Olympic infrastructure. Because these venues required millions of euros in annual maintenance—and because central government funding vanished while local municipal budgets faced severe constraints—many multi-million-euro facilities degenerated into "white elephants" (Chappelet, 2012). Lacking programmatic integration into the domestic sports market or local community structures, these state-of-the-art complexes suffered from institutional neglect and structural decay. This financial austerity effectively dismantled the centralized, paternalistic state model and initiated a significant re-evaluation of the state's role in sport delivery. With the central government retreating from its role as the primary financial guarantor of athletics, the sports ecosystem experienced a forced devolution from elite performance to grassroots utility. Recent academic literature demonstrates that this transition compelled local authorities to step into the administrative vacuum. As high-performance funding diminished, the focus pivoted toward localized, municipal-led initiatives, specifically through "Sport for All" programs (Afthonidou & Kourtesis, 2018).

The case of "e-Kouros" Platform

One of the greatest challenges in Greek sport policy was the lack of accurate data regarding active sports clubs, coaches, and resource allocation. Historically, the distribution of state subsidies to sports federations was heavily criticized for political favoritism and a lack of objective criteria (Panagiotopoulos, 2005). To address this structural deficit, the Ministry introduced the "e-Kouros" platform, a comprehensive interactive digital map of Greek sports.

The e-Kouros ecosystem works in tandem with the "Chilon" evaluation system. Under Chilon, national athletic federations are assessed objectively using measurable indicators such as the number of registered athletes, sports venues utilized, financial transparency, and international distinctions. This algorithmic matrix determines state funding distribution, minimizing political favoritism and forcing sport's governing bodies to align with principles of good governance (Ministry of Sports, 2025). Furthermore, the mandatory Register of Sports Clubs ensures that only legally recognized, audited, and certified clubs can receive state grants or utilize public municipal facilities.

The structural implementation of the "e-Kouros" platform and the "Chilon" evaluation system represents a major paradigm shift in Greek sport policy. The transition to an algorithmic, data-driven evaluation matrix has successfully established a high baseline of fiscal transparency. Furthermore, the mandatory Register of Sports Clubs has filtered out "ghost clubs"»inactive organizations that existed primarily to claim state funds or vote in federation elections. By enforcing strict accounting and licensing standards, the Ministry has successfully professionalized the administrative layer of grassroots sports organizations in Greece.

Digital Transformation, Evidence-Based Governance and the Future of Greek Sport Policy: The Contribution of e-Kouros

The implementation of the e-Kouros platform constitutes one of the most significant reforms in Greek sport policy since the enactment of Law 2725/1999. Beyond its technological dimension, e-Kouros represents a broader transformation in the philosophy of sport governance, moving from fragmented administrative practices and incomplete records toward a comprehensive system of evidence-based policymaking. In this sense, the platform should not be viewed merely as a digital registry but as a strategic governance instrument capable of reshaping the relationship between the state, sports federations, sports clubs, athletes, coaches, and local authorities.

Historically, one of the most persistent weaknesses of the Greek sport system was the absence of reliable and continuously updated information regarding the actual size and composition of the country's sporting sector. Although the General Secretariat of Sports maintained administrative records and federations collected participation data independently, no integrated mechanism existed through which policymakers could obtain a complete and accurate picture of Greek sport. Consequently, decisions concerning public funding, infrastructure development, and strategic priorities were often based on incomplete information, estimations, or historical precedents rather than measurable indicators.

The introduction of e-Kouros has fundamentally altered this situation. For the first time, Greek sport authorities possess a centralized digital ecosystem that records sports clubs, federations,

coaches, athletes, sports facilities, and participation trends across the entire country. The importance of this development cannot be overstated. Modern public administration increasingly relies on data-driven governance models in which policy decisions are supported by empirical evidence rather than political intuition. The e-Kouros initiative places Greek sport administration within this broader international trend and aligns national sport policy with contemporary principles of transparency, accountability, and digital governance.

The first major contribution of e-Kouros concerns the production of reliable statistical data. The platform demonstrates that organized sport participation in Greece is significantly larger than previously estimated. Recent records indicate more than 316,000 registered athletes throughout the country, representing a notable increase compared to previous years. At the same time, more than 20,000 licensed coaches are now officially recorded within the national sports ecosystem. These figures provide policymakers with an unprecedented understanding of the actual dimensions of organized sport and allow for more rational planning regarding resource allocation, educational programs, and infrastructure investments.

An equally important contribution concerns the geographical mapping of sports activity. Prior to the introduction of e-Kouros, the distribution of athletes and sports clubs across regions was difficult to assess systematically. The new platform provides detailed information regarding participation levels in every regional unit of the country. Such information allows public authorities to identify areas with strong sports participation as well as regions characterized by low engagement levels. Consequently, future investments can be targeted more effectively, reducing territorial inequalities and improving access to sports opportunities throughout Greece.

The regional dimension of the platform is particularly significant given the longstanding concentration of sports resources in the metropolitan areas of Athens and Thessaloniki. Throughout the post-war period, sport infrastructure, elite clubs, and administrative resources tended to accumulate in major urban centers. As a result, many rural and island regions experienced limited access to organized sport. By providing comprehensive regional data, e-Kouros creates the necessary conditions for a more balanced and equitable distribution of public resources. Policymakers are now able to evaluate objectively which regions require additional support and which areas demonstrate successful development practices that could be replicated elsewhere.

A second important dimension of the platform concerns transparency and public accountability. Greek sport governance has historically been criticized for the lack of objective criteria governing state subsidies. Funding decisions were often perceived as opaque, while federations were frequently accused of relying on political connections rather than measurable performance

indicators. Whether such criticisms were always justified is less important than the fact that they undermined public trust in sports institutions.

The integration of e-Kouros with the Chilon evaluation system addresses this challenge directly. Through the use of measurable indicators—including athlete registrations, organizational activity, competitive achievements, governance quality, and financial accountability—the state can allocate resources according to transparent and publicly verifiable criteria. This shift represents a transition from discretionary governance toward rule-based governance. In practical terms, federations and sports organizations now possess stronger incentives to improve administrative performance, maintain accurate records, and comply with accountability standards.

From a public policy perspective, the adoption of objective evaluation mechanisms reflects broader developments within contemporary governance theory. New Public Management approaches emphasize performance measurement, efficiency, and measurable outcomes as key components of effective public administration. The Chilon system embodies many of these principles by linking public funding directly to quantifiable indicators. As a result, sports federations are encouraged to adopt more professional administrative practices and to demonstrate tangible results in exchange for public support.

The mandatory Register of Sports Clubs constitutes another critical innovation. Before the introduction of the registry, uncertainty often existed regarding the operational status of sports organizations. In some cases, clubs remained formally active despite limited or non-existent sporting activity. Such situations complicated both policy planning and funding procedures. Through mandatory registration requirements, e-Kouros has significantly strengthened institutional oversight. Only clubs that satisfy legal, administrative, and financial requirements can participate fully in the public sports system and access government support programs.

The establishment of the registry has also contributed to the professionalization of grassroots sport. Sports clubs are now required to maintain updated records, comply with regulatory obligations, and demonstrate actual sporting activity. This development encourages administrative modernization and strengthens organizational capacity at the local level. In turn, stronger grassroots organizations create more sustainable foundations for long-term sport development.

Another area in which e-Kouros provides substantial added value concerns youth sport participation. The platform offers important insights into the age distribution of athletes and reveals participation patterns that were previously difficult to identify. Available data indicate that organized sport participation remains particularly strong during childhood and early adolescence. However, participation rates decline substantially during the transition from lower

secondary education (Gymnasio) to upper secondary education (Lyceum). This phenomenon is consistent with international research, which identifies academic pressures, changing social priorities, and limited time availability as major factors contributing to youth sport dropout.

The identification of these trends demonstrates the practical value of evidence-based policymaking. Rather than relying on assumptions, policymakers can now develop targeted interventions designed specifically to address critical participation gaps. For example, school-sport partnerships, flexible competition structures, and athlete support programs could be implemented to reduce dropout rates among adolescents. Without accurate data, such interventions would be considerably more difficult to design and evaluate.

The platform also generates important knowledge regarding gender participation in sport. Although significant progress has been achieved in recent decades, gender inequalities continue to characterize many sports systems internationally. Through the systematic collection of participation data, e-Kouros enables authorities to monitor developments in female sport participation and identify sports in which women remain underrepresented. This capability is particularly important given the growing emphasis placed by European institutions on gender equality and inclusive sport governance.

Equally significant is the contribution of e-Kouros to disability sport policy. For many years, information regarding athletes with disabilities, disability sports clubs, and related organizations remained fragmented. The platform now provides comprehensive data regarding participation levels, organizational structures, and geographical distribution within the disability sport sector. Such information is essential for developing inclusive policies that ensure equal opportunities for all citizens regardless of physical ability.

The disability sport data reveal both achievements and challenges. On the one hand, Greece has established a nationwide network of organizations supporting athletes with disabilities. On the other hand, participation remains concentrated within specific regions, indicating the existence of geographical inequalities in access to adapted sports opportunities. Through e-Kouros, policymakers can identify these disparities and design targeted interventions to improve accessibility, facility provision, and athlete support services.

Beyond its immediate administrative applications, the platform contributes significantly to academic research and policy evaluation. Researchers have traditionally faced considerable difficulties when attempting to study Greek sport due to limited data availability. The creation of a comprehensive national database opens new possibilities for evidence-based research on participation patterns, organizational performance, regional inequalities, gender representation,

and athlete development pathways. Consequently, e-Kouros may serve not only as a governance instrument but also as an important scientific resource for future sport policy studies.

Furthermore, the platform strengthens the state's strategic planning capacity. Effective sport policy requires long-term vision supported by reliable information. Governments must be able to anticipate future needs, evaluate existing programs, and allocate resources efficiently. By continuously collecting and updating information, e-Kouros creates the conditions necessary for strategic policy development based on measurable trends rather than short-term political considerations.

Nevertheless, several challenges remain. Digital transformation alone cannot solve all structural problems affecting Greek sport. Issues such as infrastructure deficits, financial constraints, volunteer shortages, demographic decline in rural areas, and the ongoing challenge of athlete retention require broader policy responses. Moreover, the effectiveness of e-Kouros depends heavily on data quality. Sports clubs and federations must consistently provide accurate and updated information if the system is to maintain its reliability and legitimacy.

There is also the broader question of how data should be used in policymaking. While quantitative indicators offer valuable insights, they cannot fully capture the social, cultural, and educational dimensions of sport. Excessive reliance on numerical performance measures may inadvertently encourage organizations to prioritize measurable outputs at the expense of broader social objectives. Therefore, future policy frameworks should combine quantitative evaluation with qualitative assessments that recognize the wider social value of sport.

Despite these challenges, the emergence of e-Kouros represents a major institutional innovation within the Greek sports sector. It reflects a transition from traditional administrative practices toward a modern governance model characterized by transparency, accountability, digitalization, and evidence-based decision-making. In many respects, the platform embodies the broader transformation of public administration occurring throughout Europe, where digital technologies increasingly support policy implementation and organizational oversight.

Ultimately, e-Kouros demonstrates how digital governance can strengthen state capacity while simultaneously improving the autonomy and professionalism of sports organizations. By creating a transparent and comprehensive record of Greek sport, the platform provides the foundations for more effective policy design, fairer resource allocation, and stronger public trust. As the system continues to evolve, it may serve as a model for other countries seeking to modernize their sport governance structures and align them with the principles of good governance promoted by contemporary European sport policy.

Key Findings from the e-Kouros Registry

The e-Kouros registry provides the most comprehensive picture of organized sport currently available in Greece. According to the latest available data, the Greek sports ecosystem consists of 66 officially recognized sports federations governing 151 sports disciplines, 6,451 registered sports clubs, 452,961 athletes, and 20,654 licensed coaches. These figures illustrate the substantial scale of organized sport in Greece and highlight the importance of a centralized digital governance system capable of monitoring participation, organizational activity, and resource allocation across all levels of the sporting pyramid.

One of the most significant findings concerns the distribution of sports clubs among federations. The Hellenic Football Federation (EPO) occupies a dominant position within the Greek sports system, with 2,128 affiliated clubs registered in the platform. This figure substantially exceeds that of any other federation and reflects the historical, cultural, and social prominence of football in Greek society. The Hellenic Basketball Federation (EOK) follows with 773 affiliated clubs, while the Hellenic Volleyball Federation (EOPE) and SEGAS (Hellenic Amateur Athletic Association) record 429 and 367 clubs, respectively. Together, these organizations constitute the largest and most influential sporting networks in the country and represent the core of organized sport participation in Greece.

Beyond the traditionally popular team sports, the registry highlights the remarkable diversity of the Greek sporting landscape. A particularly strong presence is observed among combat and martial arts disciplines. Federations governing taekwondo, karate, judo, wrestling, kickboxing, Muay Thai, and Wushu Kung Fu collectively account for hundreds of clubs and thousands of registered participants. This finding demonstrates that organized sport participation in Greece extends far beyond football and basketball, encompassing a wide range of individual and combat sports that attract substantial numbers of athletes and contribute significantly to the diversification of the national sports system.

The registry also provides valuable insights into the degree of institutional participation and compliance among sports organizations. Of the 5,417 sports clubs that successfully completed the registration and evaluation procedures, football clubs accounted for 1,899 organizations, representing approximately 89.2% of all eligible football clubs.

Similarly high registration rates were observed in shooting sports (SKOE - 92.4%), taekwondo (ELOT - 76.6%), karate (EOK - 76.5%), tennis (EFOA - 75.4%), and the Athletic Taekwondo Federation of Greece (AOTE - 75%). These figures indicate a high level of institutional adaptation to the requirements of the digital registry and demonstrate the growing capacity of sports organizations to operate within a transparent and standardized governance framework.

At the same time, differences among federations become apparent. Volleyball clubs (EOPE) recorded a registration rate of 43.1%, swimming clubs (KOE) 45.3%, athletics clubs (SEGAS) 53.7%, basketball clubs (EOK) 57.6%, and gymnastics clubs (EGO) 55.8%. Although these percentages remain considerable, they reveal varying levels of organizational participation and administrative readiness. Such variations may be associated with differences in federation size, organizational complexity, administrative capacity, and the ability of local clubs to comply with registration requirements. From a policy perspective, these findings are particularly important because they identify areas where targeted support and capacity-building initiatives may be necessary.

Another important observation concerns the relationship between organizational size and governance effectiveness. Federations characterized by extensive regional networks and long-established administrative structures appear to demonstrate higher levels of compliance with registry requirements. Football, basketball, and several individual sports federations illustrate how organizational maturity and administrative experience can facilitate adaptation to digital governance mechanisms. This finding reinforces the broader argument that effective governance structures are a prerequisite for successful modernization within the sports sector.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the registry lies in its ability to provide objective and verifiable evidence regarding the actual dimensions of Greek sport. For many years, policymakers relied on fragmented administrative records and federation-based estimates that often limited the capacity for comprehensive policy evaluation. The registry substantially reduces these information gaps by creating a unified database that captures participation levels, organizational activity, and institutional development across the entire sports ecosystem. Consequently, public authorities are now able to design, implement, and evaluate sport policies using standardized indicators and measurable criteria.

The findings further demonstrate that organized sport continues to represent a significant social institution within Greek society. With nearly half a million registered athletes and more than twenty thousand licensed coaches, the sports sector constitutes a substantial network of human resources, educational activity, volunteer engagement, and community participation. The scale of these figures highlights the broader social importance of sport and confirms its contribution not only to athletic development but also to public health, social cohesion, education, and local community life.

Overall, the data recorded through the e-Kouros registry reveal a sports system characterized by considerable organizational depth, extensive geographical reach, and remarkable sporting diversity. At the same time, the registry demonstrates the value of digital governance tools in promoting transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. By providing

reliable and continuously updated information, e-Kouros strengthens the capacity of public authorities to develop strategic interventions, allocate resources more effectively, and support the long-term development of Greek sport.

Regional Distribution of Sports Clubs in Greece

The geographical distribution of sports clubs recorded in the e-Kouros registry reveals a significant concentration of organized sport activity in the country's largest urban and population centers. Attica accounts for 1,844 registered sports clubs, representing 28.9% of the national total, while Central Macedonia follows with 1,130 clubs (17.7%). Together, these two regions host nearly half of all registered sports clubs in Greece, reflecting their demographic weight, extensive sports infrastructure, and long-established sporting traditions. Significant levels of sports activity are also observed in Thessaly (7.1%), Western Greece (6.6%), the Peloponnese (6.5%), Central Greece (6.5%), and Crete (6.2%). These findings suggest a strong relationship between population concentration, infrastructure availability, and the development of organized sport. At the same time, the presence of 6,376 active sports clubs across all thirteen administrative regions demonstrates the broad geographical reach of the Greek sports system and highlights the important role of local sports organizations in promoting participation, social cohesion, and community development throughout the country.

The comparison between the two registration cycles indicates a modest but positive expansion of the Greek sports sector. The total number of registered sports clubs increased from 6,374 to 6,451, representing a growth of 1.2% (+77 clubs). The data further reveal that 32 sports federations recorded an increase in the number of affiliated clubs, while 20 federations experienced a decline and 10 remained unchanged. The most significant increase was observed in the Hellenic Shooting Federation (SKOE), which added 79 clubs (+54.1%), followed by the Hellenic Gymnastics Federation (EGO) with an increase of 26 clubs (+9.5%). In contrast, the Hellenic Basketball Federation (EOK) recorded the largest decline, losing 55 clubs (-6.6%), while the Hellenic Football Federation (EPO) registered a decrease of 51 clubs (-2.3%). At the same time, several combat sports continued to expand their organizational base, including kickboxing (POK), boxing (EOP), and jiu-jitsu (EFEOZZ), suggesting growing participation and sustained development in these disciplines. Overall, the findings point to a dynamic sports environment characterized by both organizational restructuring and gradual growth across several sectors of the Greek sports system.

According to the latest data from the "e-Kouros" platform, as illustrated in Στιγμιότυπο οθόνης 2026-06-05 012502.png, there is a significant gender disparity among registered typical athletes across Greece. Out of a total of 450,482 athletes nationwide, male athletes account for the vast majority at 70.3% (316,556 individuals), whereas female athletes represent only 29.7% (133,926

individuals). This pronounced gap highlights a critical area for targeted sports policy interventions, underscoring the need for strategic initiatives aimed at promoting inclusivity, breaking down barriers, and encouraging higher sports participation rates among women.

A deeper dive into the specific sports federations reveals a stark contrast in where male and female participation is concentrated, as detailed in [Στιγμιότυπο οθόνης 2026-06-05 012737.png](#). For male athletes, football (EPO) is the overwhelming leader, absorbing 40.3% (127,225 athletes) of the total male athletic population (316,556), followed by basketball (EOK) at 20.9% (66,299). Conversely, female athletic participation (133,926 in total) is significantly more distributed. Volleyball (EOPE) holds the top spot for women at 21.5% (28,712 athletes), with basketball (EOK) following at 11.3% (15,120), and track and field (SEGAS) closely behind at 10.7% (14,384). This structural differentiation indicates that sports policy measures cannot follow a one-size-fits-all approach; instead, they must be tailored to the unique dynamics and cultural appeal of individual sports disciplines to effectively balance gender representation across all federations.

Shifting the focus to demographics, the age distribution of the national athletic workforce reveals a distinct generational pattern, as shown in [Στιγμιότυπο οθόνης 2026-06-05 012841.png](#). Participation peaks during early adolescence, with the 13–15 age group representing the largest segment at 23.8% (107,374 athletes), followed closely by the 9–12 group at 20.3% (91,352 athletes). Interestingly, a slight drop-off is observed during the critical high school years of 16–18 (17.4% or 78,433 athletes), which then rebounds strongly in the young adult category of 19–35, accounting for 22.3% (100,233 athletes). Beyond the age of 36, participation drops significantly, with the 36–54 demographic at 7.8% (35,134 athletes) and seniors aged 55 and above at just 2.9% (13,356 athletes). From a sports policy perspective, these fluctuations highlight two main operational priorities: implementing targeted retention strategies to curb the adolescent dropout rate during high school years, and designing lifelong sports initiatives to boost engagement among the adult and senior populations.

This generational shift is further illuminated by the evolving sports preferences across different age cohorts, as documented in [Στιγμιότυπο οθόνης 2026-06-05 012942.png](#). While swimming (KOE) and basketball (EOK) dominate early childhood (8 years old), football (EPO) firmly establishes its dominance from the age of 13 onward, peaking in the 19–35 demographic with 49,718 athletes. Concurrently, sports requiring early-stage specialization, like gymnastics (EGO), gradually drop out of the top rankings as athletes mature. Tracking these shifting preferences allows sports policy makers to strategically allocate infrastructure and funding to match the real-time demands of each age group.

Looking at the broader regional breakdown, Attica accounts for 36.8% of the country's total athletic population, followed by Central Macedonia at 17.4%. However, when measuring the percentage of active athletes relative to the local population, the national average stands at 4.30%. Under this metric, the North Aegean region leads the country with a 5.55% participation rate, while Crete also ranks high above average at 4.76%.

Annual tracking reveals a steady 4% growth in registration numbers for both male and female athletes compared to 2024. School-age participation is strong, with 3 out of 10 children in primary and secondary education currently registered in sports clubs.

However, a major structural challenge is highlighted during the transition to high school, where a staggering 27% dropout rate is observed among registered adolescents.

The digital registry provides crucial insights into adaptive sports, tracking a total of 82 active clubs for athletes with disabilities (Αμ&Α). The National Sports Federation for Persons with Disabilities (EAOM-AmeA) oversees the majority of these clubs at 60.4%. Geographically, these facilities face high centralization, with 39% based in Attica and 22% in Central Macedonia, leaving several administrative regions with minimal or zero representation.

The active athletic workforce for individuals with disabilities stands at 2,479 athletes, characterized by a steep gender imbalance of 75.6% males to 24.4% females. Unlike typical sports, participation in adaptive sports peaks much later in life, with the 36–54 age group accounting for 42.4% and the 19–35 group following closely at 40.1%. Compared to 2024, the overall Αμ&Α athletic population remained exceptionally stable, showing only a minimal decrease of 0.16%.

Out of the 20,654 licensed coaches in Greece, the workforce is split between Certificate Categories A (35.4%), B (16.7%), and Γ (36.1%), alongside specialized UEFA license holders who make up 11.8%. Football and basketball command the largest coaching pools, holding 20.2% and 13.9% of the national total respectively. Year-over-year data indicates a strong 13.8% growth in licensed coaches since 2024, driven primarily by a massive 93.1% surge in certified football (UEFA) coaches.

The introduction of e-Kouros marks the transition of Greek sport policy from a predominantly bureaucratic and politically mediated system toward a data-driven governance model. Although challenges remain regarding data quality, regional inequalities, and the risk of over-reliance on quantitative indicators, the platform constitutes a significant institutional innovation that aligns Greek sport governance with contemporary European standards of transparency and accountability.

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