

JANUARY 2026

THIS IS ~~NOT~~ THE TIME TO COMMENT ON LEGALITY

THE STATE OF THE RULE OF LAW IN GREECE

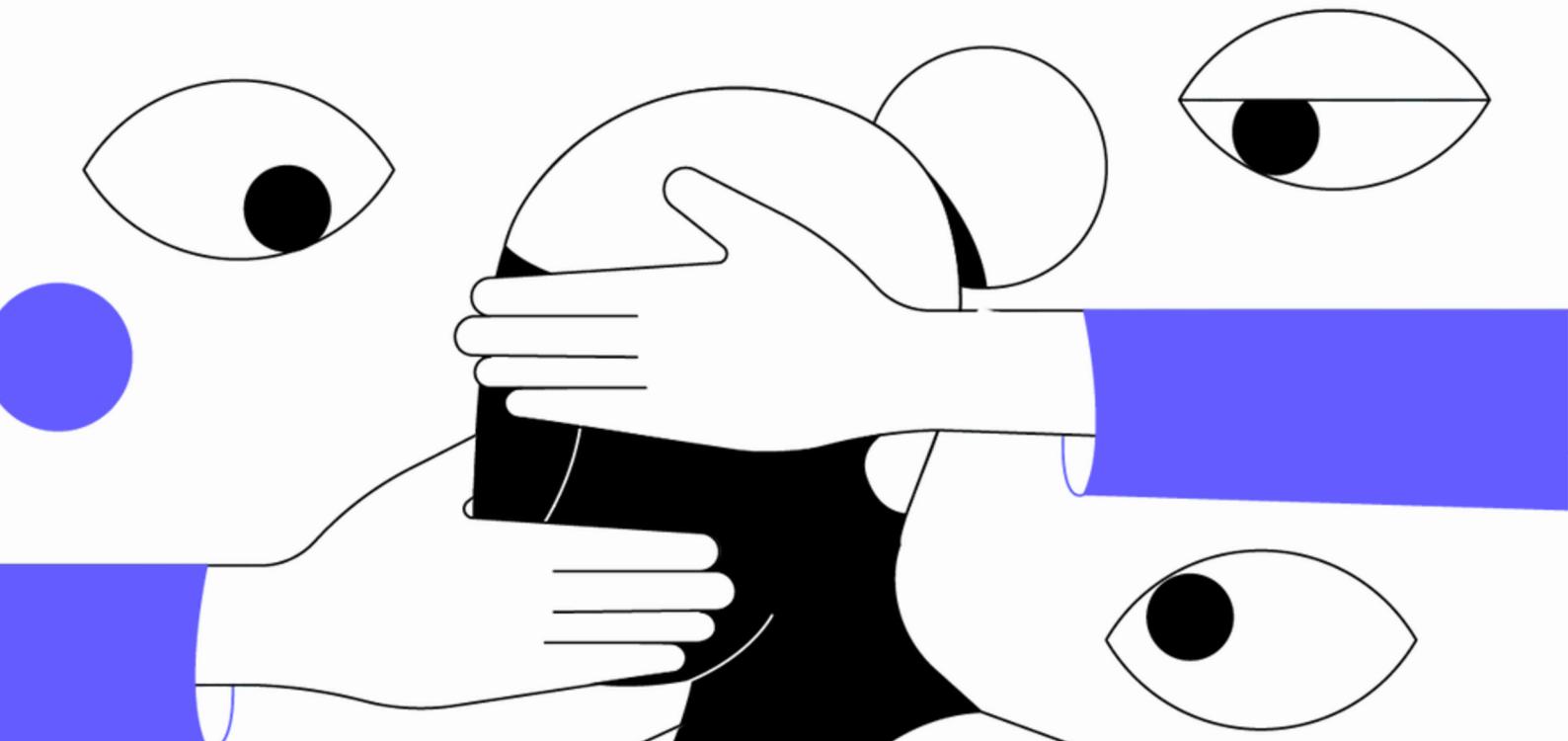


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Table of abbreviations

ADAE	Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy Αρχή Διασφάλισης του Απορρήτου των Επικοινωνιών
AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
ANA-MNA	Athens News Agency / Macedonian News Agency Αθηναϊκό Πρακτορείο Ειδήσεων / Μακεδονικό Πρακτορείο Ειδήσεων
ASEP	Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection Ανώτατο Συμβούλιο Επιλογής Προσωπικού
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
CCAC	Closed Controlled Access Centre Κλειστή Ελεγχόμενη Δομή
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIDA	Committee for the Investigation of Declarations of Assets Επιτροπή Ελέγχου Δηλώσεων Περιουσιακής Κατάστασης
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CPT	European Committee for the Prevention of Torture
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG JUST	Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
DPA	Hellenic Data Protection Authority Αρχή Προστασίας Δεδομένων Προσωπικού Χαρακτήρα
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment
DPO	Data Protection Officer
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECPMF	European Centre for Press and Media Freedom
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EKSED	Joint Rescue Coordination Centre Ενιαίο Κέντρο Συντονισμού 'Έρευνας και Διάσωσης
EMFA	European Media Freedom Act
ENCJ	European Network of Councils for the Judiciary
ENDE	Association of Judges and Prosecutors 'Ένωση Δικαστών και Εισαγγελέων
EP	European Parliament
EPPO	European Public Prosecutor's Office
ERCI	Emergency Response Centre International
ERT	Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation Ελληνική Ραδιοφωνία Τηλεόραση
ESIEA	Journalists' Union of Athens Daily Newspapers 'Ένωση Συντακτών Ημερήσιων Εφημερίδων Αθηνών
EU	European Union
EYP	National Intelligence Service Εθνική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών
FRO	Fundamental Rights Officer
GCR	Greek Council for Refugees
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation

GNCHR	Greek National Commission for Human Rights Εθνική Επιτροπή για τα Δικαιώματα του Ανθρώπου
GRECO	Group of States against Corruption
HARSIA	Hellenic Rail and Safety Investigation Authority Εθνικός Οργανισμός Διερεύνησης Αεροπορικών και Σιδηροδρομικών Ατυχημάτων και Ασφάλειας Μεταφορών
HEC	Horizontal Enabling Condition
HLHR	Hellenic League for Human Rights
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPI	International Press Institute
JMD	Joint Ministerial Decision Κοινή Υπουργική Απόφαση
KETHI	Research Centre for Gender Equality Κέντρο Ερευνών για Θέματα Ισότητας
L	Law Νόμος
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MJRC	Media and Journalism Research Centre
MP	Member of Parliament
NCRTV	National Council for Radio and Television Εθνικό Συμβούλιο Ραδιοτηλεόρασης
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NTA	National Transparency Authority Εθνική Αρχή Διαφάνειας
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OKE	Economic and Social Council of Greece Οικονομική και Κοινωνική Επιτροπή της Ελλάδος
OPEKEPE	Payment and Control Agency for Guidance and Guarantee Community Aid Οργανισμός Πληρωμών και Ελέγχου Κοινωνικών Ενισχύσεων Προσανατολισμού και Εγγυήσεων
PD	Presidential Decree Προεδρικό Διάταγμα
RSA	Refugee Support Aegean
RSF	Reporters Without Borders
SIR	Serious Incident Report
SLAPP	Strategic Lawsuit against Public Participation
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
YDEAP	European and Development Programmes Managing Service Υπηρεσία Διαχείρισης Ευρωπαϊκών και Αναπτυξιακών Προγραμμάτων

Cross-cutting rule of law issues in Greece

1. The Greek justice system persistently fails to scrutinise unlawful conduct and arbitrary use of power by the executive, and to attribute responsibility to state officials for criminal offences. This remains a crucial, cross-cutting concern transcending different rule of law pillars and markedly present in high-profile cases that continue to test the country's ever-declining trust in the independence of judiciary.¹ We analyse these issues in further detail in **Justice: Independence: Independence & Effectiveness of the Prosecution Service**.

“Greek Watergate” surveillance scandal

2. The year 2025 still failed to deliver judicial accountability for the “Greek Watergate” scandal where the National Intelligence Service (Εθνική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών, EYP), under the oversight of the Greek Prime Minister, placed at least six senior political and military officials under surveillance. We remind that the Supreme Court Prosecutor deemed the surveillance carried out by EYP to be lawful based on an erroneous reading of Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) case law, on the one hand, and found no links between EYP actions and the illegal use of Predator spyware, on the other,² despite an abundance of evidence pointing to the existence of a joint EYP-Predator centre involving surveillance of ministers, opposition politicians, journalists, businesspeople, EYP employees and high-ranking members of the Hellenic Armed Forces with the illegal Predator spyware.³
3. **Misdemeanour proceedings against private parties:** Following delays in the preliminary criminal investigation until the launch of prosecution, the Greek judiciary is now hearing the Predatortgate case at first instance. Due to gaps and omissions in the investigation conducted by the Supreme Court Prosecutor, highlighted *inter alia* by distinguished experts and academics,⁴ only four private individuals are currently charged in connection with the illegal use of Predator, while no public or government officials responsible for EYP have been indicted. The four individuals are charged only with misdemeanour offences of lesser gravity. No individual, whether private or state official, is standing trial on felony charges e.g. for breach of state secrets,⁵ despite the surveillance of senior government and state officials through Predator spyware.⁶
4. While the trial started in March 2025,⁷ omissions on the part of the Supreme Court Prosecutor and the Public Prosecutor of Athens led to adjournments of the proceedings

¹ European Commission, *Perceived independence of the national justice systems in the EU among the general public – Greece*, July 2025, [URL](#).

² Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, paras 43-46.

³ *Ibid*, paras 8-14.

⁴ *Ibid*, para 45.

⁵ Article 146 Criminal Code, L 4619/2019, Gov. Gazette 95/11.06.2019.

⁶ Reporters United, ‘Τι υποκλοπές σε βάρος υπουργού, τι κλοπές νερού!’, Instagram post, 5 March 2025, [URL](#).

⁷ Reporters United, ‘Στα δικαστήρια της Ευελπίδων ο Ταλ Ντίλιαν’, Instagram post, 5 March 2025, [URL](#).

and caused further delays in the administration of justice. These included the failure to translate the indictment (κατηγορητήριο) into the native language of the defendants who do not speak Greek (see **Justice: Quality: Accessibility of Courts**).⁸ These delays are of critical importance in view of the applicability of the statute of limitations if the trial is not completed at first instance, on appeal and before the Supreme Court within the next four years.⁹

5. The hearings held to date before the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Athens (Μονομελές Πλημμυρειοδικείο Αθηνών) indicate that the prosecutorial authorities have not exhausted all available measures aimed at ensuring accountability for those responsible for the illegal surveillance through Predator spyware in Greece, amid abundant evidence of the existence of a joint EYP-Predator surveillance centre (see further **Justice: Independence: Independence & Effectiveness of the Prosecution Service**).
6. **Proceedings concerning EYP failure to inform surveillance targets:** We also underscore with serious concern that, in 2025 too as in 2024, EYP failed to comply with the Council of State judgment that declared unconstitutional the legislative provision prohibiting Nikos Androulakis, leader of the opposition party PASOK and former MEP, from being informed of his surveillance by EYP (see **Checks & Balances: Implementation of Judgments: Domestic Courts**). Media reports state that the case was communicated in December by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and has been prioritised.¹⁰
7. In addition, the Plenary of the Council of State heard on 14 November 2025 judicial review proceedings brought by journalist Thanassis Koukakis in relation to his surveillance by EYP.¹¹ Further to a request from the Council of State, EYP replied that the three prosecutorial orders lifting the privacy of communications of Mr Koukakis were not found and were not at its disposal.¹²
8. **Access of political leadership to surveillance material in the OPEKEPE scandal:** We further stress that concerns around impermissible access of senior government officials to information obtained via surveillance have also emerged in the context of the agricultural funds misuse scandal ("OPEKEPE scandal") investigated by the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO). Former Deputy Minister of Digital Governance, Christos Boukoros, resigned from his post on 27 June 2025 following the outbreak of the scandal. In December 2025, he confirmed in his testimony before the Payment and

⁸ Reporters United, 'Δίκη-παρωδία για το Predator', Instagram post, 24 September 2025, [URL](#); 'Νέες καθυστερήσεις στην εκδίκαση του Predator', Instagram post, 23 April 2025, [URL](#); 'Υποκλοπές συγκαλυμμένες στη μετάφραση', Instagram post, 10 April 2025, [URL](#).

⁹ Reporters United, 'Απονομή δικαιοσύνης συγκάλυψης', Instagram post, 19 May 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁰ ECtHR, *Androulakis v. Greece*, App No 20986/24, Communicated on 18 December 2025, [URL](#). See also in.gr, 'Το ΕΔΔΑ καλεί την κυβέρνηση να απαντήσει για την παρακολούθηση του Νίκου Ανδρουλάκη από την ΕΥΠ', 22 December 2025, [URL](#); Ta Nea, 'ΠΑΣΟΚ: Κατά προτεραιότητα εξέταση της προσφυγής Ανδρουλάκη από το ΕΔΔΑ για τις υποκλοπές', 22 December 2025, [URL](#).

¹¹ Council of State, Case E1500/2025, heard on 14 November 2025. See also To Vima, 'Θανάσης Κουκάκης: Στο ΣτΕ η υπόθεση για την παρακολούθηση από την ΕΥΠ', 14 November 2025, [URL](#).

¹² Efsyn, 'Η ΕΥΠ έχασε τις εντολές άρσης απορρήτου για τον Θ. Κουκάκη', 15 November 2025, [URL](#).

Control Agency for Guidance and Guarantee Community Aid (Οργανισμός Πληρωμών και Ελέγχου Κοινωνικών Ενισχύσεων Προσανατολισμού και Εγγυήσεων, OPEKEPE) inquiry committee of the Hellenic Parliament that he had been informed as early as June 2024 from government sources close to the Prime Minister's office ("Megaro Maximou") of the fact that his telephone had been placed under surveillance.¹³ This was one year before the EPPO transmitted the case file to Parliament with a view to investigation and prosecution of offences committed by members of the government.¹⁴ Mr Boukoros has not disclosed the government source that informed him of his surveillance, while Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister, Giorgos Mylonakis, has denied disclosing the contents of surveillance material obtained in the context of the OPEKEPE scandal case file.¹⁵

Tempi train crash

9. The ongoing case of the 28 February 2023 train crash between a passenger train and a freight train in the Tempi valley that cost the lives of 57 people and injured approximately 180 others is a stark illustration of systemic failures of the Greek justice system and of public uproar in Greece and beyond against the lack of accountability of state officials.¹⁶ Developments in the case have exacerbated concerns regarding the effectiveness of the Tempi investigation. By 2026, nearly three years after the disaster, criminal proceedings had expanded to include a significant number of defendants, encompassing railway employees, senior executives of public and private railway entities, and state officials. While this expansion acknowledged the systemic nature of the failures, the prolonged delays underscored the investigation's lack of promptness and efficiency, contrary to the standards set by Article 2 of the Charter. These issues are analysed in detail in **Justice: Independence: Independence & Effectiveness of the Prosecution Service**.
10. At the same time, new and conflicting forensic and technical findings emerged in 2025 regarding the cause of the intense post-collision fire. Divergent expert reports – some suggesting the involvement of an unidentified flammable substance and others denying it – highlighted the irreversible consequences of the early mishandling of the crash site. These contradictions are not merely technical disputes. They are a direct result of investigative shortcomings that now prevent the establishment of a definitive factual narrative.
11. A particularly significant aspect of the case concerns the role of then Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister, Christos Triantopoulos, who was officially tasked with coordinating the state's response at the crash site. Elements that emerged during the investigation indicates that he exercised political oversight over post-crash operations, including

¹³ in.gr, 'Εξεταστική: Δεν αποκαλύπτει το όνομα από το Μαξίμου που ήξερε για τις επισυνδέσεις ο Μπουκάρος: «Δεν θα συσκοτίσω το αντικείμενο της επιτροπής», 12 December 2025, [URL](#). See also To Vima, 'Ο Μυλωνάκης και οι επισυνδέσεις', 3 September 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁴ EPPO, 'Alleged misuse of EU agricultural funds: EPPO submits information to Hellenic Parliament', 19 June 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁵ ANT1, 'Εξεταστική ΟΠΕΚΕΠΕ - Μυλωνάκης: Δεν ήξερα τίποτα περί επισυνδέσεων και δικογραφίας - Καμιά απολύτως συγκάλυψη', 17 December 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁶ To Vima, '28/2: Το μήνυμα των Τεμπών «εκπέμπει» από 381 σημεία σε Ελλάδα και εξωτερικό', 28 February 2025, [URL](#); Lifo, 'Απεργία 28 Φεβρουαρίου: Ιστορική η συγκέντρωση στο Σύνταγμα για τα Τέμπη - Το χρονικό των γεγονότων', 28 February 2025, [URL](#).

decisions related to the rapid clearing and backfilling (μπάζωμα) of the area.¹⁷ These actions were taken before the completion of essential forensic examinations and at a time when the causes of death and the origin of the fire had not been conclusively determined. The initiation of criminal proceedings relating to the role of Mr Triantopoulos and the misdemeanour charge of breach of duty represents a belated acknowledgment that responsibility may extend beyond operational actors to political decision-makers.¹⁸

12. More broadly, we deem that the investigation has been marked by systemic shortcomings and indications of interference with the justice system. Investigative steps were fragmented across multiple proceedings, crucial evidence was handled belatedly or inadequately, and there was an apparent initial reluctance to pursue lines of inquiry that could implicate institutional or political responsibility. Public interventions by senior executive officials during ongoing judicial proceedings further compromised the appearance of judicial independence and risked exerting indirect pressure on prosecutorial and judicial authorities.¹⁹

Enforced disappearance & violence against people seeking asylum

13. Greece's *de facto* policy of violent enforced disappearance of people seeking asylum and of failure to ensure meaningful investigation into those incidents continues unabated (see [Justice: Independence: Independence & Effectiveness of the Prosecution Service](#)), despite the strong condemnation of its "systematic practice of push backs" from the ECtHR in early 2025,²⁰ an acknowledgement of evidence of said practice by the CJEU at the end of 2025,²¹ and an abundance of evidence and criticism from all major human rights monitoring bodies at domestic, United Nations, Council of Europe and European Union level. The unlawful and dangerous practice is confirmed yet again throughout 2025 by the Recording Mechanism of Informal Forced Returns of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR),²² the Greek Ombudsman,²³ the Fundamental Rights Office (FRO) of Frontex,²⁴ and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights.²⁵ The European Commission has yet to take meaningful action against it to date.
14. The shipwreck of 14 June 2023 off the coast of Pylos, leading to over 600 estimated deaths, remains a striking example of flagrant failure on the part of the executive to

¹⁷ Mega, 'Ο Χρήστος Τριαντόπουλος και το «μπάζωμα» των Τεμπών', 8 March 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁸ Το Vima, 'Τέμπη: Απολογήθηκε ο Χρήστος Τριαντόπουλος – Αντιμέτωπος με πλημμέλημα για το μπάζωμα', 18 December 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁹ News 24/7, 'Μητσοτάκης: Το δράμα στα Τέμπη οφείλεται κυρίως σε τραγικό ανθρώπινο λάθος', 1 March 2023, [URL](#).

²⁰ ECtHR, A.R.E. v. Greece, App No 15783/21, 7 January 2025, para 229; G.R.J. v. Greece, App No 15067/21, 3 December 2024, para 190.

²¹ CJEU, C-136/24 P *Hamoudi*, 18 December 2025, paras 115-128.

²² GNCHR, *Recording Mechanism of Incidents of Informal Forced Returns – Annual Report 2024*, June 2025, [URL](#).

²³ Ombudsman, *ΕΜΗΔΠΑ Ετήσια Έκθεση 2024*, 7 August 2025, 10 and 106-109, [URL](#).

²⁴ Among others, Frontex, *Final SIR Report 14717/2024*, 25 June 2025; *Final SIR Report 14453/2024*, 20 June 2025.

²⁵ Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, *Memorandum on migration and border control, following the Commissioner's visit to Greece from 3 to 7 February 2025*, CommHR(2025)16, 17 April 2025, paras 10-13, [URL](#).

initiate disciplinary proceedings in the face of criminal prosecution of high-ranking Hellenic Coast Guard officials and an *ex officio* investigation launched by the Ombudsman in its capacity as National Mechanism for Investigation of Arbitrariness Incidents by law enforcement officers.²⁶

Police violence

15. The year 2025 was marked by extreme police repression during the mobilisations for the two-year anniversary of the Tempi train crash. Specifically, on 26 January 2025 and 28 February 2025, Hellenic Police units engaged in unprovoked violence on Syntagma Square. Documentation shows indiscriminate use of chemical irritants and stun grenades against peaceful crowds. A notable incident involved the serious injury of photojournalist Marios Lolas by a stun grenade on 26 January 2025, an act that drew condemnation for targeting press freedom and journalists' safety (see **Press Freedom: Protection of Journalists' Independence & Safety**).
16. We remain concerned that, despite continuous ECtHR condemnations on the matter, criminal investigations into police violence are fundamentally flawed across multiple dimensions, pointing to a persistent "culture of impunity" within the Hellenic Police and the state's failure to provide swift and effective justice to victims of police arbitrariness.
17. In an indicative example, in January 2026, the Public Prosecutor of Athens shelved the investigation into the case cited in our previous submission regarding Mohammad Kamran, a Pakistani national found dead inside a police station following eight days of detention with visible signs of physical abuse.²⁷ Here too, the criminal investigation is marred by serious deficiencies (see further **Justice: Independence: Independence & Effectiveness of the Prosecution Service**).
18. At the same time, repeated delays in the delivery of justice also reflect systemic barriers to accountability. For instance, on 14 August 2025, a formal indictment was issued against two high-ranking Hellenic Police officers following a complaint from ten lawyers against the use of water cannons and chemical agents aimed at dispersing a lawful assembly held on 6 March 2021 on Syntagma Square in support of hunger striker Dimitrios Koufontinas. The two officers, a General Police Director and a Police Director, are charged with attempted dangerous bodily harm and arbitrary obstruction of a lawful collective assembly.²⁸ The trial, initially scheduled for 7 November 2025 before the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Athens, was postponed upon request of the defendants.
19. The case of Yiannis Kafkas remains a hallmark of police brutality and delayed justice in Greece.²⁹ During a 11 May 2011 protest in Athens, Kafkas sustained near-fatal head injuries due to unprovoked, indiscriminate violence by riot police units. Despite the severity of the incident, criminal and disciplinary investigations lasted six years and

²⁶ Ombudsman, 'Ο Συνήγορος για τη πορεία του πειθαρχικού ελέγχου του ναυαγίου της Πύλου', 7 November 2025, [URL](#).

²⁷ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, para 53.

²⁸ Eksegersi, '7.11.2025: Οι «κλάρες» της Αστυνομίας στο εδώλιο', 4 November 2025, [URL](#).

²⁹ News 24/7, "Ενα κράτος σε άρνηση: Πώς η Ελλάδα πολεμά τα θύματα των αποτυχιών της", 11 October 2025, [URL](#).

failed to identify or prosecute any perpetrators. Following an action for damages brought against the state in 2016, the Administrative Court of Athens held in 2021 that the injury resulted from “indiscriminate use of force” that constituted “intended grievous bodily harm”, found the state liable and ordered 50,000 € in damages.³⁰ On appeal, the Administrative Court of Appeal delivered its judgment in 2023 and doubled the initial compensation sum to 100,000 €, citing the gravity of the injuries and the illicit conduct of the officers.³¹ In December 2023, the Greek state appealed the ruling before the Council of State. Following consecutive postponements – including in October 2025 and December 2025 – the hearing is now scheduled for 2 February 2026 (see [Justice: Efficiency: Length of Proceedings](#)).³² Fifteen years after the incident, no officer has been held accountable and the victim has yet to receive compensation.

Declining press freedom & intimidation of journalists

20. For the fourth year in a row, Greece ranked last among the EU countries in the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) annual press freedom index. Greece also dropped to 89th place worldwide out of 180 countries in 2025, down from 88th place in 2024.³³
21. In August 2025, the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA)³⁴ entered into force. Member States are required to enact reforms to align their legislation with the new Regulation. Greece, however, has made only limited progress in aligning its legal framework and practices with EMFA provisions. While certain existing laws partially meet EMFA requirements, significant shortcomings remain in areas such as regulation, ownership transparency, pluralism, public service media, and funding.
22. In early October 2025, Greece concluded a public consultation on a draft law concerning the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (Ελληνική Ραδιοφωνία Τηλεόραση, ERT) and measures related to EMFA implementation. The law, adopted on 25 November 2025 as L 5253/2025,³⁵ includes EMFA-related provisions on state advertising expenditure and a national plan for the safety of journalists.
23. Substantive reforms to safeguard the independence of regulatory authorities and public service media, ensure transparent and equitable state funding, and enhance media pluralism have yet to be introduced.
24. We analyse these issues in further detail in [Media Freedom & Pluralism](#).

Breaches of data protection obligations by state authorities

25. **Police facial recognition system:** On 31 December 2025, the [Hellenic Data Protection Authority](#) (Αρχή Προστασίας Δεδομένων Προσωπικού Χαρακτήρα, DPA) delivered

³⁰ Administrative Court of Athens, Decision 3947/2021, 22 April 2021.

³¹ Administrative Court of Appeal of Athens, Decision 2815/2023, 15 September 2023.

³² Council of State, E3005/2023, not yet heard.

³³ RSF, 2025 Index, [URL](#).

³⁴ Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (European Media Freedom Act) [2024] OJ L 17.4.2024.

³⁵ L 5253/2025, Gov. Gazette A' 212/25.11.2025.

Decision 45/2025 which found that launch by the Hellenic Police of the “Smart Policing” system entailing 1,000 ‘smart’ portable devices intended to enable facial recognition would infringe data protection standards.³⁶ Following a complaint by Homo Digitalis in 2020, the Authority found that there was no legal basis for the intended processing through the system and that the required data protection impact assessment had not been carried out in a timely manner during the pilot phase of the project.³⁷ Given that the processing was limited to a pilot application and that no harm to data subjects has been established, the Authority considered that there are no grounds for imposing an administrative fine. Based on the above and pursuant to Article 15(4)(a) L 4624/2019,³⁸ the Authority issued a warning against the activation of the Smart Policing System, since, under the existing legal framework, any operational use of the system would constitute unlawful processing of personal data and would infringe the provisions of the above-mentioned law.³⁹

26. **National data retention framework:** In December 2024, the DPA issued Decision 19/2024 on a matter exposing a structural breach of EU data protection law by the Greek state stemming from the national data-retention framework currently in force.⁴⁰ The case arose from a subscriber's complaint against a telecommunications provider that refused to grant him access to metadata relating to his electronic communications, citing national legislation, namely L 3917/2011 and L 3471/2006,⁴¹ adopted to transpose the e-Privacy Directive.⁴² Far from being a purely individual dispute with a telecommunications provider, the case highlights how the general and indiscriminate retention of electronic communications metadata pursuant to national law results in systematic violations of fundamental rights, including the right of access to personal data and the prohibition of mass surveillance.
27. The broader significance of the decision lies in the DPA's implicit criticism of the national data retention regime itself. L 3917/2011 mandates the general and indiscriminate retention of communications metadata for a period of twelve months, irrespective of any link to a specific threat, suspicion, or criminal investigation. Article 4 L 3917/2011 has been interpreted by providers as imposing an absolute bar on subscribers' access to retained data.⁴³ This interpretation, and, more fundamentally, the legislative scheme underpinning it, stands in direct conflict with Article 15 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)⁴⁴ and with the essence of the right to informational self-determination.

³⁶ DPA, Decision 45/2025, 31 December 2025, [URL](#).

³⁷ Homo Digitalis, ‘Another important victory! The Hellenic Data Protection Authority rules the operation of the Hellenic Police’s Smart Policing system unlawful’, 15 January 2026, [URL](#).

³⁸ Gov. Gazette A' 137/29.08.2019.

³⁹ DPA, Decision 45/2025, 31 December 2025, 20-21.

⁴⁰ DPA, Decision 19/2024, 2 December 2024, [URL](#).

⁴¹ L 3917/2011, Gov. Gazette A' 22/21.02.2011; L 3471/2006, Gov. Gazette A' 133/28.06.2006.

⁴² Directive 2002/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2002 concerning the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communications sector [2002] OJ L 37/47.

⁴³ DPA, Decision 19/2024, 2 December 2024, 7, 10 and 13.

⁴⁴ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data [2016] OJ L 119/1.

28. The telecommunications provider has appealed the decision before the Council of State. The hearing is expected to take place in February 2026.

29. **Centaur & Hyperion case on migration surveillance apparatus:** The Ministry of Migration and Asylum appears to continue to violate the data protection rights of asylum seekers in reception facilities, further to the compliance order issued by the DPA in April 2024. Said landmark decision had found that the deployment of EU-funded surveillance technologies in reception facilities across Greece, including biometric access control systems (Hyperion) and surveillance infrastructures (Centaur),⁴⁵ was unlawful and in breach of the GDPR. Despite the expiry of the compliance deadline in July 2024, the Ministry of Migration and Asylum has failed to take the necessary measures to remedy these violations according to a report by Homo Digitalis and I Have Rights.⁴⁶

30. Unlawful data processing practices remained in place in reception facilities such as Closed Controlled Access Centres (CCAC) on the Aegean islands, reflecting a systemic disregard for data protection obligations. Specifically, the Ministry of Migration and Asylum has failed to implement the DPA compliance order in three ways:

- ❖ It has provided only limited and insufficient information on the use of the Centaur and Hyperion systems in reception facilities.
- ❖ It has failed to establish privacy policies that clearly articulate a valid legal basis for processing both standard and special categories of personal data in relation to the Centaur and Hyperion surveillance systems. Instead, it relies on vague references to the public interest, without demonstrating necessity, proportionality or grounding in specific legal provisions, thereby falling short of GDPR requirements.
- ❖ It has not provided documentation confirming the existence of formal DPAs with key partners such as the Hellenic Police, despite evidence of active data sharing.

31. The Ministry of Migration and Asylum has lodged an appeal against the DPA decision. The case is set to be heard before the Council of State in February 2026, following a postponement ordered *proprio motu* by the Court.

⁴⁵ European Ombudsman, Decision in strategic inquiry OI/3/2022/MHZ on how the European Commission ensures respect for fundamental rights in EU-funded migration management facilities in Greece, 7 June 2023, para 23, [URL](#).

⁴⁶ I Have Rights & Homo Digitalis, "They Never Tell Us Anything": Ongoing Data Rights Violations in the Samos CCAC, July 2025, [URL](#).

Justice system

Independence

32. We reiterate our longstanding concerns regarding the (perceived) independence of the Greek judiciary, in particular as regards the adjudication of cases pertaining to state actors. Reference should be made to the findings of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ) survey regarding judges' own perceptions of judicial independence. Findings regarding Greece include the following:⁴⁷

- ❖ 39% of respondents stated that they “disagree/strongly disagree” with the statement: “In the last three years, I believe judgments that went against the interests of the government were usually implemented/enforced in my country”.⁴⁸
- ❖ 17% of respondents stated that they “agree/strongly agree” with the statement: “I believe during the last three years cases have been allocated to judges other than in accordance with established rules or procedures in order to influence the outcome of the particular case”.⁴⁹
- ❖ 27% of respondents stated that they “disagreed/strongly disagreed” with the statement: “During the last three years I believe that my independence as a judge has been respected by the government.”⁵⁰

Appointment & selection of judges, prosecutors and court presidents

33. **Consideration of the views of the judiciary in the selection of court presidents:** The implementation of Article 27 L 5123/2024⁵¹ regarding the request of an opinion of the Administrative Plenaries of the highest Greek courts prior to the appointment of their presidents has not followed the European standards cited by the Commission in previous Rule of Law Reports.⁵²

34. In July 2025, upon first application of the procedure laid down in Article 27 L 5123/2024, the Supreme Court President appointed by the Council of Ministers was the candidate ranked fourth in the Supreme Court Plenary vote, albeit first in the pre-selection process led by the Conference of Presidents of the Parliament.⁵³ The Greek government

⁴⁷ ENCJ, Survey among Judges on the Independence of the Judiciary, 2025, 14, 19-20, 25-26, 31, 36, 38, 40-41, 47-48, 53, [URL](#).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 73.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 77.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 108.

⁵¹ Gov. Gazette A' 109/19.07.2024.

⁵² European Commission, 2024 Rule of Law Report Greece, SWD(2024) 808, 24 July 2024, 4, fn. 14: “... an independent and competent authority drawn in substantial part from the judiciary should be authorised to make recommendations or express opinions which the relevant appointing authority follows in practice...”

⁵³ Naftemporiki, ‘Η νέα ηγεσία της Δικαιοσύνης – Ποιοι επελέγησαν επικεφαλής του Αρειού Πάγου’, 4 July 2025, [URL](#).

therefore did not give priority to the first, second or even third candidate proposed by the judicial cohort.

35. Concerns around the ongoing risk of political inroads into the appointment of court presidents persist in the light of recent statements of the Minister of Justice: "The selection of heads of the Supreme Courts of the country does not amount to professional union choice. It is a process regarding an independent power, legitimised by the sovereignty of the people through the Parliament and the Government."⁵⁴
36. In a press release of 23 July 2025 titled "The End of Illusions, or Lessons on How a Law Is Nullified in Practice", the Association of Judges and Prosecutors ('Ενωση Δικαστών και Εισαγγελέων, ENDE) levelled concerns about the appointment of Vice-Presidents to the Supreme Court. The press release specifically addresses the fact that Supreme Court judges (Αρεοπαγίτες) who ranked first in the electoral procedure among the members of the Court were not deemed suitable to occupy any of the eight vacant Vice-Presidential positions. ENDE importantly stated: "Yesterday's Government Gazette No. 2693/22-7-2025 regarding the appointment of Vice-Presidents to the Areios Pagos confirmed in the most emphatic manner the popular saying that in Greece we have laws, but they are not implemented. And here, the example of how a law is nullified in practice is provided by the very Government that proposed and voted for the law."⁵⁵
37. The Association of Administrative Judges (Ενωση Διοικητικών Δικαστών) has urged for rules requiring a binding opinion of the judiciary in order to ensure "that the decision-making body shall not be able to select persons beyond those proposed by the judges themselves."⁵⁶
38. **Interference in the work of EPPO prosecutors:** Intercepted communications included in the OPEKEPE case file investigated by EPPO refer to interference on the part of Cabinet Ministers with a view to removing Popi Papandreou, the EPPO Prosecutor investigating the case. This includes the Minister of Justice (see also [Anti-Corruption: Repression](#)).⁵⁷

Independence & effectiveness of the prosecution service

39. We reaffirm our longstanding concerns that Greece flouts the independence, impartiality and effectiveness standards required by Articles 2, 4 and 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights – and corollary provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) – as regards criminal investigations into unlawful conduct by state officials. Prosecution and criminal justice form the sole process apt to identify, try and punish perpetrators and to deliver justice to the victims concerned, per settled case

⁵⁴ Ministry of Justice, 'Δήλωση του Υπουργού Δικαιοσύνης Γ. Φλωρίδη για τη διαδικασία ψηφοφορίας και επιλογής για την ηγεσία του Αρείου Πάγου', 24 October 2025, [URL](#).

⁵⁵ ENDE, 'Το τέλος των ψευδαισθήσεων ή μαθήματα για το πώς ακυρώνεται ένας νόμος στην πράξη', 23 July 2025, [URL](#).

⁵⁶ Association of Administrative Judges, 'Ομιλία της Προέδρου της Ένωσης Διοικητικών Δικαστών Βανέσσας-Πλαναγιώτας Ντέγκα στην Ολομέλεια των Δικηγορικών Συλλόγων στις 13.9.2025', 13 September 2025, [URL](#).

⁵⁷ in.gr, 'ΟΠΕΚΕΠΕ: Εμπλοκή Βορίδη – Φλωρίδη για να «φαγωθεί» η Ευρωπαϊκή Εισαγγελέας δείχνει διάλογος της δικογραφίας', 27 June 2025, [URL](#). See further To Vima, 'Το παρασκήνιο για τους Ευρωπαίους Εισαγγελείς', 15 December 2025, [URL](#).

law of the ECtHR.⁵⁸ This cannot be substituted by non-judicial avenues. Compliance with Charter requirements cannot be secured unless and until deficiencies in the criminal procedure *per se* are remedied.

40. Systemic deficiencies in the prosecution of acts perpetrated by state officials remain under supervision of **Implementation of Judgments** and continue to lead to fresh condemnations of Greece by the ECtHR. However, the Commission has yet to meaningfully address those in the context of the Rule of Law Report, despite its assurances to the European Ombudsman to the effect that it “monitors compliance [on the part of Greece] with fundamental rights, including having in place timely and effective investigations, through the ‘Rule of Law Reports’.”⁵⁹ Such assurances have also been repeatedly given by the Commission to Greek civil society organisations.⁶⁰
41. In light of the persisting and pervasive character of deficiencies in Greek criminal investigations into wrongdoing by state officials, we deem it imperative for the Rule of Law Report to perform a thorough assessment of the state of domestic prosecution practice and to make appropriate recommendations for improvement.
42. We recall that the Commission has used its Rule of Law Reports to make recommendations to other Member States to remedy structural deficiencies within their prosecution services. For example, it has consistently urged Cyprus to establish remedies against decisions not to prosecute criminal offences.⁶¹ It has also stressed the need for such remedies to be effective, noting that “The strict hierarchical internal organisation of the Law Office raises questions as regards the effectiveness of the remedy”.⁶² The Commission has also made recommendations to Czechia on the need to ensure the independence of investigation and prosecution.⁶³

Core features of ineffective criminal investigations against state officials

43. Following on from our previous submissions, we highlight again that criminal investigations into unlawful acts of state officials fail to meet minimum fundamental rights standards on account of a series of deficiencies such as:⁶⁴

⁵⁸ ECtHR, *F.M. v. Greece*, App No 17622/21, 14 October 2025, para 176; *Almukhlas v. Greece*, App No 22776/18, 25 March 2025, para 77; *Alkhatib v. Greece*, App No 3566/16, 16 January 2024, para 75.

⁵⁹ European Ombudsman, *Decision on how the European Commission monitors fundamental rights compliance in the context of EU funds granted to Greece for border management*, Case 1418/2023/VS, 21 February 2025, para 25, fn. 23, [URL](#).

⁶⁰ European Commission, Letter to five civil society organisations, Ares(2024)9031451, 17 December 2024; Meeting minutes of the Legal Aid Working Group CEAS Sub-Working Group, 22 September 2025, Item 2.5.

⁶¹ European Commission, 2025 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Cyprus, SWD(2025) 913, 8 July 2025, 1, 2, 4; 2024 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Cyprus, SWD(2024) 813, 24 July 2024, 2, 6; 2023 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Cyprus, SWD(2023) 813, 5 July 2023, 2, 7.

⁶² European Commission, 2024 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Cyprus, SWD(2024) 813, 24 July 2024, 6.

⁶³ European Commission, 2025 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Czechia, SWD(2025) 903, 8 July 2025, 1, 2, 8.

⁶⁴ For example, RSA & Stiftung PRO ASYL, *Accountability adrift in Greek waters: Addressing human rights violations in Greek Coast Guard border management operations*, October 2025, para 18.

- ❖ **Lack of independence of investigating officers:** Cases of alleged misconduct by state officials continue to undergo preliminary investigation by officers belonging to those bodies, while instances of undue interference persist as regards investigating officers and experts involved in the establishment and assessment of evidence.
- ❖ **Deficiencies in the examination of witnesses and suspects:** Prosecutors have continued to dismiss criminal complaints without requesting a testimony from the complainant on the alleged incident, without interviewing proposed witnesses or identifying other witnesses, and without questioning Hellenic Police or Coast Guard officers on duty at the time of the incident.
- ❖ **Deficiencies in inspections, expertise, forensic reports and digital evidence:** Further omissions of key investigative steps in preliminary examinations include failure to perform a scene inspection, and failure to examine or even to request digital evidence e.g. surveillance footage or telecommunications data, including to inspect mobile phone signals that could establish the whereabouts of the alleged perpetrators and victims.

44. These flaws are consistently illustrated in the cases processed in the Greek criminal justice system. We draw illustrative examples of investigations into **Cross-Cutting Rule of Law Issues** from the past year below.
45. **“Greek Watergate” surveillance scandal:** An abundance of evidence emerging during the hearings of the Predatorgate trial before the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Athens (Μονομελές Πλημμελειοδικείο Αθηνών) corroborates the existence of a joint EYP-Predator surveillance centre.⁶⁵ The hearings held to date indicate critical gaps in investigative measures on the part of the prosecution service. For instance, the

⁶⁵ Among others, Inside Story, 'Υποκλοπές: Ένας δικαστής κάνει όσα δεν έκανε ο Άρειος Πάγος', 22 December 2025, [URL](#); in.gr, 'Η διαρκής κυβερνητική ομερτά για τις υποκλοπές', 20 December 2025, [URL](#); Reporters United, 'Υπουργός του Μητσοτάκη σε «στενή και διαρκή σχέση» με τον κατηγορούμενο του Predator Γιάννη Λαβράνο', Instagram post, 22 December 2025, [URL](#); 'Ισως οι καθαριστριες να πήραν την προπληρωμένη κάρτα μου για το Predator', Instagram post, 19 December 2025, [URL](#); 'Το Predator ήταν ένα σύστημα ελέγχου της κυβερνητικής μηχανής', Instagram post, 18 December 2025, [URL](#); 'Επαιρναν τα CD του Predator και τα πήγαιναν στο Μαξιμου', Instagram post, 16 December 2025, [URL](#); 'Ο κ. Λαβράνος πήγε στο Ισραήλ με τον υπουργό Άμυνας και ψεύτικο όνομα', Instagram post, 12 December 2025, [URL](#); 'Ήταν υπουργός, στόχος του Predator, προϊστάμενος της Διώξης Ηλεκτρονικού Εγκλήματος', Instagram post, 11 December 2025, [URL](#); 'Η Intellexa του Predator «συνεργάζοταν μόνο με κρατικές αρχές» και όχι με ιδιώτες', Instagram post, 3 December 2025, [URL](#); 'Αυτό δεν ήταν έλεγχος στην ΕΥΠ, αυτό ήταν αναψυχή και ψυχαγωγία', Instagram post, 1 December 2025, [URL](#); 'Αντί να βρει τους δολοφόνους του Καραϊβάζ, η ΕΥΠ του Μητσοτάκη παρακολουθούσε τους διώκτες των εγκληματιών', Instagram post, 25 November 2025, [URL](#); 'Οσο είναι η ΝΔ στα πράγματα, εμεις δεν φοβόμαστε τίποτα', Instagram post, 21 November 2025, [URL](#); 'Οι υπουργοί του κ. Μητσοτάκη που έβαλαν την καριέρα τους πάνω από τη Δημοκρατία στο σκάνδαλο του Predator', Instagram post, 18 November 2025, [URL](#); 'Το «υποθετικό» σενάριο του Ταλ Ντίλιαν για την πώληση του Predator στην ελληνική κυβέρνηση', Instagram post, 17 November 2025, [URL](#); 'Από κάποιον στην ΕΥΠ ή κατ' εντολή της ΕΥΠ', Instagram post, 14 November 2025, [URL](#); 'Ο ταυτόχρονος έρωτας της ΕΥΠ και του Predator για τον Στέφανο Χιό', Instagram post, 10 November 2025, [URL](#); 'Ολα έχουν ένα κοινό κέντρο - τον Κυριάκο Μητσοτάκη', Instagram post, 3 November 2025, [URL](#); 'Ένα παρακράτος με πολιτικές πλάτες', Instagram post, 22 October 2025, [URL](#).

Supreme Court Prosecutor and the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Athens have so far not summoned for questioning the individuals alleged to have operated the Predator spyware on behalf of EYP, despite the fact that the names of the alleged operators of the illegal spyware have been made known to the judicial authorities.

46. Furthermore, upon shelving the investigation on 30 July 2024 as far as state officials were concerned,⁶⁶ the Supreme Court Prosecutor failed to summon, either as witnesses or as suspects, individuals who are alleged to have removed equipment belonging to the company Intellexa – specifically, the company's servers – following the revelations⁶⁷ of the illegal use of Predator against targets in Greece.⁶⁸
47. In addition, evidence emerging from witnesses in the hearings of the case before the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Athens also refers to undue interference in the technical report delivered by two experts to the Supreme Court Prosecutor on 27 June 2024, i.e. three days before the closure of the investigation as regards state officials. Specifically, one of the experts reported having received instructions from senior judicial officials to refrain from disclosing any further information on the process. Official sources cited by media reports refer to instructions on the main methods followed by the two experts, with a view to calculating the number of Predator targets against the total number of EYP surveillance orders and to concluding on the absence of a correlation between the two.⁶⁹
48. **Tempi train crash:** The Tempi train crash case exemplifies a range of investigative failures and fragmentation of judicial investigations illustrating the state's inability to conduct a prompt, impartial and transparent investigation capable of revealing the true causes of the incident. Among others:
 - ❖ The crash site was not properly secured or isolated, contrary to basic forensic standards. From the early hours of the incident, efforts were made to rapidly clear and backfill (μπάζωμα) the area, as documented in the accident report released in February 2025 by the Hellenic Rail and Safety Investigation Authority (Εθνικός Οργανισμός Διερεύνησης Αεροπορικών και Σιδηροδρομικών Ατυχημάτων και Ασφάλειας Μεταφορών, HARSIA).⁷⁰ These actions irreversibly altered the scene before essential forensic examinations could be completed. In addition, crucial elements of the case file, such as the identification of the debris deposition site in Koulouri and the discovery of human remains and victims' personal belongings, were brought to light not by official investigative initiative but through the efforts of the victims' relatives. Only after their intervention were the authorities compelled to carry out further investigative

⁶⁶ Supreme Court Prosecutor, 'Ανακοίνωση – Ενημέρωση σχετικά με τις υποκλοπές', 30 July 2024, [URL](#).

⁶⁷ Citizen Lab, 'Pegasus vs. Predator - Dissident's Doubly-Infected iPhone Reveals Cyrox Mercenary Spyware', 16 December 2021, [URL](#).

⁶⁸ Reporters United, '«Γρηγόρης δεν λέγεται;»: Το φιάσκο του Αρείου Πάγου με τις υποκλοπές', 3 August 2024, [URL](#).

⁶⁹ Ta Nea, 'Σκάνδαλο υποκλοπών: Πώς «έκρυψαν» τη σύνδεση ΕΥΠ – Predator', 9 December 2025, [URL](#).

⁷⁰ HARSIA, Head-on collision between a passenger train and a freight train in Tempi, 28 February 2023, 27 February 2025, [URL](#).

acts. This underscores the initial institutional inertia and lack of diligence of the responsible authorities.⁷¹

- ❖ The victims' relatives submitted repeated requests to the Investigative Judge (ανακριτής) and the Court of Appeal Council of Larisa (Συμβούλιο Εφετών Λάρισας) for the exhumation (εκταφή) of the deceased, with a view to the conduct of toxicological examinations and clarification of the precise causes of death. These requests were initially rejected multiple times,⁷² despite evident gaps in the forensic investigation and the aforementioned disturbance of the crash site. Exhumations were only authorised after a prolonged hunger strike by a victim's father, and even then, within a separate procedural framework that limited their impact on the main case file.⁷³
- ❖ Digital evidence of the loading of the freight train in Thessaloniki on the night of the train crash has disappeared on account of railway entities executives' failure to submit the video footage to the Investigative Judge, as well as overwriting of new data on the hard disks in the months following the incident. The issue is examined in separate judicial proceedings before the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Larisa (Μονομελές Πλημμυρειοδικείο Λάρισας) against senior executives of public and private railway entities (see **Efficiency of Justice: Length of Proceedings**).

49. **Police violence:** The criminal investigation into the September 2024 death of Mohammad Kamran was shelved in January 2026 by the Public Prosecutor of Athens on the basis that there were no indications of wrongdoing on the part of Hellenic Police officers. The victim had been detained in various police stations across Athens for eight days prior to being found dead inside the Agios Panteleimonas police station. Despite photographic evidence of extensive signs of physical abuse on the victim's body and a forensic report indicating physical beatings as a concurring cause of death, the Prosecutor concluded that the victim's injuries are owed to self-harm and to "potential conflict with other unknown persons" in the 55 minutes he spent at liberty before being re-arrested and placed under policy custody. The case file contained testimonies of police officers that appear to be near-identical but bore no information on the persons detained together with the victim, who were not questioned on the incident. In addition, no explanation was offered as to why the surveillance cameras of the police station were not in operation during the time of the incident.⁷⁴
50. **Enforced disappearance & violence against people seeking asylum:** In January 2025, the ECtHR affirmed that Greece carries out a "systematic practice" of push backs and that "in the current state of national practice, domestic remedies indicated by the

⁷¹ News 24/7, 'Τέμπη: Τα μυστικά στα χώματα του μπαζώματος', 15 February 2025, [URL](#).

⁷² Huffpost, 'Απορρίπτει για τρίτη φορά αίτημα εκταφής για τα Τέμπη ο ανακριτής – Έντονες αντιδράσεις από τους συγγενείς των θυμάτων', 12 August 2025, [URL](#); Efsyn, 'Ανακοινώση εισαγγελίας Αρείου Πλάγου μετά την «εκτίμηση» Φλωρίδη για την εκταφή', 26 September 2025, [URL](#).

⁷³ News 24/7, 'Υπόθεση Ρούτσι: Πώς το ανεξήγητο «όχι» σε ένα δίκαιο αίτημα έγινε «ναι»', 7 October 2025, [URL](#).

⁷⁴ Efsyn, 'Η κρατική δολοφονία Καμράν στο αρχείο', 13 January 2026, [URL](#); KEERFA, 'Αποκαλυπτικά στοιχεία για την εισαγγελική διάταξη αρχειοθέτησης της δολοφονίας του Μ.Καμράν στο ΑΤ Αγ.Παντελεήμονα', 12 January 2026, [URL](#).

Government are not effective concerning complaints stemming from *refoulement* as such and other alleged violations of the Convention perpetrated in the course of said *refoulement*".⁷⁵

51. Yet, no push back case has proceeded beyond the criminal preliminary examination stage to date. Public Prosecutors have continued to shelve investigations against allegations of push backs for want of "sufficient indications" of wrongdoing. Criminal complaints submitted by our organisations have been routinely archived as unfounded.
52. For their part, the Greek administrative authorities demonstrate severe contempt for their responsibility to take effective disciplinary action and to ensure accountability of officials implicated in fundamental rights violations. Official figures shared by the government in late 2025 in response to parliamentary questions reveal that:
 - ❖ None of the 42 sworn administrative inquiries (ένορκη διοικητική εξέταση) conducted into allegations of fundamental rights violations from 2019 to 2025 have led to disciplinary action against Hellenic Coast Guard officials.⁷⁶
 - ❖ Out of the 39 disciplinary cases conducted against Hellenic Police officers for push backs in the same period, 25 were concluded, 8 were assessed and shelved and 6 were pending as of 14 November 2025. None led to disciplinary sanctions against Hellenic Police officers.⁷⁷
53. In addition, in October 2025, the *F.M. v. Greece* ruling of the ECtHR found that Greece breached the fundamental right to life on account of its ineffective criminal investigation into the incident of a 2018 shipwreck off the coast of Agathonisi that resulted in the case being shelved by the Piraeus Naval Court Prosecutor.⁷⁸ *F.M.* marks the fourth condemnation of Greece in three years for reasons of ineffective Naval Court Prosecutor investigations into lethal Coast Guard operations vis-à-vis newly arriving refugees, following *Safi v. Greece* in July 2022, *Alkhatib v. Greece* in January 2024 and *Almukhlas v. Greece* in March 2025.⁷⁹
54. Current examples of investigative flaws in the handling of cases of push backs and other violations against people seeking asylum are provided below:
 - (a) Following the *A.R.E. v. Greece* judgment of the ECtHR regarding a push back occurring in 2019 in the Evros region, the Appeals Prosecutor of Thrace (Εισαγγελία Εφετών Θράκης) was requested by the Supreme Court Prosecutor to reassess the criminal complaint of the applicant that had been shelved in

⁷⁵ ECtHR, *A.R.E. v. Greece*, App No 15783/21, 7 January 2025, para 201.

⁷⁶ Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Island Policy, Reply to parliamentary question, 1500.1/86057/2025/496, 28 November 2025, [URL](#).

⁷⁷ Ministry of Citizen Protection, Reply to parliamentary question, 7017/4/27879-ε', 8 December 2025, [URL](#).

⁷⁸ ECtHR, *F.M. v. Greece*, App No 17622/21, 14 October 2025.

⁷⁹ ECtHR, *Safi v. Greece*, App No 5418/15, 7 July 2022; *Alkhatib v. Greece*, App No 3566/16, 16 January 2024; *Almukhlas v. Greece*, App No 22776/18, 25 March 2025. For analysis, RSA & Stiftung PRO ASYL, *Accountability adrift in Greek waters: Addressing human rights violations in Greek Coast Guard border management operations*, October 2025, [URL](#).

2020 for want of “sufficient indications” of wrongdoing. According to information provided by the Greek government in January 2026, “The prosecutor at the Court of Appeal of Thrace replied that there is no reason to retrieve the preliminary criminal case file from the archives in order to re-examine the criminal case in question. According to domestic law, a case can be retrieved if new facts/elements have emerged. In the instant case, however, no new facts and elements, unknown at the time when the case was shelved, have been disclosed to the prosecutors handling the case in question -beyond those already taken into account- which (new facts), either on their own or in combination with those already presented, would have made it clear that the case was erroneously shelved.”⁸⁰

- (b) In the case of a push back on Samos involving *inter alia* allegations of ill-treatment of migrants by state officials, the Public Prosecutor shelved the complaint in November 2025 on the ground that the suspects could not be identified, even though no photographs of officers were shown to the victims for identification purposes.⁸¹
- (c) Following a January 2023 criminal complaint lodged on behalf of three Palestinian refugees pushed back four times from Kos to Türkiye in 2021 and 2022 – the fourth push back occurred while two of them were legally residing in Greece as recognised refugees, one of them with his family members –two preliminary examinations were launched: one before the Public Prosecutor of Kos regarding potential criminal conduct by the Hellenic Police, and one before the Naval Court Prosecutor for investigation of potential criminal acts by the Hellenic Coast Guard.
 - The Public Prosecutor of Kos instructed the Internal Affairs Division of the Hellenic Police in May 2023 to carry out a preliminary investigation into the incident involving potential criminal conduct on the part of police officers. The Internal Affairs Division called the victims to testify one year later, in April 2024. The Prosecutor shelved the case in August 2024 on grounds of insufficient indications of wrongdoing.
 - The Naval Court Prosecutor dismissed the complaint in June 2025 on grounds of insufficient evidence, without summoning the Hellenic Coast Guard officers on duty on the day of the alleged incident for testimonies and without carrying out any investigation to identify the place where the complainants had been informally and unlawfully detained. Upon admission of the complainants’ appeal, the Reviewing Court Prosecutor (*Εισαγγελία Αναθεωρητικού Δικαστηρίου*) ordered the continuation of the preliminary examination.
- (d) In March 2025, the Reviewing Court Prosecutor rejected the appeal against the closure by the Naval Court Prosecutor of a preliminary investigation into a push

⁸⁰ Greek government, Action Plan A.R.E. v. Greece, DH-DD(2026)37, 5 January 2026, para 5, [URL](#).

⁸¹ Information provided by Human Rights Legal Project, January 2026.

back incident occurring in March 2020 from Rhodes to Türkiye.⁸² The victim was not called to testify prior to the closure of the case. The Prosecutor refrained from examining submitted digital evidence – satellite imagery and photographs – showing the place where the victim had been detained on Rhodes, and offered no explanation as to why he was found on a life raft adrift in Turkish territorial waters.

- (e) In a separate instance, following a mutual legal assistance request from Türkiye, the Greek Public Prosecutor reported that there was no record of any official interaction between Greek authorities and the victim and that therefore his presence on Greek territory could not be confirmed, despite the Hellenic Coast Guard acknowledging the detection of a life raft in Turkish territorial waters without offering any explanation as to how it arrived there.⁸³
- (f) In April 2025, the Naval Court Prosecutor closed the investigation into a fatal incident occurring off the coast of Rhodes on 20 October 2024 during a Hellenic Coast Guard operation, killing eight and seriously injuring 17 other people. Reports have stated that Coast Guard manoeuvres led to collision with the boat carrying the victims.⁸⁴
- (g) Finally, in cases concerning failure of the Hellenic Coast Guard to perform search and rescue, in May 2025, the Naval Court Prosecutor launched prosecution against 17 Hellenic Coast Guard members in relation to the 14 June 2023 Pylos shipwreck but shelved the investigation as regards four officials present in the operation room and involved in the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (Ενιαίο Κέντρο Συντονισμού Έρευνας και Διάσωσης, EKSED).⁸⁵ The preliminary examination led by the Naval Court Prosecutor was marred by several deficiencies, including failure to seize mobile phones of EKSED officials and to lift confidentiality of communications despite evidence that contact between EKSED and the Adriana boat had taken place through non-recorded phone calls.⁸⁶ Survivors of the shipwreck successfully appealed this order. In November 2025, the Reviewing Court Prosecutor instructed the Naval Court Prosecutor to initiate proceedings against the four officials, including the current Head of the Hellenic Coast Guard.⁸⁷

55. Circular statements denying the existence of illegal practices: In addition to the above investigative flaws, Greek prosecution services shelve complaints at the stage of preliminary examination by continuing to adopt a circular reasoning whereby the

⁸² For instance, Reviewing Court Prosecutor, Order 12/2025, 18 March 2025. The case is pending before the ECtHR: *Alnassar v. Greece*, App No 43746/20.

⁸³ Information provided by Legal Centre Lesvos, November 2025.

⁸⁴ Efsyn, 'Παραβιάστηκαν όλοι οι κανόνες αποφυγής σύγκρουσης πλοίων στη «σφαγή» των προσφύγων', 23 December 2024, [URL](#); The Press Project, 'Eight refugees dead – another deadly result of Coast Guard pursuits' – KEERFA condemns Rhodes shipwreck', 23 December 2024, [URL](#).

⁸⁵ RSA et al., 'Pylos Shipwreck: Criminal prosecution for felonies against 17 members of the Coast Guard, including senior officers of its leadership', 23 May 2025, [URL](#).

⁸⁶ RSA & Stiftung PRO ASYL, *Accountability adrift in Greek waters: Addressing human rights violations in Greek Coast Guard border management operations*, October 2025, 5.

⁸⁷ RSA et al., 'Pylos shipwreck: Criminal prosecution on felony charges against the current head of the Coast Guard and senior members of its leadership', 7 November 2025, [URL](#).

alleged acts are not perpetrated by state officials since they are prohibited by law. Such interpretations are also reflected in statements made by the hierarchy of the prosecution service. In a 2025 exchange with the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the Supreme Court Prosecutor issued a “categorical denial of systematic practices of summary returns from Greece, which contradicts the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights”.⁸⁸

56. In a similar vein, despite the widely established “covert nature” of push back practices,⁸⁹ Public Prosecutors continue to invoke the absence of formal records of apprehension of victims as evidence dispelling the veracity of their allegations.

(a) In April 2025, the Appeals Prosecutor of Thrace dismissed the appeal against the closure of a preliminary examination into a July 2022 incident of push back against two brothers, one of whom died in custody prior to the unlawful removal to Türkiye.⁹⁰ The Appeals Prosecutor held that no record of the complainant's arrest or of his brother or other witnesses he had proposed was found in police records.

(b) As for the investigation into repeated push backs from Kos to Türkiye, described in para 54(c), the Naval Court Prosecutor dismissed the criminal complaint in June 2025 on the ground that the persons' arrest, albeit informal and unlawful, would have been recorded as a formal apprehension and logged into the book of incidents.⁹¹ In the absence of any such record, the Prosecutor concluded that there was no sufficient evidence and failed to provide any reasoning as to how the complainants – who were recognised refugees in Greece – came to find themselves arrested in Türkiye.

(c) In another case, the criminal complaint was dismissed as unfounded by the Public Prosecutor of Orestiada and on appeal by the Appeals Prosecutor in 2025, on the ground that Türkiye had suspended all readmission procedures under the EU-Turkey Statement since March 2020 and that, according to both the National Mechanism for the Investigation of Arbitrariness Incidents and NGOs, no return operations to Türkiye had been officially recorded during the relevant period. The absence of any complaints submitted by Frontex was also cited by the Prosecutor.⁹² This position wholly disregards the fact that push backs are secret, extrajudicial operations unrelated to formal readmission procedures.

57. Importantly, similar statements are routinely made by law enforcement bodies themselves. In response to Frontex investigations following Serious Incident Reports (SIR) into allegations of push back operations, the Coast Guard consistently replies that the

⁸⁸ Commissioner for Human Rights, *Memorandum on migration and border control, following the Commissioner's visit to Greece from 3 to 7 February 2025*, CommHR(2025)16, 17 April 2025, para 21.

⁸⁹ ECtHR, *A.R.E. v. Greece*, App No 15783/21, 7 January 2025, paras 218, 230. See also CJEU, C-136/24 *P Hamoudi*, 18 December 2025, para 109.

⁹⁰ Appeals Prosecutor of Thrace, Order 8/2025, 7 April 2025.

⁹¹ Naval Court Prosecutor, Order 62/2025.

⁹² Appeals Prosecutor of Thrace, Order 5005/2025; Public Prosecutor of Orestiada, Order 5016/2005.

alleged practice does not correspond to its operational procedures, without providing further details or evidence.⁹³ Similar statements are made by the Hellenic Police in disciplinary proceedings, according to the Ombudsman.⁹⁴

58. **Arbitrary use of *res judicata*:** In one case, a criminal complaint was dismissed by the Public Prosecutor upon misapplication of the principle of *res judicata* on the ground that the alleged events had already been examined in a preliminary investigation initiated in 2022 following general emails to the Prosecutor concerning push backs in Greece.⁹⁵ That earlier file was not a complaint concerning a specific victim. It had been archived for want of “sufficient evidence to identify specific and certain criminal acts... in terms of manner, place, time, and other circumstances to enable further investigation and attribution of criminal responsibility”. Yet, the criminal complaint dismissed in 2025 contained detailed information satisfying these criteria. This reasoning disregards the ECtHR's findings in *A.R.E. v. Greece* which highlighted both the systematic nature of push backs and the recurrent ineffectiveness of investigations in Greece.
59. **Restricted challenges against decisions not to prosecute:** Finally, we stress that access to remedies against decisions of the prosecution service not to initiate criminal proceedings have been severely restricted through financial charges. Under the Criminal Procedure Code currently in force, an appeal before the Appeals Prosecutor against the dismissal of a criminal complaint (*προσφυγή κατά διάταξης απόρριψης της έγκλησης*) is subject to a 350 € fee.⁹⁶ Challenging a decision not to prosecute is 133% more expensive than appealing against a civil court ruling (*έφεση*) in civil proceedings and 75% more expensive than appealing against an administrative court ruling.⁹⁷

60. Conversely, under the persisting tendency to **misuse criminal law** against the populations that often find themselves at the receiving end of ill-treatment by the state, prosecutions and even convictions are handed down on far lower a threshold of evidence.
61. We draw particular attention to the significant increase in **prosecution of refugees and migrants for smuggling offences** on the basis that they drove a boat or vehicle transporting third-country nationals to Greece or merely assisted the driver e.g. by providing GPS instructions. These prosecutions are frequently accompanied by aggravated charges, including alleged profit-making, participation in a criminal organisation, and endangerment of human life. A particularly sharp escalation has

⁹³ Frontex, *Final SIR Report 14717/2024; Final SIR Report 14453/2024; Final SIR Report 13563/2023*.

⁹⁴ Ombudsman, *ΕΜΗΔΠΑ Ετήσια Έκθεση 2024*, 7 August 2025, 108.

⁹⁵ Appeals Prosecutor of Thrace, Order 10/2025; Public Prosecutor of Alexandroupoli, Order EF325-30.

⁹⁶ Article 52(2) Criminal Procedure Code, L 4620/2019, Gov. Gazette A' 96/11.06.2019, as amended by Article 70 L 5090/2024.

⁹⁷ Article 495(3)(A) Civil Procedure Code, PD 503/1985, Gov. Gazette A' 185/24.10.1985, as last amended by Article 42 L 5221/2025, sets out a 150 € fee for appeals against first-instance court rulings. Article 277(2) Administrative Procedure Code, L 2717/1999, Gov. Gazette A' 97/17.05.1999 and Article 36(1) PD 18/1989, Gov. Gazette A' 8/09.01.1989 set out a 200 € fee for appeals in administrative proceedings.

been observed in Crete, where organisations report that more than one hundred asylum seekers are currently detained pending trial for illegal transfer or facilitation.⁹⁸

62. Although the Migration Code expressly provides that asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection are exempt from its scope,⁹⁹ judicial practice varies considerably across regions, while Public Prosecutors have reportedly appealed acquittal decisions based on the application of this exemption. Greek courts also largely disregard the CJEU ruling in *Kinsa*,¹⁰⁰ which clarified that individuals who facilitate the crossing of borders for their family members in order to seek asylum do not fall within the scope of facilitation of unauthorised entry within the meaning of EU law.¹⁰¹
63. As already documented in our previous contributions, proceedings are typically conducted through extremely short trials, with ¾ of hearings observed by fair trial monitors on Crete, Samos and Rhodes in 2025 lasting less than five minutes.¹⁰² Moreover, these trials present serious concerns relating to core safeguards such as legal aid and interpretation (see **Justice: Quality: Accessibility of Courts**). Criminal convictions are often based on the testimonies of witnesses who do not appear in court to be cross-examined. Substantive criminal law defences such as duress or state of necessity are rarely examined,¹⁰³ while minors are frequently tried as adults due to the failure to apply appropriate age assessment procedures. Objections raised concerning violations of fair trial rights are usually dismissed without substantive examination.¹⁰⁴
64. Sentencing practices in smuggling cases are exceptionally severe: sentences are calculated per person transported, resulting in cumulative penalties amounting to hundreds of years of imprisonment. As of September 2025, 45.8% of individuals imprisoned in Greece for smuggling were serving sentences ranging from 15 years to life imprisonment.¹⁰⁵ In light of those sentences, defendants often resort to plea deals, which, however, are often neither voluntary nor informed.¹⁰⁶
65. Similar concerns arise from L 5226/2025 and the **reform of criminal provisions on “illegal entry” and “illegal stay”**.¹⁰⁷ Article 27 L 5226/2025 states that illegal entry, stay or exit of third-country nationals is punishable by a minimum imprisonment sentence of two years and a fine of at least 5,000 €.¹⁰⁸ These provisions apply to EU citizens as well. The

⁹⁸ Human Rights Legal Project & Legal Centre Lesvos, *The Exemption from Criminalisation: A Real Safeguard or an Illusion?*, November 2025, 27, [URL](#).

⁹⁹ Article 3(1)(e) L 5038/2023, Gov. Gazette A' 81/01.04.2023.

¹⁰⁰ CJEU, C-460/23 *Kinsa*, 3 June 2025,

¹⁰¹ Human Rights Legal Project & Legal Centre Lesvos, *The Exemption from Criminalisation: A Real Safeguard or an Illusion?*, November 2025, 13.

¹⁰² Border Violence Monitoring Network, *Trials Monitoring*, [URL](#).

¹⁰³ Note GCR, 'Sudanese refugee acquitted of smuggling charges after being detained for 8 months – Case represented by the Greek Council for Refugees', 21 November 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁰⁴ Border Violence Monitoring Network, *Trials Monitoring*, [URL](#).

¹⁰⁵ Human Rights Legal Project & Legal Centre Lesvos, *The Exemption from Criminalisation: A Real Safeguard or an Illusion?*, November 2025, 10. See also Realnews, 'Οι ξενοι κρατούμενοι στις ελληνικές φυλακές – Αποκαλυπτικά στοιχεία', 5 November 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁰⁶ Border Violence Monitoring Network, *Trials Monitoring*, [URL](#).

¹⁰⁷ L 5226/2025, Gov. Gazette A' 154/08.09.2025.

¹⁰⁸ The provision amended Article 83 L 3386/2005, Gov. Gazette A' 212/23.08.2005, which already penalised illegal entry and exit of third-country nationals. That provision had already formed the subject matter of an infringement procedure against Greece: INFR2014/2231.

imposition of non-suspensive imprisonment sentences runs counter to the *effet utile* of the Return Directive,¹⁰⁹ and flouts constant recommendations from the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers to address the “structural issue of prison overcrowding” in Greece, “including by enhancing the scope and the use of suspension of sentences” (see **Checks & Balances: Implementation Judgments: European Court of Human Rights**).¹¹⁰ While the law affords Public Prosecutors discretion to abstain from prosecution, in practice prosecution for illegal stay appears to be the norm. The law further provides that the Hellenic Police shall transmit files to the Public Prosecutor for initiation of prosecution when removal is postponed due to factors such as serious health conditions, inability to establish identity, or technical obstacles e.g. lack of means of transport.

66. The rules in question prohibit both suspension and conversion of the imprisonment sentence, in direct conflict with the general provisions of the Criminal Code. Suspension of the sentence is only permitted upon condition of immediate voluntary departure from Greece, in which case the individual may be detained either in a pre-removal detention centre or in a prison until departure is completed. As the individual is stripped of “genuinely free choice between these options”, voluntary departure under these circumstances amounts to forced removal and may give rise to violations of the principle of *non-refoulement* enshrined in Article 19(2) of the Charter.¹¹¹ Moreover, the lodging of an asylum application has been treated as a breach of the terms of suspension of the sentence, resulting in imprisonment of the applicants. We have raised the above issues with the European Commission *inter alia* in a formal infringement complaint lodged in January 2026.¹¹²
67. These criminal provisions have been implemented in practice even to persons seeking international protection, against the backdrop of persistent barriers to access to the asylum process, consistently highlighted by the Commission.¹¹³ For example, in December 2025, the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Athens acquitted an asylum seeker, survivor of the 14 June 2023 Pylos shipwreck, who had been arrested and prosecuted on grounds of illegal stay. The asylum seeker had been arrested and subjected to criminal proceedings while awaiting the lodging of his asylum application, which the competent authorities had scheduled for March 2026, despite his compliance with all required legal procedures.¹¹⁴ In another case, a Palestinian refugee who unsuccessfully tried to obtain an appointment to lodge his asylum claim,

¹⁰⁹ Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals [2008] OJ L348/98. See CJEU, C-329/11 Achugbabian, 6 December 2011, para 39; C-61/11 PPU El Dridi, 28 April 2011, para 59.

¹¹⁰ Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, CM/Del/Dec(2025)1537/H46-14, 17 September 2025, para 7; CM/Del/Dec(2022)1428/H46-13, 9 March 2022, para 5.

¹¹¹ ECtHR, N.A. v. Finland, App No 25244/18, 14 November 2019, para 60; M.S. v. Belgium, App No 50012/08, 31 January 2012, paras 124-125.

¹¹² CPLT(2026)00156, lodged on 3 January 2026.

¹¹³ For example, European Commission, *Communication on the status of migration management in mainland Greece*, COM(2025) 170, 4 April 2025, 11; 12th Steering Committee Meeting for Migration Management, Ares(2023)3222469, 25 April 2023; *Report of meeting between DG HOME / Secretary General for Reception*, Ares(2023)1307494, 16 November 2022.

¹¹⁴ GCR, ‘Athens’ Court acquits asylum seeker, survivor of the Pylos shipwreck, who was accused of illegal residence under the provisions of the new law of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum’, 18 December 2025, [URL](#).

due to the fact that the dedicated online platform for registration appointments in mainland Greece was – and remains – out of operation, was convicted for illegal entry in September 2025 by the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Athens. These cases highlight the risk of arrest, prosecution and conviction of asylum seekers who are unfairly treated as offenders despite taking all measures within their control to regularise their stay in the country.

Pressing need for prompt and thorough European Commission scrutiny

68. In February 2025, the Commission was recommended by the European Ombudsman to “ensure the proactive publication of (i) the measures adopted by Greece to comply with the Charter [horizontal enabling conditions under Article 15 and Annex III of the Common Provisions Regulation¹¹⁵], if any, (ii) Greece’s self-assessment(s), (iii) the Commission’s assessment(s), and (iv) information about the functioning of the monitoring mechanisms in place.” It was also urged by the European Ombudsman to “Reassess Greece’s compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights, considering credible complaints about fundamental rights issues...”¹¹⁶
69. The Commission stated in September 2025 that “progress in investigations on alleged pushback incidents is necessary to ensure accountability”.¹¹⁷ Earlier positions from DG HOME note that “the Commission maintains the point that allegations that provide credible evidence should lead to official investigations into reported incidents. Meaningful progress in these investigations should be made in due time, avoiding delays and ensuring the prospect of accountability.”¹¹⁸
70. The Commission has also expressly referred to “[Horizontal Enabling Conditions], court decisions (ECHR), questions of the EP and NGOs and the attention of the public” as “layers that require such monitoring” in its exchanges with the Greek authorities.¹¹⁹
71. However, the Commission has yet to perform an actual assessment of the effectiveness of criminal investigations performed by the Greek government, whether in the Rule of Law Report or under other monitoring processes or enforcement action. According to the information conveyed to civil society e.g. through meetings or documents granted upon request for public access, the Commission also does not appear to proactively inquire into the outcome of investigations concluded by the Greek prosecution service, in keeping with the European Ombudsman’s recommendations. This includes the cases

¹¹⁵ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy [2021] OJ L 231/159.

¹¹⁶ European Commission, *Comments by the European Commission on the conclusions of an inquiry from the European Ombudsman*, Case 1418/2023/VS, 11 June 2025, 2, [URL](#).

¹¹⁷ European Commission, Reply to written question E-2785/2025, 26 September 2025.

¹¹⁸ European Commission, Letter to five civil society organisations, Ares(2024)9031451, 17 December 2024.

¹¹⁹ European Commission, *Mission Report: Visit of... to Greece / 17 – 19 March 2025*, Ares(2025)9329218, 21 March 2025, 2.

the Commission itself has referred to the Greek authorities for investigation.¹²⁰ Recent exchanges between the Commission and the Greek government corroborate that formal information does not seem to be provided to the Commission on the progress of those investigations.¹²¹

72. Limited action on the part of the Commission to respond to the lack of transparency on investigations constitutes an additional barrier to meaningful scrutiny of the effectiveness of the Greek criminal justice system. Per its admission in December 2024, "the Commission has been advocating with Greece on the need to introduce more transparency on the progress and outcomes of ongoing or concluded investigations" and acknowledges that "it is clear that further improvements can be made".¹²²
73. Yet, there is still no publicly available information on the outcome of more than 200 investigations into push back allegations archived by prosecution services for want of "sufficient indications" of wrongdoing.¹²³ No known follow up actions have been taken by the Commission in that direction, nor has the Commission taken any concrete action to address the absence of a single criminal prosecution or a single disciplinary action against law enforcement officers for push backs to date. Related concerns with regard to the effectiveness of investigations performed by the NTA into push back allegations are discussed in **Checks & Balances: Independent Authorities: National Transparency Authority**.

Independence of the Bar and of lawyers

74. **Interference with the self-regulation status of bar associations:** Throughout the reporting period, the Plenary of Greek Bar Associations has voiced sharp criticism and objections against announced government plans for targeted amendments to the Lawyers Code¹²⁴ that would change the process of qualification and promotion of lawyers. The Plenary of Greek Bar Associations stresses that such plans run counter to the principle of independence and self-regulation of bar associations and have been publicly

¹²⁰ European Commission, *Request for investigation*, Ares(2023)3494606, 19 May 2023; *Request for investigation*, Ares(2022)1299947, 21 February 2022. Both requests were made by DG HOME to the NTA.

¹²¹ European Commission, *Mission Report: Visit of HOME DG Gminder to Greece / 8-9 September 2025*, Ares(2025)9223739, 26 October 2025: "The DG insisted on a formal reply by Greece following the Commission's inquiry with the Ministry of Migration and Asylum regarding the New York Times case". This corresponds to *Request for investigation*, Ares(2023)3494606, 19 May 2023.

¹²² European Commission, Letter to five civil society organisations, Ares(2024)9031451, 17 December 2024.

¹²³ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, paras 50 and 191, [URL](#). See further Greek government, *Action Plan A.R.E. v. Greece*, DH-DD(2026)37, 5 January 2026, para 12, fn. 5.

¹²⁴ L 4194/2013, Gov. Gazette A' 208/27.09.2013.

communicated by the government without prior consultation therewith.¹²⁵ For its part, the Ministry of Justice has confirmed its intention to present plans for such a reform.¹²⁶

75. Further criticism has been levelled by the Plenary of Greek Bar Associations against statements pointing to judicial interference in the disciplinary functions of bar associations.¹²⁷

Quality of justice

Accessibility of courts

76. **Legal aid:** Applications for legal aid are examined pursuant to Article 3 L 3226/2004, as amended by L 4842/2021.¹²⁸ Payment of legal aid fees has faced delays, as noted in previous submissions.¹²⁹

77. The accessibility of legal aid is still marred by the absence of means of access beyond in-person submission of a written application in Greek before the court, as described in [Digitalisation](#).

78. In addition, the state continues not to discharge its legal aid obligations directly deriving from EU law. Specifically, in the area of migration and asylum, Greece still has no scheme in place for free legal assistance and representation to people subject to return proceedings and corollary detention,¹³⁰ despite a decade of Commission and Council recommendations for measures to remedy this structural deficiency.¹³¹ This also forms the subject matter of ongoing supervision of [Implementation of Judgments: European Court of Human Rights](#). The effects of the absence of legal aid for people deprived of their liberty for immigration purposes are palpable:¹³²

¹²⁵ Plenary of Greek Bar Associations, 'Ανακοινώσεις της Ολομέλειας Δικηγορικών Συλλόγων Ελλάδας μετά τη συνεδρίαση της 25ης Οκτωβρίου 2025', 30 October 2025, [URL](#); 'Άσκηση – Προαγωγές – Υποχρεωτική ασφάλιση δικηγόρων: Η πρόσφατα κυρωθείσα Σύμβαση για την Προστασία του Επαγγέλματος του Δικηγόρου επιβάλλει την αυτορρύθμιση του δικηγορικού λειτουργήματος', 25 September 2025, [URL](#); 'Προαγωγές δικηγόρων/Εξετάσεις ασκούμενων: Η αυτορρύθμιση του δικηγορικού επαγγέλματος αναγκαία προϋπόθεση για την ανεξαρτησία του', 10 August 2025, [URL](#).

¹²⁶ Ministry of Justice, Reply to parliamentary question, 240/2025, 9 October 2025, [URL](#); 233/2025, 9 October 2025, [URL](#); 223/2025, 24 September 2025, [URL](#).

¹²⁷ Plenary of Greek Bar Associations, 'Συντονιστική Επιτροπή: Η αυτορρύθμιση του επαγγέλματος του αποτελεί κόκκινη γραμμή για το δικηγορικό σώμα. Καμία ανοχή στις προκλήσεις', 18 November 2025, [URL](#).

¹²⁸ L 3226/2004, Gov. Gazette A' 24/04.02.2004; L 4842/2021, Gov. Gazette A' 190/13.10.2021.

¹²⁹ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2024 Rule of Law Report, January 2024, paras 41-43.

¹³⁰ Plenary of Greek Bar Associations, 'Μεταναστευτικό-Άσυλο: Η προσήλωση στη διεθνή και συνταγματική νομιμότητα αποτελεί μονόδρομο για κάθε ευνομούμενη δημοκρατική πολιτεία', 18 August 2025, [URL](#).

¹³¹ European Commission, Annex to the Report of the 2024 Revisit of Greece related to the serious deficiencies identified in 2021 in the field of return, C(2025) 4342 final, 3 July 2025.

¹³² RSA, Deportation & immigration detention statistics in Greece: first half 2025: Pressing need for legal aid, 24 September 2025, [URL](#); Constant barriers to challenging immigration detention in Greece, April 2025, [URL](#).

- ❖ Appeals against Hellenic Police return and deportation orders have remained at extremely low levels of 1.3% in 2022, 1.2% in 2023, 0.97% in 2024 and 1.5% in the first half of 2025.
- ❖ Less than one out of five Hellenic Police detention orders end up challenged in court: rates of objections against detention stood at 13% in 2021, 16% in 2022, 21% in 2023, 14% in 2024 and 17% in the first half of 2025.

79. Legal aid in criminal proceedings is still marred by serious effectiveness concerns. In smuggling cases discussed under **Independence & Effectiveness of the Prosecution Service**, state-appointed lawyers to people accused of smuggling offences are usually assigned only shortly before the hearing, with insufficient time to prepare, limited access to interpreters, and minimal familiarity with the case file.

80. In the particular case of access of victims of gender-based violence to legal aid, specific sections on domestic or gender-based violence exist in certain bar associations but are dependent on protocols and arrangements co-signed with other stakeholders. For example, the free legal aid programme launched in 2025 across 25 bar associations in collaboration with the Research Centre for Gender Equality (Κέντρο Ερευνών για Θέματα Ισότητας, KETHI) refers to free legal assistance to women victims of gender-based and domestic violence who are only referred to counselling centres or sheltered in public shelters.¹³³ Legal aid offered by civil society organisations is limited. Unfortunately, the required low-income threshold leads in practice to the exclusion of many victims from state legal aid. Although mechanisms exist to provide free legal aid irrespective of any income criteria, these apply mostly to victims of trafficking in human beings and sexual crimes against minors. Moreover, women victims of sexual or other forms of gender-based violence are only entitled to free legal aid once legal proceedings have been initiated and not at the very early stage of the procedure. Furthermore, migrant and asylum-seeking women victims of violence face additional obstacles to accessing free legal aid because of administrative requirements such as the need to provide tax clearance certificates.¹³⁴

81. **Translation and interpretation services:** Criminal proceedings are regularly marred by failure to observe procedural requirements for non-Greek speakers. Prosecutors have consistently failed to translate summons to trial into a language understood by the defendant in cases ranging from smuggling offences,¹³⁵ to the "**Greek Watergate Surveillance**" trial currently conducted against four private individuals.¹³⁶

82. As for interpretation, systematic deficiencies, coupled with the lack of a reliable system for certification and compensation of interpreters in criminal proceedings,¹³⁷ deprive parties from the fundamental right to be heard and undermine access to justice, in breach of the Directive on Interpretation and Translation in Criminal Proceedings.¹³⁸

¹³³ Lawspot, 'ΔΣΑ: Ξεκίνησε η εφαρμογή του Προγράμματος Legal Aid', 26 June 2025, [URL](#).

¹³⁴ Information provided by Centre Diotima, December 2025.

¹³⁵ Border Violence Monitoring Network, *Trials Monitoring*, [URL](#).

¹³⁶ Reporters United, 'Δίκη Predator: Υποκλοπές συγκαλυμμένες στη μετάφραση', 11 April 2025, [URL](#).

¹³⁷ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2024 Rule of Law Report, January 2024, para 44.

¹³⁸ Directive 2010/64/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings [2010] OJ L 280/1.

83. This particularly but not exclusively affects defendants. In the case of victims of gender-based violence who participate in proceedings either as witnesses or as parties supporting the prosecution, for instance, the lack of interpretation between client and lawyer leads to a lack of communication and poses an obstacle to representation of such cases, contrary to the safeguards laid down in Article 56(h) of the Istanbul Convention and Article 7 of the Victims' Rights Directive.¹³⁹ No free-of-charge interpretation is offered for meetings with lawyers even under legal aid provisions.¹⁴⁰

84. Catalogues of courts arbitrarily list as "certified interpreters" persons who do not wield the Greek language or foreign language in question and/or who have not received training or ensure the necessary level of quality to provide interpretation services. In addition, the possibility for the accused to use an interpreter of their choice is reluctantly met by judges, with court insisting on relying on listed interpreters even where they are visibly not apt to ensure communication. In other cases, the courts may request interpretation from a person who is not listed as an interpreter at all. Recent examples in cases represented by our organisations include the following:

- ❖ On 7 July 2025, the Single-Judge Felony Court of Appeal of Crete (*Μονομελές Εφετείο Κακουργημάτων Κρήτης*) heard the case of a Sudanese national charged with migrant smuggling and illegal entry, during which interpretation was provided not by a listed interpreter but by a co-detained migrant who was himself a defendant in separate criminal proceedings.
- ❖ On 26 September 2025, the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Athens heard a case of a Turkish-speaking refugee accused of 'illegal exit'. The Court insisted on using an interpreter who had not been certified for Turkish interpretation as he was a Farsi speaker of Azeri origin. The interpreter admitted that he was regularly being used for Turkish interpretation in criminal trials. The Court ultimately accepted the defence lawyer's objection and postponed the hearing.
- ❖ On 19 November 2025, the Single-Judge Felony Court of Appeal of Crete acquitted a Sudanese refugee charged with smuggling upon his entry into Greece together with his wife and their three minor children. Earlier, the Court upheld the defence's objection of nullity of the witness statements collected during the investigation on the ground that they had been taken from Bangladeshi nationals through a Pakistani interpreter in a language other than their spoken language.
- ❖ On 12 January 2026, the Single-Judge Felony Court of Appeal of Crete heard several cases of Sudanese and South Sudanese refugees charged with smuggling. After one of the defendants requested interpretation in English, the judge instructed an armed police guard escorting him to interpret for the court. Following difficulties encountered by the guard when interpreting for the court,

¹³⁹ Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime [2012] OJ L 315/57.

¹⁴⁰ Information provided by Centre Diotima, December 2025.

interpretation was ultimately provided by a private individual present in the room.

85. The authorities invoke “urgent circumstances” justifying use of a non-listed interpreter frequently when encountering victims of gender-based violence who speak a rare language. This practice can pose risks as it often results in enlisting someone from the community. Among problematic practices, Centre Diotima highlights the use of volunteer interpreters for certain languages, the use of the same interpreter for victims as for suspects, the use of another victim e.g. family member or person related to the victim as an interpreter.¹⁴¹
86. The Criminal Procedure Code allows for objections regarding the adequacy of interpretation services in criminal proceedings to be submitted only by the suspect or the accused, not by the victim.¹⁴²

Digitalisation & accessibility

87. **Availability of digital tools and portals:** The possibility to submit applications or access court documentation via digital tools remains limited in respect of many procedures:
 - ❖ Legal aid applications before courts cannot be electronically lodged,¹⁴³ contrary to submissions made by the European Commission in previous Rule of Law Reports.¹⁴⁴ Requests for legal aid in administrative justice proceedings can only be lodged before the courts in person, in writing and in Greek language. There is no possibility for such applications to be filed online. This continues to pose serious barriers to access to justice, bearing especially in mind that the territorially competent administrative court may not be that of the applicant's place of residence.¹⁴⁵ These obstacles have higher negative impact on non-Greek speakers and further exacerbate their access to justice.
 - ❖ The Administrative Justice portal only allows for electronic submission of applications and appeals. Submission or retrieval of documents related to ongoing cases e.g. power of attorney (πληρεξούσιο), memo (υπόμνημα), documentary evidence (σχετικά) or Government observations (απόψεις Διοικησης) cannot be done electronically across administrative courts. In addition, there is no uniform practice across the administrative courts with regard to recording receipt of key documents e.g. power of attorney or memo, and to updating the Administrative Justice portal accordingly.

¹⁴¹ Information provided by Centre Diotima, December 2025.

¹⁴² Article 233(1) Criminal Procedure Code.

¹⁴³ National Portal of Administrative Procedures, 109617 Παροχή νομικής βοήθειας (ευεργέτημα πενίας), [URL](#).

¹⁴⁴ European Commission, 2022 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Greece, SWD(2022) 508, 13 July 2022, 6.

¹⁴⁵ By way of example, all judicial review applications in asylum cases decided by the Asylum Service in Thessaly, Central Greece, Western Greece, Peloponnese, Northern Aegean, Southern Aegean, Crete and Attica are exclusively lodged with the Administrative Court of Athens: Article 15(4) L 3068/2002, Gov. Gazette A' 274/14.11.2002.

88. **Accessibility of court judgments:** Criminal case law accessibility is significantly hampered by domestic rules in force since 2020 which allow courts to refrain from producing written minutes of their criminal judgments (καθαρογραφή) *inter alia* upon unanimous acquittal in cases prosecuted *ex officio* without a civil party supporting the prosecution and without an order of return or confiscation of seized goods.¹⁴⁶ As a result, the overwhelming majority of acquittal judgments are only available in one-page format omitting the court's reasoning and containing only the outcome of the case (διατακτικό). Renewed requests were made from practitioners, the Bar Association of Athens and the Association of Criminal Lawyers (Ενωση Ποινικολόγων) to the Court of Appeal of Athens (Εφετείο Αθηνών) in December 2025 and January 2026 for reconsideration of the rule, with a view to ensuring compliance with the right to a fair trial and to contributing to transparency and to development of jurisprudence.¹⁴⁷ Members of the judiciary have opposed reform of the rule in question.¹⁴⁸

89. As regards administrative justice, further to the *Tsiolis v. Greece* judgment of the ECtHR,¹⁴⁹ the Greek government informed the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in August 2025 that "a new project is currently underway which provides special tools for automatic anonymization and posting on the websites of the Council of State and the Administrative Courts, for the purpose of automatically updating said websites, making them directly accessible to all citizens."¹⁵⁰ However, full judgments of lower administrative courts are still not published on their websites, as a rule. This includes judgments announced in press releases on the courts' websites.¹⁵¹

90. As for Council of State judgments, navigation on the Court's website is particularly difficult in case of general searches for case law. In addition, the formal date of publication of a judgment rarely coincides with the actual disclosure of the text of the ruling on the Court's website. Uploading of the full text of the ruling may take several weeks after the publication date.¹⁵²

Court statistics

91. For yet another year, the statistical data published online by the Ministry of Justice appear to be patchy, inconsistent and incomplete. We particularly note that, as of January 2026, the most recent data published on the website of the Ministry of Justice concerning criminal proceedings relate to the year 2023 and (exclusively) to the Minor

¹⁴⁶ Article 142(4) Criminal Procedure Code; MD 2273/2020, Gov. Gazette B' 2273/14.06.2020.

¹⁴⁷ Bar Association of Athens, 'Αποφάσεις ΔΣ του ΔΣΑ της 19ης Ιανουαρίου 2026', 21 January 2026, [URL](#); Dikastiko, 'Ενωση Ποινικολόγων και Μαχόμενων Δικηγόρων: Αντίθετη στην άρνηση καθαρογραφής αθωατικών αποφάσεων', 8 January 2026, [URL](#); Nomiki Bibliothiki, 'Μη καθαρογραφή των αθωατικών ποινικών αποφάσεων', 23 December 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁴⁸ Dikastiko, 'Διαφωνία δικαστών – δικηγόρων για την καθαρογραφή αθωατικών αποφάσεων – Ο αντίλογος του Προέδρου Εφετών Κ. Κουτσογεώργου', 12 January 2026, [URL](#).

¹⁴⁹ ECtHR, *Tsiolis v. Greece*, App No 51774/17, 19 November 2024.

¹⁵⁰ Greek Government, *Action Plan from Greece concerning the case of Tsiolis v. Greece*, DH-DD(2025)949, 20 August 2025, para 11, [URL](#).

¹⁵¹ For example, Administrative Court of Athens, Decision A12072/2025, 26 November 2025. The Court has published an extract of the ruling: [URL](#).

¹⁵² For example, Decisions 1048/2025 to 1052/2025 were delivered on 6 June 2025. However, the full text of those decisions was only published on 10 July 2025 on the website of the Council of State.

Offences Courts (Πταισματοδικεία).¹⁵³ Although some statistics relating to the justice system can be found in a fragmented manner on the websites of the Hellenic Statistical Authority, the Hellenic Police, the Courts of First Instance (Πρωτοδικεία), as well as in the "Crime and Justice" section of data.gov.gr, the data made available to the public are still considered insufficient and often relate to earlier years.

92. We reiterate that different branches of government supply conflicting court statistics in the context of parliamentary scrutiny, even when responding to the same parliamentary question. In August 2025, for example, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Citizen Protection gave contradictory figures on objections against detention (αντιρρήσεις κατά κράτησης) before the Administrative Courts (Διοικητικά Πρωτοδικεία).¹⁵⁴
93. Inconsistency and confusion also underpin court statistics supplied by the Greek government to official monitoring processes such as the **Implementation of Judgments: European Court of Human Rights**. In its latest Action Report to the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on the Sidiropoulos & Papakostas v. Greece group regarding effective investigations into **Police Violence**,¹⁵⁵ for instance, the government presents fragmented, unclear and seemingly contradictory statistics on prosecution of law enforcement bodies for ill-treatment which do not permit any thorough or meaningful assessment of the state's compliance with the requirements set by the Strasbourg Court.¹⁵⁶
94. As regards the **Office for the Collection and Processing of Judicial Statistics**, we are not in a position to provide any information on its activities, as we were unable to identify any sufficiently detailed publicly available material concerning its operation and work. Specifically, the only website we were able to find for this office is <https://juststat.moj.gov.gr/>, while only vague, scattered information exists across the internet on its work. This includes:
 - ❖ A May 2025 reply of the Ministry of Justice to a parliamentary question concerning **Police Violence**, stating that "The Office for the Collection and Processing of Judicial Statistics (JustStat) of the Ministry of Justice, following an ad hoc inquiry to the Public Prosecutors' Offices of First Instance, Appeals and Supreme Court Prosecutors' Offices, as well as the Courts of First Instance, Courts

¹⁵³ Ministry of Justice, Στατιστικά στοιχεία από το 2016 έως σήμερα, [URL](#); Ανοικτά Δεδομένα Υπουργείου Δικαιοσύνης, [URL](#).

¹⁵⁴ Ministry of Justice, Reply to parliamentary question, 3481/2025, 4 August 2025 and Ministry of Citizen Protection, Reply to parliamentary question, 7017/4/27666-γ', 25 August 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁵⁵ ECtHR, *Sidiropoulos & Papakostas v. Greece*, App No 33349/10, 25 January 2018.

¹⁵⁶ Greek Government, *Action Report in the Sidiropoulos & Papakostas v. Greece group of cases*, DH-DD(2025)1506, 17 December 2025, 18-21, [URL](#). For instance, the report makes an unclear distinction in prosecution statistics between "extreme police conduct" (ill-treatment, torture, etc.) and "torture and other violations of human dignity" (Article 137A CC). The report then presents four data sections, each offering different figures. Furthermore, the report states that no criminal charges have been brought against Hellenic Coast Guard officers for "torture and other violations of human dignity, bodily harm and unlawful acts of violence" in 2023, but later states that "Each year, only a few prosecutions (3-4) individuals in total are brought against coast guard officers (2023: 3, 2024: 4)".

of Appeal and the Supreme Court, collected data on the question in question for the period from 2024 to April 2025.”¹⁵⁷

- ❖ Similar information is compiled in a December 2025 reply of the Ministry of Justice to a question on the same topic.¹⁵⁸ The format in which the Office has supplied the information, however, does not permit effective comparison and comprehension of the data. Several sections of the tables provided appear to be unclear or incomplete.
- ❖ A July 2025 reply of the Ministry of Justice to a parliamentary question concerning postponements of hearings in Mixed Jury Courts (*Μίκτα Ορκωτά Δικαστήρια*), stating that “The Office for the Collection and Processing of Judicial Statistics (JustStat) of the Ministry of Justice, following an ad hoc inquiry to the Courts of First Instance of the country, collected data on the questions tabled with the present question, for the period 1-1-2025 to 6-6-2025.”¹⁵⁹
- ❖ Media articles stating that the statistics collected by the Collection Office show an acceleration in the issuance of court decisions.¹⁶⁰

Ineffectiveness of judicial review

95. The lack of effectiveness of review of deprivation of liberty orders remains a long-lasting issue of concern in the Greek justice system, and a matter of ongoing supervision of **Implementation of Judgments: European Court of Human Rights**. Objections against detention are a single-judge, non-appealable remedy marred by a lack of certainty and predictability, as highlighted in our previous contributions.¹⁶¹ There continue to be staggering disparities in outcomes between judicial review performed by the administrative courts upon objections and *ex officio* review performed by the same courts pursuant to the same legal standards. The rate of detention orders quashed upon *ex officio* review did not exceed 0.7% in 2021, 0.3% in 2022, 0.5% in 2023, 0.96% in 2024 and 0.6% in the first half of 2025. Conversely, the rate of granted objections against detention was 42% in 2021, 40% in 2022, 46% in 2023, 42% in 2024 and 50% in the first half of 2025.¹⁶² We reiterate that the state is still not complying with its EU law obligation to provide free legal assistance to people deprived of their liberty for immigration purposes.

¹⁵⁷ Ministry of Justice, Reply to parliamentary question, 103/2025, 16 May 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁵⁸ Ministry of Justice, Reply to parliamentary question, 284/2025, 12 December 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁵⁹ Ministry of Justice, Reply to parliamentary question, 167/2025, 3 July 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁶⁰ Capital, ‘Δικαστικός χάρτης: Τα στατιστικά του Υπουργείου Δικαιοσύνης “δειχνούν” επιπτάχυνση στην έκδοση αποφάσεων’, 1 May 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁶¹ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, paras 81-84.

¹⁶² RSA, *Deportation & immigration detention statistics in Greece: first half 2025: Pressing need for legal aid*, 24 September 2025; *Constant barriers to challenging immigration detention in Greece*, April 2025.

Efficiency of justice

Length of proceedings

96. **Delays in civil and criminal courts** persist. In the [Tempi Train Crash](#) case, for example, the hearing of the case before the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Larisa regarding the disappearance of digital evidence of the loading of the freight train in Thessaloniki was scheduled for 11 June 2025. Seven months and seven hearings later, the trial had not yet entered into the merits of the case. As of 12 January 2026, the Court was still at the stage of deciding the scope of charges for which civil parties in support of the prosecution could be admitted.¹⁶³
97. **Delays in administrative courts:** Regrettably, the Rule of Law Report continues to pay limited regard to the length of administrative court proceedings beyond cases adjudicated by the Council of State. We still stress, however, that administrative law remedies at lower court level are also marred by protracted delays.
98. Specifically, we continue to observe unduly long waiting times throughout all stages of judicial proceedings before lower administrative courts. In the particular area of judicial review of asylum decisions by the Administrative Courts of Athens and Thessaloniki, an analysis of a sample of 662 applications lodged from January 2020 to June 2025 by civil society organisations reveals that the courts heavily exceed the domestic law deadlines for schedule of hearings and delivery of judgments:¹⁶⁴
 - ❖ **Delays in schedule of hearings:** Greek law sets the maximum deadline for schedule of a hearing on applications for judicial review against asylum decisions at 60 days.¹⁶⁵ However, the average waiting time for a hearing at first instance in the aforementioned sample of asylum cases stood at 794 days for applications lodged in 2020, 1,221 days for applications lodged in 2021 and 1,040 days for applications lodged in 2022 at the Administrative Court of Athens, and at 482 days for applications lodged in 2020, 370 days for applications lodged in 2021 and 514 days for applications lodged in 2022 at the Administrative Court of Thessaloniki. These delays are mainly owed to repeated *proprio motu* postponements of hearings by the courts which may reach 10 or even 15 postponements per case in Athens.¹⁶⁶ Due to those delays, the Administrative Court of Athens frequently hears judicial review cases at first instance up to five years after their submission.

¹⁶³ Larissanet, 'Τέμπη – Δίκη για τη διαχείριση βιντεοληπτικου υλικού: Μόνο για την υπεξαγωγή θα παρασταθεί η υποστήριξη της κατηγορίας', 12 January 2026, [URL](#); Dnews, 'Τέμπη: Καρυστιανού κατά Κωνσταντοπούλου - 'Ενταση για τις ενστάσεις', 9 January 2026, [URL](#).

¹⁶⁴ RSA et al., Ακυρωτικός έλεγχος ασύλου, πέντε χρόνια μετά τη μεταφορά της αρμοδιότητας στα διοικητικά πρωτοδικεία, September 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁶⁵ Article 116(1) Asylum Code, L 4939/2022, Gov. Gazette A' 111/10.06.2022.

¹⁶⁶ For current examples of cases pending hearing following 10 postponements, see Administrative Court of Athens, AK1452/2021, lodged on 14 September 2021 and scheduled for 8 May 2026; AK2013/2001, lodged on 6 December 2021 and not yet scheduled; AK1593/2021, lodged on 30 September 2021 and scheduled for 23 January 2026; AK482/2022, lodged on 21 March 2022 and scheduled for 8 May 2026; AK1395/2022, lodged on 6 September 2022 and scheduled for 23 January 2026.

- ❖ **Delays in delivery of judgments:** The average time from the hearing to the delivery of a judgment on the merits consistently stood close to one year in Athens: 375 days for applications lodged in 2020, 405 days for applications lodged in 2021 and 347 days for applications lodged in 2022. Average times for decision-making on the merits of cases were significantly shorter in Thessaloniki: 190 days for applications lodged in 2020, 120 days for applications lodged in 2021 and 93 days for applications lodged in 2022.

99. These delays bear significant impact on both speedy processing and substantive treatment of judicial review applications. According to official figures of the Commissioner-General for Administrative Courts, the majority of decisions taken by the Administrative Court of Athens in the area of judicial review of asylum cases are dismissals on inadmissibility grounds: 77% in 2022, 53% in 2023, 53% in 2024 and 84% in the first eight months of 2025.¹⁶⁷

100. Meanwhile, interim relief cannot effectively be sought pending the outcome of proceedings at the administrative courts. Greek law requires suspension requests (*αίτηση αναστολής*) in asylum cases to be concluded within three weeks.¹⁶⁸ Hence, no provisional order (*προσωρινή διαταγή*) can be requested pending the conclusion of suspension proceedings in such cases, regardless of the urgency of the request.¹⁶⁹ In practice, however, processing of suspension applications at the Administrative Court of Athens systematically exceeds three months according to the above sample. In fact, almost 20% of suspension cases at the Administrative Court of Athens exceeded six months.

101. Such delays in administrative justice may in practice deprive applicants of the possibility to have their claims effectively examined on the merits, bearing particularly in mind that matters such as standing (*έννομο συμφέρον*) to request judicial review of administrative acts are assessed by the courts at the hearing stage, potentially several years after the lodging of the application.¹⁷⁰

102. Poor law-making and constant changes to rules of procedure (*δικονομίες*) and to substantive rules also form important factors behind persistent delays in justice in Greece (see [Checks & Balances: Legislative Process](#)).

¹⁶⁷ Information provided by the Commissioner-General for Administrative Courts to the Legal Aid Working Group (LAWG), 13 November 2025.

¹⁶⁸ Article 15(7) L 3068/2002.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Note the pending case ECtHR, *Islam Ibram v. Greece*, App No 5425/20, Communicated on 8 December 2025.

Proposed recommendations: Justice system

Deliver structural reforms to ensure independent and effective criminal investigations into allegations of ill-treatment by law enforcement bodies and a robust track record of criminal prosecutions and disciplinary actions.

Strengthen the effectiveness of legal aid through a centralised system, accessible procedures for requesting legal aid and uniform rules on the processing of requests.

Enhance the accessibility of court judgments, including through availability of acquittal judgments of criminal courts and comprehensive uploading of civil, administrative and criminal case law on a free-of-charge public database.

Strengthen the effectiveness and uniformity of judicial review of detention orders and introduce an appeal against court decisions on objections against detention.

Take measures to limit *proprio motu* postponements of hearings by administrative courts in judicial review.

Anti-corruption framework

103. In November 2025, the NTA conducted a public opinion poll on corruption in Greece.¹⁷¹ The following findings are of particular note:

- ❖ When asked "To what extent do you believe that corruption exists in Greece?", 56% of respondents answered "to a very large extent" (πολύ μεγάλο), 27% answered "quite high" (αρκετά μεγάλο), 13% answered "moderate" (μέτριο), 2% answered "quite low" (αρκετά μικρό), and 1% answered "not at all".
- ❖ When asked "Do you believe that Greek society and citizens tolerate corruption?", 52% of respondents answered "yes", 33% "probably yes", 7% "probably no" and 6% "no".

104. In a poll conducted by the NTA at the Thessaloniki International Fair in September 2025:
(a) 47% of respondents answered "yes" to the question "Have you noticed or experienced any incidents of corruption in your dealings with public services?" and (b) 93% of respondents answered "yes" to the question "do you believe that Greek society and citizens tolerate corruption?"¹⁷²

105. According to the findings of a Heinrich Böll Stiftung – Thessaloniki Office public opinion survey, nearly all Greek citizens (97% of respondents) believe that corruption is widespread or very widespread in Greece and that trust in institutions remains critically low.¹⁷³

106. Moreover, according to the data presented in Special Eurobarometer 561 in July 2025,¹⁷⁴ a very high percentage of respondents in Greece: (a) agree that there is (i) corruption in the local or regional public institutions (94%) and at national level institutions (95%) and that (ii) high-level corruption cases are not adequately pursued (80%); (b) totally disagree with the statement that government efforts to combat corruption are effective (73%).

107. The data included in the above studies, combined with the findings and assessments that we have been recording in our reports over the years, clearly indicate that, despite the many so-called positive efforts or steps allegedly taken by the government, there is still a plethora of fundamental problems which need to be acknowledged, adequately assessed and resolved. Therefore, we urge again the Commission to duly consider, assess and adequately address the issues identified in our reports, to ensure

¹⁷¹ NTA, 'Έρευνα Κοινής Γνώμης για τη διαφθορά στην Ελλάδα – Νοέμβριος 2025, December 2025, [URL](#); 'Τοποθετήσεις / 5ο Φόρουμ ΕΑΔ: Χτίζοντας ένα μέλλον με αξίες: Νέοι και Κουλτούρα Ακεραιότητας', 10 December 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁷² NTA, 'Η ΕΑΔ στην 89η Διεθνή Έκθεση Θεσσαλονίκης', 1 September 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁷³ Heinrich Böll Stiftung Thessaloniki, *Citizens and the State: Trust, Inequality of Opportunity, Political Participation*, 16 October 2025, [URL](#); Heinrich Böll Stiftung Thessaloniki, 'Έρευνα κοινής γνώμης για τις σχέσεις πολιτών και πολιτείας', [URL](#).

¹⁷⁴ European Commission, *Special Eurobarometer 561: Citizens' attitudes toward corruption in the EU in 2025*, July 2025, 39-40, 54, 56, [URL](#).

that they are correctly and sufficiently covered in the Rule of Law Report and that their importance is not downplayed.

108. The following sections refer to particular areas where notable developments were reported throughout the past year.

Prevention

Lobbying

2025 Rule of Law Report recommendation

Improve the lobbying framework, including by reviewing the definition of a lobbyist and ensuring effective implementation.

109. We maintain the position that, while the enactment of L 4829/2021¹⁷⁵ in theory constituted a positive step towards transparency and accountability, significant reservations persist regarding its effectiveness and implementation in practice.¹⁷⁶ A major issue continues to be the 'narrow' definition of "lobbyist" which leaves out in-house lobbying, as well as the very limited publication of information on lobbying activities to date.

110. Moreover, concerns arise once again this year even based on the data that has been published in the Transparency Register, as:

- ❖ The number of lobbyists (*εκπρόσωποι συμφερόντων*) registered in the Register remains very low, while only a limited number of institutional stakeholders (*θεσμικοί φορείς*) appear in the Register.
- ❖ The number of declared meetings is extremely low and the information reported by lobbyists does not always correspond with that reported by institutional stakeholders.
- ❖ There are lobbyists who have not submitted any annual declaration at all, despite their legal obligation to do so.¹⁷⁷

111. We further note that we have been unable to locate any kind of information in the Transparency Register on inspections potentially carried out or the sanctions potentially imposed.

112. Despite the Commission's recommendation in the 2025 Rule of Law Report, no amendments to L 4829/2021 appear to have taken place, nor are we aware of any relevant changes currently being planned. Nevertheless, it should be noted that

¹⁷⁵ L 4829/2021, Gov. Gazette A' 166/10.09.2021.

¹⁷⁶ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, paras 101-105.

¹⁷⁷ Vouliwatch, 'Μητρώο Lobbying • Ετήσια Αναφορά Vouliwatch 2024', 14 July 2025, [URL](#).

specific proposals on lobbying were included in the proposals submitted by Vouliwatch to the NTA for the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2026-2030.¹⁷⁸

Gifts policy

113. Following on from our previous submissions, our doubts persist as to whether the rules on gifts are actually being followed.
114. **Gifts to Members of Parliament:** There seems to have been no development on the issue of gifts to Members of Parliament. According to the most recent Implementation Report of the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan, Action 2.3.19 regarding the update of the code of conduct for Members of Parliament "has not started".¹⁷⁹ The update of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Parliament, as well as the introduction of an obligation to publish the register of gifts received by Members of Parliament, was also among the proposals submitted by Vouliwatch to the NTA for the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2026-2030.
115. We urge the Commission to highlight the persisting absence of disclosure of recording of gifts to Members of the Parliament¹⁸⁰ in the Rule of Law Report and to make specific recommendations to that effect, as has already been the case for other Member States e.g. Belgium.¹⁸¹
116. **Gifts to Members of Cabinet and Deputy Ministers:** For yet another year, the gifts registry provided for in Article 17 L 4829/2021 was reactively published with delay, in May 2025. Once again, the publication was preceded by a freedom for information request submitted by Vouliwatch for access to the relevant list.¹⁸² The request remained unanswered, an appeal ensued before the NTA and on 25 April 2025 the NTA upheld the appeal.¹⁸³ Notwithstanding the requirement in said decision for publication of the register to be done within seven days, the list appears to have been made public only on 9 May 2025.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, the concerns we expressed last year regarding the structure and content of the published list remain valid.¹⁸⁵
117. The procedure that had to be followed once again in order for the competent authority to comply with its statutory obligations is indicative of the way issues related to **Transparency & Access to Documents** are dealt with in Greece. The disregard for the proper and timely implementation of the law, as well as the treatment afforded to civil society organisations, constitutes a matter that should be specifically addressed

¹⁷⁸ Vouliwatch, 'Το Vouliwatch στο Εθνικό Στρατηγικό Σχέδιο Καταπολέμησης Διαφθοράς', 21 November 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁷⁹ NTA, NACP 2022-2025 Implementation Report, A' Semester 2025, 42, [URL](#).

¹⁸⁰ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2024 Rule of Law Report, January 2024, para 59; Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, para 107.

¹⁸¹ European Commission, 2025 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Belgium, SWD(2025) 901, 8 July 2025, 9.

¹⁸² Vouliwatch, 'Το Vouliwatch ζητάει και φέτος τη λίστα με όλα τα δώρα που έχουν λάβει τα μέλη της Κυβέρνησης', 13 March 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁸³ Vouliwatch, 'Δώρα πολιτικών Vol.2 • Δικαιώση (;) Vouliwatch από την ΕΑΔ', 28 April 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁸⁴ Vouliwatch, 'Δώρα πολιτικών Vol.2 • Για 2η χρονιά πετύχαμε τη δημοσίευση της λίστας «και μεν, αλλά»', 13 May 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁸⁵ Joint Civil Society Submission on the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, paras 109-110.

by the European Commission, as it seems to point to a structural problem that is not remedied merely by the eventual – and delayed – publication of the gifts registry.

Asset declarations

118. The concerns we expressed in our previous submissions regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of the asset declaration system remain unchanged.¹⁸⁶ In addition, we would like to mention the following:

119. **Extension of the submission deadline:** In line with the 'practice' followed in previous years, the deadline for the submission of asset declarations was extended again this year. Article 116 L 5243/2025,¹⁸⁷ introduced for voting by an amendment in an unrelated bill (see [Checks & Balances: Legislative Process: Late & Irrelevant Amendments](#)),¹⁸⁸ extended the deadline for submitting annual asset declarations and financial interests' declarations for the year 2025 (financial year 2024) to 15 November 2025. According to the regulatory impact assessment,¹⁸⁹ the deadline provided by L 5026/2023¹⁹⁰ is not sufficient for all obligated individuals to complete the process on time and smoothly, the users need more time to adapt to the new electronic platform and the large number of people needing to file within a short period increases the risk of system overload, potentially causing delays and technical malfunctions.

120. **Publication of asset declarations:** The deadline for the submission of asset declarations for the years 2023 (fiscal year 2022) and 2024 (fiscal year 2023) was set for 28 February 2025 following recurrent extensions. Whereas Article 32(1) L 5026/2023, as did Article 2(2) L 3213/2003,¹⁹¹ provides that asset declarations shall be published after the audit and within three months from the submission deadline at the latest, the declarations for the years 2023 and 2024 had not been published until the end of September 2025,¹⁹² i.e. seven months after the submission deadline. On 5 September 2025, Vouliwatch sent a petition to CIDA inquiring about the reasons behind their omission to publish the asset declarations and asking when their publication is due.¹⁹³ Unfortunately, the Vouliwatch petition remained once again unanswered, as do most of our petitions to CIDA over the years.

121. **(Minor) changes to the law on asset declarations:** Whereas certain provisions of L 5026/2023 were amended¹⁹⁴ and certain provisions relating to asset declarations were

¹⁸⁶ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2024 Rule of Law Report, January 2024, paras 62-63; Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, paras 111-118.

¹⁸⁷ Gov. Gazette A' 187/31.10.2025.

¹⁸⁸ Hellenic Parliament, Ρυθμίσεις για την ενίσχυση της δημόσιας υγείας και την αναβάθμιση των υπηρεσιών υγείας, [URL](#).

¹⁸⁹ Hellenic Parliament, Ρυθμίσεις για την ενίσχυση της δημόσιας υγείας και την αναβάθμιση των υπηρεσιών υγείας, Amendment 409/41, 24 October 2025, 12, 15, 18, [URL](#).

¹⁹⁰ L 5026/2023, Gov. Gazette A' 45/28.02.2023.

¹⁹¹ L 3213/2003, Gov. Gazette A' 309/31.12.2003.

¹⁹² Specifically, the declarations were published on 29 September 2025. As stated in the press release issued by the Parliament, the statements were published "unchecked, as submitted" (ανέλεγκτες, όπως κατατέθηκαν): Hellenic Parliament, 'Αναρτήθηκαν στον διαδικτυακό τόπο της Βουλής οι Δηλώσεις Περιουσιακής Κατάστασης «Πόθεν Έσχες» των ετών 2023 και 2024 (χρήσεις 2022 και 2023)', 29 September 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁹³ Vouliwatch, 'Που είναι τα πόθεν έσχες; Το Vouliwatch ρωτάει', 10 September 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁹⁴ Specifically, Article 83 L 5172/2025 amended Article 21(7) L 5026/2023, while Article 49 L 5193/2025 amended Article 16 L 5026/2023.

enacted – without amending L 5026/2023 – in the course of 2025,¹⁹⁵ no steps appear to have been taken in the direction of enhancing transparency or ensuring the country's compliance with GRECO recommendations.¹⁹⁶ For this reason, the need for the revision of the existing legal framework was highlighted by Vouliwatch in their proposals to the NTA for the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2026-2030, proposing *inter alia* the amendment – and extension – of the obligations set by law for political advisors and the publication of financial interests issues.¹⁹⁷

Political money, transparency and CIDA

122. We reiterate the concerns expressed in our previous submissions regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of both the legislative framework (PD 15/2022)¹⁹⁸ and its practical implementation, which remain intact. Once again, we highlight that there has been no change in the quantity or quality of information published by CIDA on its website or of the publicly available information on political finance in general.

123. **CIDA's website:** In March 2025, Vouliwatch submitted a freedom of information request to CIDA seeking the provision of documents and data that could not be found on its website even though they should have been published. The request also asked for the timely and complete publication of all the information that should be published by law, as well as the updating of outdated standard information on the website e.g. references to the currently applicable legislative framework instead of the previous one.¹⁹⁹ Once again, Vouliwatch received no response to this request. We believe however, that CIDA read the request, since the standard information that was identified in the request as outdated was – finally – updated a few days later. Unfortunately, that seems to be the sole point on which CIDA chose to act.

124. **Publication of political parties' financial statements:** According to Article 12(5) PD 15/2022, political parties and coalitions of parties that receive regular public funding are required to publish their financial statements on their websites within a specific deadline.²⁰⁰ Failure to comply with this obligation leads to a fine pursuant to Article 21(2) PD 15/2022.

125. In June 2025, given the longstanding doubts as to political parties' compliance with these obligations and as to effective monitoring thereof by the Audit Committee, Vouliwatch submitted a report / complaint to CIDA, requesting that the Committee examine whether the legally required information had been published within the prescribed deadline.²⁰¹ This request was made following a preliminary review carried out by Vouliwatch on the official websites of eight political parties, which concluded

¹⁹⁵ By way of example, reference is made to Article 116 L 5243/2025 and to Article 27 L 5255/2025.

¹⁹⁶ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, paras 113-114.

¹⁹⁷ Vouliwatch, 'To Vouliwatch στο Εθνικό Στρατηγικό Σχέδιο Καταπολέμησης Διαφθοράς', 21 November 2025, [URL](#).

¹⁹⁸ PD 15/2022, Gov. Gazette A' 39/01.03.2022.

¹⁹⁹ Vouliwatch, 'To Vouliwatch ζητά από την Επιτροπή (μη) Ελέγχου να δημοσιεύσει όσα οφείλει', 7 March 2025, [URL](#).

²⁰⁰ The first five months of each year: Article 12(5) PD 15/2022, as amended by Article 23 L 4954/2022.

²⁰¹ Vouliwatch, 'Που είναι οι ισολογισμοί των κομμάτων; To Vouliwatch αναφέρει', 18 June 2025, [URL](#).

that the financial statements for the year 2024 had not been published despite the expiry of the statutory deadline. As clearly stated in the report / complaint, the absence of the required information could at that time be verified through a simple review of the relevant websites, and in any event CIDA was informed that Vouliwatch had screenshots at its disposal confirming this omission.

126. Once again, there was no response from CIDA, not even regarding the reference number assigned to the report. Shortly thereafter, however, CIDA published an announcement on its website stating that the deadline for the submission of the financial statements for the year 2024, as well as for their publication on the parties' websites, had been extended until 31 July 2025.²⁰² It should be noted, however, that this announcement followed an earlier announcement dated 29 May 2025,²⁰³ which referred exclusively to the extension of the deadline for the submission of the financial statements to CIDA and made no reference whatsoever to the obligation to publish them on the parties' websites. We note that the latter obligation in any event constitutes a separate legal requirement stemming from a different article of the PD 15/2022.

127. CIDA's striking silence in response to our requests and/or complaints appears to have taken on a permanent and systematic character, clearly illustrating both the way civil society and its requests are treated by public authorities and how the latter choose to exercise their duties. This persistent lack of response and effective access to public data inevitably raises serious doubts as to how the Committee carries out its mandate. It regrettably gives grounds to believe that the application of financial transparency rules addressed to political figures is at variance with the application of similar standards relating to other citizens. When even the monitoring and enforcement of clear, formal legal obligations appear to be inconsistent or deficient, it is legitimate to question the effectiveness and credibility of the Committee's oversight more broadly. Indeed, if the fulfilment and verification of basic procedural requirements cannot be ensured, it is difficult to see how meaningful and substantive scrutiny can reasonably be expected.

Conflicts of interest in the public sector

128. As we noted last year, the issue of conflicts of interest was examined by GRECO in the context of its 5th Evaluation Round, while the OECD has also put forward a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening the Greek system.²⁰⁴ Unfortunately, we are not aware of any steps taken to address these issues.

129. The Ethics Committee of the NTA is the competent body for ethics issues and conflicts of interest of senior officials. One case recently handled by the Committee related to the former Governor of the Recovery and Resilience Fund Special Coordination Service (*Ειδική Υπηρεσία Συντονισμού Ταμείου Ανάκαμψης*), Nikos Mantzoufas. After leaving the Service, Mr Mantzoufas was hired by private company Sunlight Group which had secured financing during the period of his directorship of the Recovery and Resilience

²⁰² CIDA, 'Παράταση προθεσμίας υποβολής οικονομικών καταστάσεων κομμάτων/συνασπισμών κομμάτων έτους 2024', 10 July 2025, [URL](#).

²⁰³ CIDA, 'Παράταση προθεσμίας υποβολής οικονομικών καταστάσεων κομμάτων/συνασπισμών κομμάτων έτους 2024', 29 May 2025, [URL](#).

²⁰⁴ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, paras 121-123.

Fund. In January 2026, one year after a Greek media outlet reported his case to the Ethics Committee,²⁰⁵ the NTA imposed a fine for not requesting permission to engage in other, private business activity.²⁰⁶

Repression

2025 Rule of Law Report recommendation

Continue efforts to establish a robust track record of prosecutions and final judgments in corruption cases, including high-level corruption.

Obstacles to investigation and prosecution of corruption cases

130. **Obstruction of EPPO:** In August 2025, the European Chief Prosecutor, Laura Codruța Kövesi, stated that Greece was among three EU countries, alongside Croatia and Slovakia, where governments sought to exert political influence over her work as head of EPPO. She explicitly included Greece among the Member States that challenged the institutional independence of EPPO, noting that attempts at political interference in the operations of the Office have occurred since she assumed office.²⁰⁷
131. During a press conference in October 2025, Ms Kövesi stated that Article 86 of the Greek Constitution establishing a special regime of ministerial criminal responsibility effectively obstructed EPPO investigations into potential criminal responsibility arising from the fatal **Tempi Train Crash** and into the OPEKEPE case.²⁰⁸

Proposed recommendations: Anti-Corruption

Amend lobbying legislation in place to ensure that in-house lobbying is also regulated.

Amend the Code of Conduct of Parliament to ensure that gifts to Members of Parliament are properly recorded and disclosed on a publicly accessible register.

Ensure that the asset declaration system is aligned in both law and practice with the principles of transparency and accountability and with GRECO recommendations. Amend asset declaration legislation to render publication of declarations of interest compulsory for Members of Parliament and Members of Cabinet.

Ensure that the rules on transparency, integrity and accountability and anti-corruption are implemented in practice, especially regarding CIDA's compliance with its statutory obligations.

²⁰⁵ Solomon, 'Revolving Doors: How top Greek officials became executives in companies they once oversaw', 12 February 2025, [URL](#).

²⁰⁶ Solomon, Media report, 28 January 2026, forthcoming.

²⁰⁷ To Vima, 'European Prosecutor Says Greece Tried to 'Influence' Her Work', 1 August 2025, [URL](#); TVXS, 'Λάσουρα Κοβέσι / Η Ευρωπαϊα εισαγγελέας καταγγέλλει πολιτικές παρεμβάσεις από την ελληνική κυβέρνηση', 1 August 2025, [URL](#).

²⁰⁸ Naftemporiki, 'Κοβέσι: Το άρθρο 86 παρεμπόδισε την έρευνά μας στα Τέμπη και τον ΟΠΕΚΕΠΕ', 2 October 2025, [URL](#).

Media freedom and pluralism

Media authorities & bodies

Independence of media regulatory bodies

132. The National Council for Radio and Television (*Εθνικό Συμβούλιο Ραδιοτηλεόρασης*, NCRTV) overseeing the radio and television market has been and continues to be susceptible to political interference. This is mainly given that the selection of its members is susceptible to influence on the part of the ruling party holding a majority in parliamentary committees (see [Checks & Balances: Independent Authorities](#)). We reiterate the concerns expressed in our previous contributions, including the November 2024 decision of the Council of State not to judicially review the 2023 amendment of the composition of the Authority.²⁰⁹

133. On 19 February 2025, the NCRTV imposed a fine of 90,000 € on Alter Ego Media, the parent company of Mega TV, following a complaint filed by Grigoris Dimitriadis, former Secretary-General to the Prime Minister. The complaint related to reports aired by the channel in 2023 and 2024 about the "[Greek Watergate](#)" **Surveillance Scandal** and Mr Dimitriadis' alleged involvement therein. These broadcasts were based on journalistic investigations conducted by other media outlets rather than Mega TV's own reporting. In its decision, the Council argued that Mega TV had "repeatedly violated the provisions requiring respect for the personal integrity of individuals featured in broadcasts". The Board of the Journalists' Union of Athens Daily Newspapers (*Ένωση Συντακτών Ημερήσιων Εφημερίδων Αθηνών*, ESIEA) expressed concern over the reasoning, noting that this could oblige TV stations to present lengthy documents within limited airtime. ESIEA further criticised the decision's 86-page rationale, pointing out that the NCRTV appeared to engage in detailed, judicial-style assessment of a case that had never been heard in court, while the judiciary itself continues to handle numerous **SLAPP** lawsuits filed by Mr Dimitriadis against journalists; some of those have already been dismissed. ESIEA warned that the Council's reasoning could set a dangerous precedent for ongoing and future trials involving journalists and news outlets.²¹⁰

134. The NCRTV has experienced a reduction in funding since the Greek financial crisis. This has resulted in a shortage of personnel, leading to operational difficulties. In 2025, nine new employees joined the NCRTV, all of whom hold administrative roles. However, none of them are expert professionals such as lawyers or political scientists. Moreover, two staff members have since resigned. As a result, the staffing issues raised in our previous contribution remain unresolved.

135. One of the key concerns regarding the NCRTV is its transparency. The decisions of the regulatory authority used to be public and accessible via the Transparency Portal

²⁰⁹ Joint Civil Society Contribution to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, para 66.

²¹⁰ ESIEA, "Εντονος προβληματισμός για το σκεπτικό απόφασης του ΕΣΡ", 20 February 2025, [URL](#).

(Διαύγεια), the official repository for all acts and decisions of Greek government institutions. However, the Authority has stopped publishing decisions on the portal and now publishes all of its decisions on its website instead. Still, there is a need for the repository to be restored for transparency reasons and for journalists and the public to be able to effectively navigate through the data.

Safeguards & transparency of media ownership

Transparency of media ownership

136. In November 2025, the Parliament adopted L 5253/2025. According to the explanatory memorandum, Part B of the bill introduced in September 2025 aimed at ensuring effective and full implementation of the EMFA.²¹¹ The Scientific Service of the Hellenic Parliament noted, however, that the bill consisted in implementation of certain provisions rather than the entirety of the Regulation.²¹²

137. A comparison between the bill submitted to public consultation and the version eventually submitted to Parliament and subsequently adopted as L 5253/2025 shows that certain provisions included in the consultation draft were dropped from the final text. Among these was Article 28 of the bill which concerned the establishment of a National Media Ownership Database (Εθνική βάση δεδομένων παρόχων υπηρεσιών μέσων ενημέρωσης). This issue was also raised during the Plenary Session of the Hellenic Parliament of 20 November 2025, where reference was made by MPs to the fact that this information would be covered under the Registry of Beneficiaries (Μητρώο Πραγματικών Δικαιούχων).²¹³ The Registry of Beneficiaries is a central digital database in which the ultimate beneficial owners of companies, along with any relevant changes thereto, must be recorded. Note, however, that following a CJEU ruling which annulled EU law provisions that required public access to beneficial ownership,²¹⁴ the Anti-Money Laundering Directive was amended and now states that beneficial ownership information shall be accessible to “any person or organisation that can demonstrate a legitimate interest”.²¹⁵

138. Article 202 L 5259/2025 was adopted further to these reforms.²¹⁶ However, the domestic provision introduces restrictions on access to the Registry of Beneficiaries beyond those

²¹¹ Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister, Δημόσια ηλεκτρονική διαβούλευση για το σχέδιο νόμου του Υφυπουργού στον Πρωθυπουργό με τίτλο: «Εκσυγχρονισμός νομικού πλαισίου οργάνωσης και λειτουργίας της «Ελληνικής Ραδιοφωνίας Τηλεόρασης Ανώνυμης Εταιρείας (Ε.Ρ.Τ. Α.Ε.)» και ενίσχυση του δημόσιου χαρακτήρα της και της ανταγωνιστικότητάς της στην αγορά των Μέσων Μαζικής Ενημέρωσης – Λήψη μέτρων για την εφαρμογή του... EUROPEAN MEDIA FREEDOM ACT)», 17 September 2025, [URL](#).

²¹² Hellenic Parliament Scientific Service, 'Έκθεση επί του νομοσχεδίου: Εκσυγχρονισμός νομικού πλαισίου οργάνωσης και λειτουργίας της «Ελληνικής Ραδιοφωνίας Τηλεόρασης Ανώνυμης Εταιρείας (Ε.Ρ.Τ. Α.Ε.)...»», 19 November 2025, 23, [URL](#).

²¹³ Hellenic Parliament, Plenary Session ΑΒ', 20 November 2025, 83-84, 339-340 [txt], [URL](#).

²¹⁴ CJEU, C-37/20 Luxembourg Business Registers, 22 November 2022.

²¹⁵ Article 74 Directive (EU) 2024/1640 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2024 on the mechanisms to be put in place by Member States for the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing [2024] OJ L 19.6.2024.

²¹⁶ Gov. Gazette A' 228/12.12.2025.

laid down in the Directive. Specifically, access of any individual or organisation is conditioned upon proof of a special legal interest (ειδικό έννομο συμφέρον) linked exclusively to prevention and combating of money laundering from criminal activities or terrorism financing, and a prior prosecutorial order.

139. In addition, whereas the version of the bill put to public consultation included Article 33 designating the NCRTV as the competent authority to assess any concentration in the media market that could have a significant impact on media pluralism,²¹⁷ this provision was also dropped by the version tabled to Parliament and ultimately voted (see also [Checks & Balances: Legislative Process: Public Consultations](#)).

140. **Online Media Registry:** The Online Media Registry (Μητρώο Ηλεκτρονικού Τύπου) commenced operations in March 2023, and websites began registering in large numbers from 2024 onwards. Despite this step forward for transparency, this registry does not cover all online media, nor does it establish an obligation for them to register. As noted in the November 2025 Media Capture Monitoring Report for Greece: "The only incentive for outlets to join is that registration is the sole pathway to receive state funding. Online media that choose not to register and disclose their beneficial owner are free to remain outside the system. As of the date of this report, 567 online media outlets were registered. When asked about the total number of online media operating in Greece, the Greek Secretariat General for Communication & Media responded that the agency 'does not keep records of the percentage of electronic media at national level that are registered in the Register'."²¹⁸

141. There are still numerous websites that do not publicly disclose their owner or beneficial owner. According to the EMFA and the newly adopted Article 27 L 5253/2025, all "media service providers shall disclose, in a clear and easily accessible manner, to the recipients of their services, in particular on their websites or through other equivalent means" the name or names of their direct or indirect owner or owners with shareholdings enabling them to exercise influence on the operation and strategic decision making. How the law will be implemented remains to be seen.

Safeguards against political interference

142. **Public media:** Despite ongoing efforts to professionalise and depoliticise ERT and the Athens News Agency / Macedonian News Agency (Αθηναϊκό Πρακτορείο Ειδήσεων / Μακεδονικό Πρακτορείο Ειδήσεων, ANA-MNA), the broadcasters have persistently fallen short of achieving the editorial and institutional independence needed to withstand political interference. The Secretariat-General of Communication and Information, the supervisory body of ERT and ANA-MNA, is still under the authority of the Prime Minister's Office.

²¹⁷ Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister, Δημόσια ηλεκτρονική διαβούλευση για το σχέδιο νόμου του Υφυπουργού στον Πρωθυπουργό με τίτλο: «Εκσυγχρονισμός νομικού πλαισίου οργάνωσης και λειτουργίας της «Ελληνικής Ραδιοφωνίας Τηλεόρασης Ανώνυμης Εταιρείας (Ε.Ρ.Τ. Α.Ε.)» και ενίσχυση του δημόσιου χαρακτήρα της και της ανταγωνιστικότητάς της στην αγορά των Μέσων Μαζικής Ενημέρωσης – Λήψη μέτρων για την εφαρμογή του... EUROPEAN MEDIA FREEDOM ACT)», 17 September 2025, [URL](#).

²¹⁸ MJRC & IPI, *Media Capture Monitoring Report: Greece – Measuring EMFA Compliance*, November 2025, 26, [URL](#).

143. In July 2025, the International Press Institute (IPI) sent an open letter to the Prime Minister outlining a number of reforms required to improve the worrying climate for media freedom in the country. Among the reforms, IPI underlined the problem of government pressure on editorial and media independence, including the use of public funds and advertising, as well as the lack of independence for ERT and ANA-MNA.²¹⁹

144. Since 2023, the CEOs of the public broadcasters have to undergo recruitment through the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (Ανώτατο Συμβούλιο Επιλογής Προσωπικού, ASEP), that is a competitive process involving written and oral examinations. This process results in a proposal of three candidates. However, it is ultimately the Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister responsible for the supervision and regulation of organisational matters of the public broadcasters that selects and appoints one of the three candidates. This indicates that the appointment of managerial personnel in public broadcasters will continue to be influenced by political factors. In January 2025, the first CEO of ERT that went through this selection process was appointed.²²⁰

145. In January 2025, ERT reportedly violated the principles of objectivity and completeness of information, pluralism and the free movement of ideas in downplaying in its news coverage the demonstrations that took place on 26 January 2025 regarding the fatal **Tempi Train Crash**, a matter of important public interest and as such an issue on which ERT had a corresponding obligation to provide extensive and objective news coverage.²²¹ No sanctions have been imposed by the NCRTV in this regard.

146. In June 2025, the removal of journalist Thomas Sideris from ERT and the cancellation of his programme titled “March to Gaza” sparked significant public controversy. The decision was widely criticised by journalists, unions and commentators as an act of editorial censorship or politically motivated intervention, given the programme’s sensitive international and political subject matter.²²²

147. **Media pluralism in non-public media:** The control of private media by vested interests represents the most severe manifestation of media capture in Greece, as stated in our previous submission.²²³ The concentration of traditional media assets in the hands of wealthy families and shipping magnates with close political affiliations appears to have decisively influenced the media environment. Consequently, although the country hosts a large number of media outlets, meaningful pluralism and a broad range of independent perspectives remain largely absent.

148. Major media outlets often function as vehicles for promoting specific narratives or supporting political parties rather than serving as platforms for public interest reporting on and holding power to account. Human Rights Watch stated in its 2025 report that

²¹⁹ IPI, ‘Greece: IPI joins open letter to PM Mitsotakis outlining urgent need for further media freedom reforms’, 17 July 2025, [URL](#).

²²⁰ Newmoney, ‘Ο Κωνσταντίνος Παπαβασιλείου νέος διευθύνων σύμβουλος στην EPT’, 17 January 2025, [URL](#).

²²¹ Govwatch, ‘Doubts raised over ERT’s objectivity in covering protests over the Tempi rail disaster (26.1.2025)’, 28 January 2025, [URL](#).

²²² Kouti tis Pandoras, ‘Θωμάς Σιδερης: Αντιδράσεις για την απομάκρυνσή του από την EPT – «Δεν είναι μόνο για μένα», 30 June 2025, [URL](#).

²²³ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, para 138.

"RSF describes a situation in Greece where 'a few entrepreneurs run an overwhelming majority of media outlets, while being involved in other highly regulated business sectors. Some of them have close ties to the country's political elite.' Political polarization further undermines media pluralism".²²⁴

149. The deal for the acquisition of the only national cooperative newspaper in Greece, "Efimerida ton Syntakton" (Efsyn), was finalised in December 2025.²²⁵ The new owner, Dimitris Melissanidis, is a Greek businessman with a portfolio covering not only media (Nafemporiki newspaper, Nafemporiki regional TV channel) but also shipping, energy and real estate sectors.
150. Numerous pressures on editorial independence and journalistic output persist in Greece. Even in cases where owners do not engage in heavy-handed meddling, self-censorship is a prevalent practice among journalists.²²⁶
151. Article 28(2) L 5253/2025 makes provisions for safeguarding editorial independence as follows: "Media service providers enjoy protection of substantive editorial freedom and independence in the exercise of their professional activities. The exercise of editorial freedom is subject only to the limitations provided for under Union and national law. Any interference by state bodies, government officials or political actors in the editorial policies or editorial decisions of media service providers, as well as any attempt to influence such policies or decisions, is prohibited."
152. Yet, in December 2025, less than a month after the adoption of the law, SKAI TV channel issued a statement against the Hellenic Film and Audiovisual Center (Ελληνικό Κέντρο Κινηματογράφου, Οπτικοακουστικών Μέσων και Δημιουργίας) operating under the Ministry of Culture, accusing it of censorship because of the Authority's decision to revoke the approval for partial public funding of a documentary prepared by Alexis Papachelas, entitled "17 November: Rise and Fall".²²⁷ The revocation was reportedly based on the inclusion in the documentary of an interview with Dimitris Koufontinas, the former member of the terrorist organisation "17 November". This decision was taken abruptly, overturning the Authority's previous decision of 8 December 2025, and without any prior notification to SKAI's owning company.

Fair and transparent allocation of state advertising

153. IPI and MJRC highlight in their November 2025 report that "a significant factor in the context of media capture in Greece is the financial reliance of media outlets on state

²²⁴ Human Rights Watch, *From Bad to Worse: The Deterioration of Media Freedom in Greece*, 8 May 2025, [URL](#).

²²⁵ Efsyn, 'Η ΕΦ.ΣΥΝ και επίσημα στην οικογένεια Μελισανίδη – Το μήνυμα της ιδιοκτησίας', 13 December 2025, [URL](#).

²²⁶ iMEDd, 'Foreword & Key Findings', [URL](#).

²²⁷ SKAI, 'Ο ΣΚΑΪ καταγγέλλει τον ΕΚΚΟΜΕΔ για το ντοκιμαντέρ Παπαχελά: Απόπειρα προληπτικής λογοκρισίας', 16 December 2025, [URL](#); Typologies, 'Ο ΣΚΑΪ καταγγέλει τον ΕΚΚΟΜΕΔ για απόπειρα προληπτικής λογοκρισίας- Σκληρή επιστολή Αλαφούζου για την ανάκληση χρηματοδότησης του ντοκιμαντέρ του Παπαχελά', 16 December 2025, [URL](#).

support and advertising, which creates a vulnerability to the potential for editorial interference".²²⁸

154. The [e-Pasithea](#) platform went online in September 2024 but took almost a year to become fully operational. It provides a range of digital services, including the electronic submission of advertising expenditure reports and applications for the approval of public sector advertising programmes. As of September 2025, the platform offers access to all approval decisions for the year 2024, including application number, year, government agency, approval number, approval date, decision in PDF format, and the corresponding hyperlink to the publication on the Transparency Portal (*Διαύγεια*), as well as approval decisions for 2025 that are still being processed.

155. Media do not publicly disclose the total annual amount of public funds for state advertising allocated to them. While the state is required to publish details of state funding allocation, the Transparency Portal (*Διαύγεια*) is not easy to navigate and contains hundreds of such announcements. As a result, one would need to search for all decisions issued in a given year to trace the total amount granted to a media outlet. Moreover, there is no annual report that provides a comprehensive overview of the state funding and its allocation per media outlet.

Protection of journalists

2025 Rule of Law Report recommendation

Continue ongoing efforts to strengthen legislative and non-legislative safeguards to improve the safety and protection of journalists, in particular as regards abusive lawsuits, in line with the adopted Memorandum of Understanding and taking into account European standards on the protection of journalists

Journalists' independence & safety

156. Multiple cases of attacks, threats or violations against the freedom of the press, journalists and media in Greece continued to be recorded throughout 2025 by press organisations, journalists' associations and the [Mapping Media Freedom](#) platform managed by the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF). We name a few below:

- ❖ The Hellenic Police used tear gas against journalists while they were covering farmers' protests;²²⁹

²²⁸ MJRC & IPI, *Media Capture Monitoring Report: Greece – Measuring EMFA Compliance*, November 2025, 20.

²²⁹ Panhellenic Federation of Journalists' Unions, 'Επιθεση με χημικά δέχθηκαν δημοσιογράφοι της ΕΣΗΕΠΗΝ', 12 December 2025, [URL](#); Mapping Media Freedom, 'Journalists exposed to tear gas by police while covering farmers' protest', 9 December 2025, [URL](#).

- ❖ A journalist was hospitalised after an attack while covering strike action in Patras;²³⁰
- ❖ Reporters United investigative media outlet received threats after publishing an investigation into Latsis family shipping activities;²³¹
- ❖ Local and regional media were excluded from asking questions during the Prime Minister's annual press conference;²³²
- ❖ Efsyn and MIIR faced legal threats after reporting on an airline's alleged links to criminal networks;²³³
- ❖ A Greek MP attacked and insulted a journalist;²³⁴
- ❖ An attempted bomb attack was committed at the home of a journalist;²³⁵
- ❖ Reporters United were targeted by frivolous copyright claims over their investigation into Europe's betting industry;²³⁶
- ❖ The Prime Minister attacked and accused media of covering up truth about the deadly **Tempi Train Crash**, referring to a "coordinated attempt to obscure the truth and manipulate public opinion around an issue that is deeply emotional", as well as "to exploit human suffering";²³⁷
- ❖ A photojournalist was seriously injured by riot police while covering a **Tempi Train Crash** protest;²³⁸

²³⁰ Mapping Media Freedom, 'Journalist Panagiotis Rigopoulos hospitalised after attack while covering strike action in Patras', 14 November 2025, [URL](#).

²³¹ Mapping Media Freedom, 'Reporters United receives threats after publishing investigation into Latsis family shipping activities', 8 November 2025, [URL](#); Reporters United, Instagram post, 9 November 2025, [URL](#).

²³² Panhellenic Federation of Journalists' Unions, 'Αποκλεισμός Μέσων Μακεδονίας-Θράκης από τη συνέντευξη Τύπου του Πρωθυπουργού στη ΔΕΘ', 10 September 2025, [URL](#); Mapping Media Freedom, 'Local and regional media excluded from asking questions during PM's annual press conference', 9 September 2025, [URL](#).

²³³ Mapping Media Freedom, 'Efsyn and MIIR face legal threat after reporting on airline's alleged links to criminal networks', 9 September 2025, [URL](#).

²³⁴ Mapping Media Freedom, 'SYRIZA MP insults Documento journalist and newspaper', 4 August 2025, [URL](#); Documento, 'Επιστολή Άγγελου Προβολιστιάνου στην ΕΣΗΕΑ για τις αθλιότητες της Έλενας Ακρίτα', 5 August 2025, [URL](#).

²³⁵ Mapping Media Freedom, 'Attempted bomb attack at home of well-known Greek journalist Yannis Pretenteris', 10 July 2025, [URL](#); European Federation of Journalists, 'Greece: attempted bomb attack on journalist Yannis Pretenteris', 10 July 2025, [URL](#); ESIEA, 'Η ΕΣΗΕΑ καταδικάζει την τοποθέτηση εκρηκτικού μηχανισμού στο σπίτι του δημοσιογράφου Γιάννη Πρετεντέρη', 10 July 2025, [URL](#).

²³⁶ Mapping Media Freedom, 'Reporters United targeted by frivolous copyright claims over investigation into Europe's betting industry', 5 June 2025, [URL](#).

²³⁷ Mapping Media Freedom, 'PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis accuses opposition and media of covering up truth about Tempi disaster', 4 April 2025, [URL](#).

²³⁸ Mapping Media Freedom, 'Photojournalist Orestis Panagiotou seriously injured by riot police while covering Tempi protest', 28 February 2025, [URL](#); Govwatch, 'Police violence against photojournalists at work, covering the strike marking the two year anniversary of the Tempi rail disaster (28.2.2025)', 18 March 2025, [URL](#); ESIEA & Panhellenic Federation of

- ❖ A journalist was targeted by Government Spokesperson Pavlos Marinakis during a press conference with derogatory remarks about the reporter following a series of questions about the operation of private universities and the safety of the railway network in Greece, both issues of public interest;²³⁹
- ❖ A journalist was obstructed by the Hellenic police while covering a demonstration in Thessaloniki;²⁴⁰
- ❖ A photojournalist was physically attacked by riot police while covering a demonstration;²⁴¹
- ❖ Journalists were attacked by ultras while covering a demonstration;²⁴²
- ❖ Greek courts upheld the conviction of a Kurdish journalist, rejecting her appeal and handing her a suspended sentence of seven months;²⁴³
- ❖ Police officers proceeded with an unjustified and unprovoked detention of a journalist while she was covering a student protest over the **Tempi Train Crash**.²⁴⁴

157. In September 2025, ESIEA issued a statement expressing its "serious concern over publications, especially when they are anonymous, that target journalists for simply doing their job, namely, for asking questions".²⁴⁵

SLAPPs

158. As reported in our previous contribution, the Greek government has not adopted legislation in order to deal with Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) which pose a significant threat to the media, journalists, activists and human rights defenders. This is despite the worrying increase in SLAPP cases appearing in Greece, a

Journalists' Unions, 'Η ΕΣΗΕΑ για τον τραυματισμό συναδέλφων κατά την κάλυψη του συλλαλητηρίου της 28ης Φεβρουαρίου', 4 March 2025, [URL](#).

²³⁹ Mapping Media Freedom, 'Government spokesperson targets Jacobin journalist Christos Avramidis during press conference', 19 February 2025, [URL](#); Govwatch, 'Government spokesman, Pavlos Marinakis, publicly insults a journalist', 24 February 2025, [URL](#).

²⁴⁰ Mapping Media Freedom, 'Journalist Babis Bikas obstructed by police while covering demonstration', 26 January 2025, [URL](#).

²⁴¹ Govwatch, 'Excessive police violence against demonstrators and press reported at demonstrations over the Tempe rail accident (26.1.2025)', 17 March 2025, [URL](#); Mapping Media Freedom, 'Photojournalist Marios Lolos physically attacked by riot police while covering demonstration', 26 January 2025, [URL](#); Panhellenic Federation of Journalists' Unions, 'Η ΠΟΕΣΥ για την επίθεση σε φωτορεπόρτερ και παρεμπόδιση δημοσιογράφου', 27 January 2025, [URL](#).

²⁴² Mapping Media Freedom, 'Journalists attacked by ultras while covering demonstration', 26 January 2025, [URL](#).

²⁴³ Mapping Media Freedom, 'Kurdish journalist Berçem Mordeniz handed suspended sentence of seven months', 8 January 2025, [URL](#).

²⁴⁴ Govwatch, 'Accusations of Police Arbitrariness Against Journalist', 28 March 2025, [URL](#).

²⁴⁵ ESIEA, 'Αδιανόητη επίθεση κατά του Θανάση Κουκάκη', 25 August 2025, [URL](#). For more information, Solomon, 'Υπόθεση Credia Bank: Το χρονικό της επίθεσης κατά δημοσιογράφων', 2 September 2025, [URL](#).

development that reinforces concerns relating to freedom of expression and press freedom.

159. Recent research on the subject has shown that SLAPPs in Greece are often not limited to financial claims. In a significant proportion of cases, criminal proceedings are initiated in parallel. This amplifies the aggressive nature of SLAPPs and contributes to further intimidation of victims who may face not only financial repercussions but also criminal sanctions such as imprisonment.²⁴⁶ Other extra-legal tools are often employed in parallel, ranging from smear campaigns to threats and verbal or other forms of attack.

160. As regards the nature of cases of SLAPPs analysed by Hellenic League for Human Rights (HLHR) research, most common examples included political-economic scandals, breaches of the rule of law and cases involving politicians with a criminal background. Cases documented throughout 2025 include the following:

- ❖ A mayor filed a legal complaint for defamation against a radio host over statements regarding the Municipal Council.²⁴⁷
- ❖ Another mayor also filed a criminal complaint against a journalist.²⁴⁸
- ❖ A convicted murderer filed lawsuits against two journalists for defamation and misuse of sensitive personal data.²⁴⁹

161. In January 2026, the Civil Court of Athens (Πολυμελές Πρωτοδικείο Αθηνών) dismissed a 450,000 € lawsuit brought by the nephew and former Secretary-General of the Prime Minister, Grigoris Dimtriadis, against MEP Stelios Kouloglou for a letter had sent to the President of the European Parliament relating to the "["Greek Watergate" Surveillance Scandal](#)" and SLAPPs.²⁵⁰ The Court held *inter alia* that the reference to an "industry of lawsuits" did not amount to defamation on the ground that Mr Dimitriadis had brought several actions against journalists and media outlets working on the surveillance scandal.²⁵¹

162. In addition, a noteworthy number of SLAPPs are centred on environmental cases, often coupled with violations of environmental legislation (coined as "eco-SLAPPs").²⁵² More

²⁴⁶ HLHR & The Manifold, [Χαρτογραφώντας το τοπίο των SLAPP στην Ελλάδα](#), March 2025, [URL](#).

²⁴⁷ Mapping Media Freedom, 'Mayor of Lefkada files complaint against Prisma 91.6 radio host Panagiotis Kouniakis', 23 January 2025, [URL](#); Panhellenic Federation of Journalists' Unions, 'Η Ένωση επανέρχεται στο θέμα των στρατηγικών αγωγών κατά της συμμετοχής του κοινού (SLAPP)', 6 February 2025, [URL](#).

²⁴⁸ Govwatch, 'Journalist acquitted of defamation despite inadequate SLAPP protections', 26 February 2025, [URL](#).

²⁴⁹ Mapping Media Freedom, 'Convicted murderer files lawsuits against journalists Konstantinos Poulis and Anna Nini', 16 January 2025, [URL](#).

²⁵⁰ For rulings in respect of other such lawsuits, Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, para 150.

²⁵¹ The Press Project, 'Απορρίφθηκε η αγωγή Δημητριάδη κατά Κούλογλου', 19 January 2026, [URL](#).

²⁵² Iasonas Gousetis, 'Eco-SLAPPs: Legal intimidation as a weapon to silence environmental and public space defenders', Heinrich Böll Foundation – Thessaloniki Office, 8 December 2025, [URL](#).

than 10 recent eco-SLAPPs are analysed in HLHR research, including recent developments and court rulings.²⁵³ These cases also attract international attention, as was the case with a Greek developer's SLAPPs against Save Ios Association.²⁵⁴

163. The Greek judiciary handles SLAPPs variably. There appear to be no consistent patterns apart from the fact that the exorbitant financial sums initially claimed in such lawsuits are not awarded by the courts. Furthermore, it appears that Greek case law applies and interprets the provisions of the Criminal Code in a manner contrary to freedom of expression, without adhering to the criteria established by ECtHR jurisprudence and standards concerning public figures, matters of public interests, good faith, and the nature of the contested statements.²⁵⁵
164. In light of the above, the transposition of the Anti-SLAPP Directive²⁵⁶ and adoption of measures proposed in the Anti-SLAPP Recommendation²⁵⁷ are essential. We recall that the European Commission has made specific recommendations to other Member States such as Croatia to that end.²⁵⁸

Transparency and access to documents

165. Our concerns regarding the adequacy of the legal framework on the right of access to public information and the ineffective implementation thereof remain unchanged.²⁵⁹ For yet another year, no tangible steps appear to have been taken towards the necessary revision and codification of the legislative framework, nor towards the implementation of Recommendation iv made by GRECO in its Fifth Evaluation Round or towards ratification of the Tromsø Convention.
166. At the same time, serious concerns arise from the requirements laid down in relevant secondary legislation amended in 2025 as to the formal elements required for a request for access to information to be considered "non-anonymous", namely a certified digital signature via the gov.gr Uniform Digital Portal.²⁶⁰ We deem those requirements excessive and overly formalistic.

253 HLHR, *Eco-SLAPPs: Νομικός εκφοβισμός και τοπική περιβαλλοντική δράση στην Ελλάδα*, October 2025, [URL](#).

254 The CASE, 'CASE Statement condemning Greek developer's SLAPPs against Save Ios Association', 13 March 2025, [URL](#).

255 HLHR & The Manifold, *Χαρτογραφώντας το τοπίο των SLAPP στην Ελλάδα*, March 2025.

256 Directive (EU) 2024/1069 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation') [2024] OJ L 16.4.2024.

257 Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/758 of 27 April 2022 on protecting journalists and human rights defenders who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation') [2022] OJ L 138/30.

258 European Commission, 2025 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Croatia, SWD(2025) 911, 8 July 2025, 2, 15-16.

259 Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, paras 153-156; Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2024 Rule of Law Report, January 2024, paras 77 et seq.

260 Article 2 MD 21797/2024, Gov. Gazette B' 7302/31.12.2024, as amended by Article 1 MD 8229/2025, Gov. Gazette B' 2601/27.05.2025.

167. In addition, failure on the part of Greek public authorities to both promptly and properly publish information that they are legally required to proactively disclose and to respond to requests for access to public information appears to be a systemic and systematic phenomenon (see [Anti-Corruption: CIDA and Checks & Balances: Dialogue & Participation](#)). Moreover, based on cases that have recently come to our attention, we express strong reservations even as to whether public bodies are fully aware of their statutory obligations e.g. their obligation to respond within specific time limits.

168. Examples of such deficiencies extend beyond our organisations. For example, throughout the past year, the editorial team and reporters of Omnia TV submitted requests for access to documents as follows:

- ❖ An April 2025 request to the administration of the National Technical University of Athens for access to documents and information regarding the technical specifications of its installed surveillance system, as well as documents and information relating to the licensing of the system's operation. The administration of the University never responded.
- ❖ A May 2025 request to the Municipality of Aghia Paraskevi for access to documents and information concerning the City Security system using unmanned aerial vehicles (drones), including impact assessments and decisions of municipal communities and committees. The Municipality never responded.
- ❖ A July 2025 request for access to public documents to the European and Development Programmes Managing Service (Υπηρεσία Διαχείρισης Ευρωπαϊκών και Αναπτυξιακών Προγραμμάτων, YDEAP) of the Hellenic Police concerning reports and final progress reports submitted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and held by YDEAP in the context of the implementation of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme. In August 2025, YDEAP rejected the request on the ground that the documents had been (retroactively) classified as diplomatic pursuant to L 5207/2025.²⁶¹

169. We finally highlight that Vouliwatch has conducted a thorough analysis and a methodologically sound assessment of the legal framework in question and carefully drafted a roadmap and set of recommendations in line with the Tromsø Convention and global best practices.²⁶² Despite wide dissemination of the paper to all relevant stakeholders, competent Ministers and Members of Parliament, it does not seem to have been acknowledged to date.

²⁶¹ L 5207/2025, Gov. Gazette A' 94/10.06.2025.

²⁶² Vouliwatch, "Εγγραφο Πολιτικής: Συστάσεις για Αναμόρφωση Νομικού Πλαισίου του Δικαιώματος Πρόσβασης στη Δημόσια Πληροφορία", 10 October 2024, [URL](#).

Proposed recommendations: Media Freedom

Ensure that the NCRTV operates independently and has adequate state funding to perform its duties and responsibilities effectively and in a timely fashion.

Ensure greater transparency on the concentration of media ownership and enact rules to limit vertical and horizontal ownership concentration.

Strengthen transparency of e-Pasithea data on matters such as public funding allocations to media outlets.

Ensure that safeguards are in place in newsrooms to prevent interference and to protect editorial independence and press freedom.

Adopt anti-SLAPP legislation to protect journalists, media, activists and human rights defenders from SLAPPs.

Ratify the Tromsø Convention, ensure that access to information held by all public bodies is governed by a single legal framework and that disclosure of such information is subject only to exceptions laid down in law.

Ensure that public authorities comply with access to public information rules and promptly and proactively publish information and documents covered by mandatory disclosure.

Checks & Balances

Legislative process

170. The standards laid down in the domestic legal order for the preparation, submission and adoption of legislation regrettably continue to be systematically disregarded.²⁶³ In general, the legislative process followed in Greece remains largely problematic. 'Polynomia' through overregulation of the same matter through multiple laws and 'kakonomia' through poor legislative drafting practices and contempt for good law-making principles have been a longstanding and systematic problem since the very first Rule of Law Report.²⁶⁴ These include deficiencies in impact assessment and **Public Consultation of Bills**, persisting use of '**Omnibus**' **Legislation** and submission of **Late & Irrelevant Amendments**, **Recurrent Amendment** of even freshly adopted legislation and inaccessible codification of laws. We analyse those deficiencies in detail below.

171. Concerns and reflections on relevant issues addressed in the following sections can also be found in reports by the Hellenic Parliament Scientific Service,²⁶⁵ opinions of the Economic and Social Council of Greece (Οικονομική και Κοινωνική Επιτροπή της Ελλάδος, OKE),²⁶⁶ and plenary debates in Parliament.²⁶⁷ Special mention should be made of an opinion by the Hellenic Court of Audit concerning pension-related provisions, which notes an increasing tendency to introduce provisions in pension legislation in a fragmented and *ad hoc* manner, contrary to the principles of good law-making.²⁶⁸

²⁶³ Namely, Articles 74-75 Constitution; Articles 85, 87, 88 and 101 Standing Orders of the Hellenic Parliament (Section of Parliamentary Business); Articles 57 et seq. L 4622/2019; Manual of Legislative Methodology, 2020, [URL](#).

²⁶⁴ European Commission, 2020 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Greece, SWD(2020) 307, 30 September 2020, 10.

²⁶⁵ Among others, Hellenic Parliament Scientific Service, 'Εκθεση επί του νομοσχεδίου «Αναδιοργάνωση της δομής της Ελληνικής Αστυνομίας και αναβάθμιση...»', 19 March 2025, [URL](#); 'Εκθεση επί του νομοσχεδίου «Εθνικός Τελωνειακός Κώδικας και άλλες διατάξεις - Συνταξιοδοτικές διατάξεις»', 23 July 2025, [URL](#); 'Εκθεση επί του νομοσχεδίου «Σύσταση νομικού προσώπου δημοσίου δικαίου με την επωνυμία «Ελληνορθόδοξη...»», 30 July 2025, [URL](#); 'Εκθεση επί του νομοσχεδίου «Ρυθμίσεις για την ενίσχυση της δημόσιας υγείας και την αναβάθμιση των υπηρεσιών υγείας», 27 October 2025, [URL](#); 'Εκθεση επί του νομοσχεδίου «Πλαισίο για κοινωφελείς περιουσίες, ιδρύματα, σχολάζουσες κληρονομιές...», 8 December 2025, [URL](#); 'Εκθεση επί του νομοσχεδίου «Σύσταση και λειτουργία Ανεξάρτητης Αρχής Ελέγχου της Αγοράς...», 26 December 2025, [URL](#).

²⁶⁶ *Inter alia*, OKE, Γνώμη της ΟΚΕ για το σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Ανάπτυξης με τίτλο «Αναμόρφωση του πλαισίου για την επαγγελματική κατάρτιση υπαλλήλων...», July 2025, [URL](#); Γνώμη της ΟΚΕ για το σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Παιδείας, Θρησκευμάτων και Αθλητισμού με τίτλο «Σύσταση νομικού προσώπου δημοσίου δικαίου με την επωνυμία...», July 2025, [URL](#); Γνώμη της ΟΚΕ επί του σχ/ν «Σύσταση και Λειτουργία Ανεξάρτητης Αρχής Εποπτείας...», November 2025, [URL](#); Γνώμη της Ο.Κ.Ε. επί του Σχεδίου Νόμου του Υπουργείου Ψηφιακής Διακυβέρνησης «Ιδρυση Ελληνικού Εργοστασίου Τεχνητής Νοημοσύνης...», December 2025, [URL](#).

²⁶⁷ Hellenic Parliament, Plenary Session, 20 March 2025, [URL](#); 2 December 2025, [URL](#); 9 December 2025, [URL](#).

²⁶⁸ Hellenic Court of Audit "Πρακτικά της 2ης ειδικής συνεδρίασης της Μειζονος Ολομέλειας του Ελεγκτικού Συνεδρίου της 31ης Μαρτίου 2025", 16, [URL](#); "Πρακτικά της 3ης ειδικής

172. Against this backdrop, it can be reasonably concluded that substantial, structural changes are necessary in order to improve the legislative process and consequently to reinforce public trust in institutions. We therefore reiterate our plea to the European Commission to duly highlight these issues in the Rule of Law Report and to make targeted recommendations to that effect.

173. In this regard, while we welcome the government's compliance with the two-week deadline for public consultation, the manner in which issues related to good law-making seem to be addressed under the Rule of Law Report mechanism continues to give rise to serious concerns. The fact that the government has chosen to focus its 'corrective action' solely on an issue the Commission explicitly identified as problematic in its Rule of Law Reports and translated into specific recommendations²⁶⁹ underscores these concerns. This approach further highlights the need for a clear and explicit identification of the broader shortcomings and of the specific issues that remain in need of correction. It also reflects the need for specific Rule of Law Report recommendations to encourage tangible, concrete action towards remedying longstanding deficiencies.

174. Throughout 2025, Parliament passed 97 pieces of legislation (L 5168/2025 to L 5264/2025). Of those, 63 were laws and 34 international conventions. It is noted at this point that, during 2025, 21 legislative proposals (*προτάσεις νόμου*) were submitted by Members of Parliament. As indicated on the respective pages on the Parliament's website, the procedural status of these proposals is listed as "submitted",²⁷⁰ while according to the weekly bulletin dated 19 December 2025, all submitted legislative proposals (including those submitted in 2024 and 2023) remain pending before the competent standing committees.²⁷¹

175. The section below draws on Vouliwatch's analysis of the procedure followed for 47 of the laws adopted last year.²⁷²

συνεδρίασης της Μειζονος Ολομέλειας του Ελεγκτικού Συνεδρίου της 3ης Απριλίου 2023", 10, [URL](#).

²⁶⁹ European Commission, 2024 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Greece, SWD(2024) 808, 24 July 2024, 2: "Step up the efforts to ensure the effective and timely consultation in practice of stakeholders on draft legislation, including by observing the statutory timeframe for public consultation."

²⁷⁰ Links to the legislative proposals' pages on the Parliament's website, along with title and the date of submission, are available on the following spreadsheet: [URL](#).

²⁷¹ Hellenic Parliament, 'Εβδομαδιαίο δελτίο των κατατεθέντων στη Βουλή νομοσχεδίων και προτάσεων νόμων', 19 December 2025, [URL](#).

²⁷² The data set used to extract the statistics and conclusions mentioned in this chapter can be found in the following spreadsheet: [URL](#). The abovementioned list (and research in general) excludes: the 34 international conventions (L 5169/2025, L 5171/2025, L 5175/2025, L 5180/2025, L 5181/2025, L 5182/2025, L 5183/2025, L 5185/2025, L 5186/2025, L 5189/2025, L 5190/2025, L 5191/2025, L 5192/2025, L 5196/2025, L 5198/2025, L 5199/2025, L 5200/2025, L 5201/2025, L 5205/2025, L 5206/2025, L 5207/2025, L 5208/2025, L 5210/2025, L 5211/2025, L 5213/2025, L 5227/2025, L 5228/2025, L 5230/2025, L 5231/2025, L 5241/2025, L 5242/2025, L 5245/2025, L 5247/2025, L 5248/2025), L 5177/2025 relating to the ratification of the Indirect Taxes Code, L 5219/2025 relating to the Property Tax Code and L 5249/2025, L 5250/2025 and L 5262/2025 relating to the state budget and state balance sheets, in view of applicable special voting rules. It also excludes 10 laws concerning the ratification/

Public consultation of bills

Significant concerns persist regarding the public consultation process and the extent to which the principles of good law-making are effectively observed.

176. **Impact assessments:** Article 61(2) L 4622/2019 provides that a preliminary regulatory impact analysis shall accompany the bills during the public consultation process.²⁷³ However, we have noticed that consultations on certain bills were launched without an accompanying regulatory impact analysis (ανάλυση συνεπιέσθιων ρύθμισης) and/or remained without such an analysis for almost the entire duration of the consultation period.²⁷⁴ It is worth noting in this regard that OKE has highlighted the issue of delays in the publication of regulatory impact analyses in several of its opinions, while highlighting that such delays hinder the proper and timely assessment of the proposed regulatory measures.²⁷⁵ We recall that the European Commission has expressly acknowledged the recent involvement of OKE through opinions on bills as “an effort to strengthen the social dialogue and participatory democracy in the law-making process”.²⁷⁶

177. **Duration of public consultations:** As previously stated, we welcome the practice followed in 2025 with regard to compliance with the time limits set out in Article 61(2) L 4622/2019 and note that all bills were subjected to public consultation for 14 days or more. Specifically, 13 bills were open to consultation for a period of 14 days, while 34 were open for more than 14 days.

178. However, OKE has on many occasions proposed extensions to the duration of the public consultation period to at least 15 working days, taking the view that the time currently allotted is insufficient for the effective examination of the overall material, particularly in light of the extensive length of bills and of their accompanying

approval of contracts, draft contracts, agreements, private agreements or amendments thereto (L 5168/2025, L 5174/2025, L 5204/2025, L 5234/2025, L 5235/2025, L 5238/2025, L 5244/2025, L 5254/2025, L 5257/2025, L 5260/2025) as a slightly different procedure seems to be followed for the preparation and adoption of these laws. Finally, it excludes L 5251/2025 (Κύρωση της από 23.10.2025 Πράξης Νομοθετικού Περιεχομένου... και συναφείς διατάξεις), as we were unable to identify any evidence that the provisions of this bill were subjected to public consultation, despite the fact that such consultation should have taken place for the majority of its provisions, namely all provisions other than Article 1 concerning the ratification of the emergency decree. In order to apply a consistent methodology, the data concern the remaining 47 laws.

²⁷³ Gov. Gazette A' 133/07.08.2019.

²⁷⁴ Notably the bills subsequently adopted as L 5226/2025, L 5243/2025, L 5246/2025, L 5252/2025, L 5255/2025, L 5256/2025, L 5258/2025, L 5263/2025, L 5264/2025. These omissions are documented in screenshots on file with the authors.

²⁷⁵ *Inter alia*, OKE, Γνώμη της ΟΚΕ για το σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Εσωτερικών με τίτλο «Αναμόρφωση του πειθαρχικού δικαιου των υπαλλήλων του δημόσιου τομέα, σύσταση Ελληνικού Κέντρου Εμπειρογνωμοσύνης Διοικητικών Μεταρρυθμίσεων και λοιπές διατάξεις», July 2025, [URL](#); Γνώμη της ΟΚΕ για το σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Υγείας με τίτλο «Ρυθμίσεις για την ενίσχυση της δημόσιας υγείας και την αναβάθμιση των υπηρεσιών υγείας», October 2025, [URL](#); Γνώμη της ΟΚΕ για το σχέδιο νόμου «Ψηφιακή ενίσχυση της οδικής ασφάλειας και λοιπές διατάξεις», November 2025, [URL](#).

²⁷⁶ European Commission, 2025 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Greece, SWD(2025) 908, 8 July 2025, 16-17.

documents.²⁷⁷ At the same time, it has also proposed the formal establishment of an additional consultation period in cases where the bill submitted to Parliament contains provisions that differ from those included in the version of the bill that was subject to public consultation.

179. We fully share the views expressed by OKE and urge the Commission to convey corresponding recommendations to the Greek government. Such an approach could contribute to laying the foundations – at least at an initial stage – for a more effective and meaningful public consultation process.

180. **Transparency & completeness of consultations and assessment of consultation input:**
We note that for yet another year:

- ❖ Despite the provisions of Article 61(4) L 4622/2019,²⁷⁸ (a) in only 2 out of 47 cases was the public consultation report posted on the opengov.gr website and (b) the obligation to send the report by email to the participants in the consultation does not seem to have been respected. In our experience, as many times as we have submitted a comment during the consultation process, we have not received the corresponding email.
- ❖ Many legislative provisions do not seem to go through public consultation. In the vast majority of the cases examined (42 out of 47 cases), articles were identified in the bill introduced for voting in Parliament that were not included in the corresponding bill submitted to public consultation. Furthermore, the bills introduced for voting contained a total of 3,602 articles, of which only 3,348 were also found in the versions of the bills that had been put to public consultation, irrespective of differences in form between the two versions. It should be noted that the 254 articles that we were not able to find in the corresponding versions of the bills put to public consultation, as well as the articles submitted for voting through amendments, were most likely never subjected to the public consultation process. In this context, it is noteworthy that the bill subsequently adopted as L 5224/2025 comprised of 192 pages at the time it was submitted for voting, compared to 142 pages when it was placed under public consultation.
- ❖ Bills are at times introduced for voting in Parliament within a very short period following the conclusion of the consultation process.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.* See also OKE, *Γνώμη της ΟΚΕ για το σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Εργασίας και Κοινωνικής Ασφάλισης με τίτλο «Δίκαιη Εργασία για Όλους: Απλοποίηση της Νομοθεσίας - Στήριξη στον Εργαζόμενο - Προστασία στην Πράξη»*, September 2025, [URL](http://opengov.gr).

²⁷⁸ Article 61(4) L 4622/2019: "The Coordination Service of the Ministry concerned prepares a report on the public consultation... The report is included in the final Regulatory Impact Assessment of Article 62 of this Law and accompanies the regulation when it is submitted to Parliament, is posted on the website where the consultation took place and is sent by e-mail to the e-mail addresses from which the comments were received."

²⁷⁹ Nine bills were submitted to Parliament on the same day or the day following the conclusion of the public consultation process. These include, in particular, the bills subsequently adopted as L 5223/2025, L 5224/2025, L 5225/2025, L 5233/2025, L 5240/2025, L 5258/2025, L 5259/2025, L 5263/2025 and L 5264/2025.

181. More generally, we continue to have reservations as to whether the comments submitted in the context of public consultation are thoroughly taken into account and addressed across legislative initiatives. We were particularly surprised to note that even technical comments suggesting drafting corrections submitted during public consultations do not appear to be taken into consideration.²⁸⁰

182. **Consideration of expert views:** Institutional and professional bodies such as the Ombudsman, judicial, bar and scientific associations have repeatedly criticised the absence of prior consultation before the drafting of legislation.²⁸¹ The issue of lack of consultation with the competent authorities and bodies has also been raised by opposition MPs during plenary debates in Parliament.²⁸²

183. Finally, we have significant doubts as to whether the observations and recommendations submitted by competent bodies e.g. the Hellenic Parliament Scientific Service, OKE and the DPA are effectively taken into account during the legislative process or reflected in the laws ultimately adopted.

Late & irrelevant amendments

184. Last-minute amendments that are not related to the subject matter of the bill remain a frequent phenomenon, as is their inclusion in the final text of the law. The bills under which ministerial amendments are not tabled prior to adoption are few. In 38 out of 47 cases (80.85%), ministerial amendments were tabled after the bill had been submitted to Parliament. A total of 53 amendments were submitted, amounting to a total of 223 articles.²⁸³

²⁸⁰ For example, during the public consultation on the bill subsequently adopted as L 5226/2025, RSA submitted a comment on Article 14 ([URL](#)) in which it pointed out that the relevant provision on judicial review remedies should amend of the outdated cross-references to L 3900/2010 and PD 18/1989 and should instead cross-refer to the applicable Article 15 L 3068/2022. No change was made to the provision, nor does the Regulatory Impact Assessment appear to provide any response to this specific issue: Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Ανάλυση συνεπειών ρύθμισης, August 2025, 33, [URL](#).

²⁸¹ Among others, Ombudsman, ΕΜΗΔΙΠΑ Ετήσια Έκθεση 2024, 7 August 2025, 36: "... the Ombudsman was never invited by the competent authorities to contribute to the discussion on the amendment of Presidential Decree 120/2008, despite the fact that, within the scope of his competences, it has engaged in this field by submitting specific proposals for improving the quality of disciplinary control."; Association of Administrative Judges, 'Υπόμνημα της Ένωσης Διοικητικών Δικαστών', 6 May 2025, [URL](#): "... once again the Ministry of Justice is unexpectedly proposing amendments to fundamental pieces of legislation... without any prior consultation with judicial associations. Furthermore, the choice to submit the said draft law to public consultation during the Easter holidays (from 12/4/2025 to 28/4/2025) hindered the meaningful participation of stakeholders, including us, the judges, in this crucial process. As an Association, we denounce the entrenched practice of drafting legislation relating to procedural law or to matters we adjudicate without any prior hearing or cooperation with judicial associations; Plenary of Greek Bar Associations, 'Αποφάσεις Ολομέλειας- Συντονιστική Επιτροπή Ολομέλειας: Καθολική αποχή δικηγόρων στις 23 και 24 Ιανουαρίου 2025', 17 January 2025, [URL](#): "... the legal profession was never invited to participate in the Working Group for drafting the Bill, nor to present its views..."

²⁸² *Inter alia*, Hellenic Parliament, Plenary Session, 19 September 2025, [URL](#); Hellenic Parliament, Plenary Session, 17 December 2025, [URL](#).

²⁸³ It is noted that a ministerial amendment was also tabled in the context of L 5174/2025. However, this law was not included among those examined in Vouliwatch's research, as it concerns the ratification of a donation agreement.

185. Contrary to the provisions of the Constitution and the Standing Orders of the Hellenic Parliament (Section of Parliamentary Business),²⁸⁴ of those 53 amendments:

- ❖ 44 amendments (83.02%) were last-minute amendments, filed either on the day or the eve of adoption of the law – or the start of the plenary debate in cases where more sessions were held prior to adoption. Notably, in 25 cases, amendments were tabled after 22:00, with the discussion of the bill commencing the following day.
- ❖ 4 amendments were filed on a Friday after 13:00.
- ❖ 51 amendments (96.22%) were irrelevant amendments, as they contained provisions that seem not to be directly related to the main subject matter – or at least one of the main topics – of the bill. This assessment seems to be confirmed by the legislature's choice to include said provisions in sections of the acts titled "other provisions", "other urgent provisions", "other provisions of the Ministry" etc, which in several cases appears to be the only part of the title of the law under which such provisions could arguably be subsumed.²⁸⁵

186. The issue of the late submission or irrelevance of amendments introduced for adoption is frequently raised during plenary debates in Parliament by members of the opposition.²⁸⁶ Nevertheless, such provisions are ultimately adopted. In our assessment, the responses provided to these concerns by the competent ministers or members of the parliamentary majority are neither convincing nor sufficiently reasoned.

²⁸⁴ According to Article 74(5) Constitution: "A Bill or law proposal containing provisions not related to its main subject matter shall not be introduced for debate. No addition or amendment shall be introduced for debate if it is not related to the main subject matter of the Bill or law proposal. Additions or amendments by Ministers are debated only if they have been submitted at least three days prior to the commencement of the debate in the Plenum, to the Section specified in article 71 or to the competent standing parliamentary committee, as specified by the Standing Orders..." According to Article 87(1) Standing Orders of the Hellenic Parliament (Section of Parliamentary Business): "Additions or amendments... are filed in the appropriate department of the Parliament, and listed in a separate book, numbered consecutively.... Submissions on Friday shall be made no later than 13.00. Confirmation of the submission of additions or amendments is provided by the competent department of the Parliament by drawing up, underneath their text, an act stating the number, date and time of the submission."

²⁸⁵ Note that there were 4 amendments which could be argued to contain provisions that may be related in some way to the (broader) subject matter of the respective law: Amendments No. 398/94 22.9.2025 in L 5233/2025, [URL](#); No 386/15 25.7.2025 in L 5223/2025, [URL](#); No 378/34 22.7.2025 in L 5221/2025, [URL](#); and No 369/22 11.7.2025 in L 5215/2025, [URL](#). However, we considered it more appropriate to present them here as "irrelevant" due to the legislature's choice to place them in sections bearing the abovementioned titles. This also indicates its assumption of a lack of connection between these provisions and the other sections of the laws in question.

²⁸⁶ *Inter alia*, Hellenic Parliament, Plenary Session, 23 January 2025, namely 32, 34, 44, 62, 91, [URL](#); Plenary Session, 2 July 2025, namely 7, 14, 27, 41, 56, [URL](#); Plenary Session, 18 December 2025, namely 11, 17, 47, 70, 95-96, 98, 103, 168, 298, 319, [URL](#). Note that in the context of the aforementioned sessions, concerns are also raised by MPs regarding the manner in which legislative activity is generally conducted, referring *inter alia* to fragmented law-making and to the lack of prior consultation with the stakeholders concerned.

‘Omnibus’ legislation

187. For yet another year, we note that legislative acts often regulate a number of unconnected topics. This view seems to be borne out both by the titles of the laws passed and by the government itself.

188. The titles of 38 of the 47 laws (80.85%) analysed by Vouliwatch contained terms such as “and other provisions”, “other urgent provisions / regulations” etc. Furthermore, even in the laws that did not contain any of these phrases in their title, there is very often a chapter within the text that bears a similar title.²⁸⁷ We stress at this point that:

- ❖ Similar issues are identified at earlier stages of the legislative process, given that a large number of bills bear a corresponding title either upon their submission for public consultation or upon their submission to Parliament.²⁸⁸
- ❖ Hellenic Parliament Scientific Service reports have highlighted the absence of such phrases from the title of the law, despite the fact that the bill contains “other provisions” and would therefore have required a corresponding reference in the title.²⁸⁹

189. There are also cases where the bill is described as “omnibus” (πολυνομοσχέδιο / ερανιστικό νομοσχέδιο) either by the supervising ministry in the context of the public consultation²⁹⁰ or by the majority rapporteur or MPs during the debate in the Parliament

²⁸⁷ This was the case in 6 of the 9 laws that did not contain the above phrases in their title. Notably, in L 5215/2025, L 5223/2025, L 5243/2025, L 5246/2025, L 5253/2025, L 5261/2025 there is a chapter or part bearing a similar title.

²⁸⁸ In particular, 28 bills included the phrases such as “and other provisions” in their title at the time of their submission to Parliament, while 24 bills included the same phrases at the stage of public consultation. Conversely, it was observed that 13 bills contained a chapter bearing a corresponding title, without this being expressly reflected in the title of the bill.

²⁸⁹ Namely, Hellenic Parliament Scientific Service Έκθεση επί του νομοσχεδίου Εκσυγχρονισμός νομικού πλαισίου οργάνωσης και λειτουργίας της «Ελληνικής Ραδιοφωνίας Τηλεόρασης Ανώνυμης Εταιρείας (Ε.Ρ.Τ. Α.Ε.)»..., 19 November 2025, 16, [URL](#); Έκθεση επί του νομοσχεδίου «Ρυθμίσεις για την ενίσχυση της δημόσιας υγείας και την αναβάθμιση των υπηρεσιών υγείας», 27 October 2025, 14, [URL](#); Έκθεση επί του νομοσχεδίου «Ρυθμίσεις για τη δέσμευση, χρήση, μεταφορά και αποθήκευση διοξειδίου του άνθρακα - Ενσωμάτωση της Οδηγίας 2009/31/EK...», 10 December 2025, 18, [URL](#).

²⁹⁰ For instance, (a) the PDF document of the preliminary Regulatory Impact Analysis of the bill put to public consultation carries the mention “omnibus” (ερανιστικό): Ministry of Tourism, Θέσπιση προδιαγραφών ακινήτων βραχυχρόνιας μίσθωσης, περιβαλλοντική κατάταξη καταλυμάτων 5 December 2024, [URL](#); Ministry of Culture, Αναδιοργάνωση του νομικού προσώπου δημοσίου δικαίου με την επωνυμία «Εθνική Πινακοθήκη-Μουσείου Αλεξάνδρου Σούτσου», 17 January 2025, [URL](#). (b) The PDF of the bill put to public consultation carries the mention “omnibus: Ministry of Interior, Ρυθμίσεις για το ανθρώπινο δυναμικό του δημοσίου τομέα, τις Οργανώσεις της Κοινωνίας των Πολιτών..., 24 December 2025, [URL](#). (c) The press release refers to the bill as “omnibus”: Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food, ‘Ανάσα για τους αγρότες οι νέες ρυθμίσεις για τα κόκκινα δάνεια: Τι περιλαμβάνει το ερανιστικό νομοσχέδιο του ΥΠΑΑΤ’, 24 January 2025, [URL](#).

plenary session.²⁹¹ Bills are also referred to as “omnibus” bills in OKE opinions²⁹² and during plenary debates by opposition MPs.²⁹³

190. Finally, in certain cases the provisions which appear to fall under the part of the title described as “and other provisions” ultimately account for a fairly substantial part of the law.²⁹⁴

Recurrent amendment of laws & poor codification

191. As highlighted in our previous submissions,²⁹⁵ legislation in Greece is frequently amended, often within a very short period of time from enactment or prior amendment. Provisions that amend laws enacted even a few months earlier, as well as provisions extending deadlines laid down in previous legislation, were identified in at least 30 of the laws examined in the context of Vouliwatch’s analysis.

192. We highlight the following examples to illustrate the frequent and rapid legislative amendments described above:

- ❖ L 4963/2022 regarding the judicial police was further amended throughout 2025, by Article 63 L 5172/2025, Articles 52-53 L 5197/2025 and Articles 158-159 L 5221/2025.²⁹⁶
- ❖ The Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and special criminal laws were amended once again by a series of laws in the course of the year,

²⁹¹ Among others, New Democracy rapporteurs, MPs and/or Ministers refer to the bills that are introduced for voting as “omnibus” in the plenary sessions of Parliament: 5 February 2025, [URL](#); 18 February 2025, [URL](#); 27 February 2025, [URL](#); 31 July 2025, [URL](#); 29 October 2025, [URL](#).

²⁹² Namely, OKE, *Γνώμη της ΟΚΕ για το σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Υγείας με τίτλο «Ρυθμίσεις για την ενίσχυση της δημόσιας υγείας και την αναβάθμιση των υπηρεσιών υγείας», October 2025, [URL](#); Γνώμη της ΟΚΕ για το σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Παιδείας, Θρησκευμάτων και Αθλητισμού με τίτλο «Σύσταση νομικού προσώπου δημοσίου δικαίου με την επωνυμία...», July 2025, [URL](#).*

²⁹³ Among others, Hellenic Parliament, Plenary Session, 23 January 2025, [URL](#); 23 July 2025, [URL](#); 9 December 2025, [URL](#); 18 December 2025, [URL](#).

²⁹⁴ We note in particular that: (a) L 5256/2025, [URL](#) bears the title “Digital enhancement of road safety and other provisions” and consists of 49 articles. However, only Part A, comprising of 26 articles, regulates matters relating to the digital enhancement of road safety. (b) L 5194/2025, [URL](#) bears the title “Establishment and organisation of a public law legal entity under the name ‘Association of Dietitians-Nutritionists of Greece’ and other provisions” and consists of 54 articles. However, only Part A, comprising of 22 articles, concerns the establishment and organisation of the Association. Part B, comprising of 8 articles, regulates matters relating to dietitians in general, while Parts C and D, comprising of 23 articles in total, bear the titles “other provisions of the Ministry of Health” and “other urgent provisions” respectively.

²⁹⁵ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, paras 172-176; Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2024 Rule of Law Report, January 2024, paras 94-96.

²⁹⁶ Note that provisions relating to matters concerning the judicial police are also found in Article 64 L 5172/2025 (Αμοιβή επιπροπών για τη διενέργεια ψυχομετρικών, αθλητικών και υγειονομικών εξετάσεων του διαγωνισμού για το προσωπικό του αστυνομικού τομέα της Δικαστικής Αστυνομίας) and in Article 51 L 5197/2025 (Παράταση ισχύος του πίνακα επιλαχόντων του διαγωνισμού για την πλήρωση κενών του αστυνομικού τομέα της Δικαστικής Αστυνομίας).

including L 5172/2025, L 5187/2025, L 5221/2025, L 5224/2025, L 5232/2025.²⁹⁷ As before, the continuous amendments of criminal provisions, as well as the content of certain provisions themselves, have been subject to scrutiny.²⁹⁸

- ❖ The Civil Procedure Code was amended by L 5193/2025, L 5221/2025, L 5259/2025 and L 5264/2025.
- ❖ The Administrative Procedure Code (*Κώδικας Διοικητικής Δικονομίας*) and L 702/1977 and L 1406/1983 on administrative justice were amended by L 5172/2025 and L 5197/2025.
- ❖ Strikingly, at least 15 laws enacted in 2025 include provisions amending legislation adopted the same year.²⁹⁹ This includes Codes, even those enacted in 2025, amended within a short period of time, effectively calling into question the purpose and stability of the codification process.³⁰⁰
- ❖ The recurrent extension of statutory deadlines previously set by other laws does not seem to be an isolated phenomenon.³⁰¹ In a considerable number of cases, such extensions are granted without any corresponding amendment to the provisions that originally set the relevant deadlines or defined the temporal scope of application of the respective acts. This approach to law-making renders identification of the rules in force at any given time particularly difficult. We specifically highlight two cases, in which, following successive legislative extensions:

²⁹⁷ L 5172/2025 also amended L 3500/2006 on combating domestic violence); L 5187/2025 also amended L 2168/1993 on weapons.

²⁹⁸ Among others, Hellenic Parliament, 2η Συνεδρίαση Διαρκούς Επιτροπής Δημόσιας Διοικησης, Δημόσιας Τάξης και Δικαιοσύνης, 20 January 2025, [URL](#); ENDE, Παρατηρήσεις της Ένωσης Δικαστών και Εισαγγελέων στο σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Δικαιοσύνης «Αντιμετώπιση νέων μορφών βίας κατά γυναικών, κ.λ.π», 20 January 2025, [URL](#); Network for Children's Rights, Τοποθέτηση του Δικτύου στην δημόσια διαβούλευση του Υπουργείου Δικαιοσύνης, 7 January 2025, [URL](#); Plenary of Greek Bar Associations, 'Η Ολομέλεια είναι κατηγορηματικά αντίθετη στην περιστολή του δικαιώματος πλήρους πρόσβασης του κατηγορουμένου στη δικογραφία', 13 September 2025, [URL](#); Hellenic Parliament, Plenary Session, 18 September 2025, [URL](#).

²⁹⁹ L 5264/2025, L 5263/2025, L 5261/2025, L 5259/2025, L 5256/2025, L 5246/2025, L 5243/2025, L 5239/2025, L 5237/2025, L 5232/2025, L 5229/2025, L 5224/2025, L 5215/2025, L 5193/2025,

³⁰⁰ For example, (a) the Labour Law Code, PD 62/2025 was amended by L 5239/2025; the Indirect Taxes Code, L 5177/2025 was amended by L 5193/2025, L 5246/2025 and L 5259/2025; (c) the National Customs Code, L 5222/2025 was amended by L 5259/2025; (d) the Property Tax Code, L 5219/2025 was amended by L 5222/2025, L 5224/2025, L 5246/2025 and L 5264/2025; (e) the VAT Code, L 5144/2024 was amended by L 5193/2025, L 5222/2025, L 5246/2025 and L 5259/2025.

³⁰¹ Note *inter alia* the extensions provided for in: Articles 26 and 44 L 5184/2025; Article 207 L 5187/2025; Articles 27, 30, 32, 33 L 5188/2025; Articles 211, 226, 240 L 5193/2025; Articles 42, 51 L 5194/2025; Articles 124, 125, 127, L 5209/2025; Articles 56, 60 L 5215/2025; Articles 42, 44, 58 L 5216/2025; Articles 148, 167 L 5221/2025; Articles 255, 264 L 5222/2025; Articles 88, 115, 120, 128, 168, 172, 174 L 5224/2025; Articles 100, 109, 112, 113, 114, 119 L 5225/2025; Articles 16, 37, 43 L 5233/2025; Articles 68, 95, 102 L 5239/2025; Articles 34, 38 L 5240/2025; Articles 98, 111, 116 L 5243/2025; Articles 48, 53, 59 L 5255/2025; Articles 28, 40, 43, 46, L 5256/2025; Articles 174, 176, 247, 250, 254, 255, L 5259/2025; Articles 55, 59, 63, 64, 71, 75, L 5261/2025; Articles 79, 83, 87, 88, 101, 103, 107, 108, 118, 119, 121, 122, 123, 129 L 5264/2025

- (a) The deadline for the licensing procedure for television content providers has been extended from 31 December 2022 to 30 June 2023, to 31 December 2023, to 31 December 2024, to 31 December 2025 and is currently set for 31 December 2026.³⁰²
- (b) The deadline for completion of the liquidation of the Mutual Assistance Fund of Employees of the Ministry of Culture and Sports (*Ταμείο Αλληλοβοήθειας Υπαλλήλων Υπουργείου Πολιτισμού και Αθλητισμού*) is currently set for 31 July 2026.³⁰³

193. These issues and the broader trend of frequent or short-term amendments to legislative provisions corroborate our longstanding concerns about a hasty, haphazard approach to preparing and enacting laws or an inability to implement newly adopted provisions and a corresponding need to change them. The repercussions of the flaws of the legislative process on legal certainty, predictability and fair warning are all the more critical given that consolidated versions of Greek legislation are still not accessible to the public. This includes essential texts such as the Criminal Code, Civil Code or rules of court procedures. Still in 2026, the National Codification Portal is not operational and not publicly accessible,³⁰⁴ contrary to government assurances towards launch by October 2023 in previous Rule of Law Reports.³⁰⁵ We stress that an adequate Codification Portal should include references to secondary legislation and to case law on the interpretation of the different legislative provisions (see **Justice: Quality: Digitalisation & Accessibility**).

194. In addition, the persisting absence of codification and recurrent amendment of laws have particularly serious implications on the judiciary and the **Justice: Efficiency of Justice**, given the constant and haphazard amendments brought about *inter alia* to rules of procedure.

Other issues in the legislative process

195. The 2020 Regulatory Impact Analysis Manual of the Secretariat-General for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs is presented as a key component of the legislative drafting process in accordance with the principles of good law-making. As stated in its preface, the Manual provides instructions and guidance for completing regulatory impact analyses to the parties involved in the legislative drafting process, who are in turn required to follow them.³⁰⁶ However, we have serious reservations regarding the proper implementation of these guidelines in practice. We observed, for example, that the specific objectives by legislative area (Field 9) are frequently left blank or not even

³⁰² Article 2(4) L 4339/2015, as amended by Article 41 L 4779/2021; Article 31 L 5005/2022; Article 86 L 5043/2023; Article 96 L 5079/2023; Article 35 L 5167/2024; Article 42 L 5263/2025.

³⁰³ The Mutual Assistance Fund was placed under liquidation by Article 19 L 4639/2019 within a deadline of one year. Since then, a number of legislative extensions were granted, including by Article 78(2) L 5219/2024, Article 174 L 5224/2025 and Article 101 L 5264/2025.

³⁰⁴ Secretariat-General for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, *Εθνική Πύλη Κωδικοποίησης*, [URL](#): "The National Codification Portal is in the final stage of implementation" (last accessed 23 January 2026).

³⁰⁵ European Commission, 2022 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Greece, SWD(2022) 508, 13 July 2022, 20, fn. 173.

³⁰⁶ Secretariat-General for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, *Εγχειρίδιο ανάλυσης συνεπειών ρύθμισης*, 2020, [URL](#).

incorporated into the regulatory impact analysis. Commentary in the general impact report (Fields 18–20) is in most cases either overly general or incomplete, and in some cases the accompanying tables are entirely left blank. The estimated timeline for issuing regulatory acts and circulars (Field 32) is almost never provided, while the legality report (Fields 24 et seq.) is often completed in a general or rudimentary manner e.g. without referencing relevant decisions or legislation cited elsewhere in the analysis. More broadly, there seems to be a recurring pattern of not clearly presenting the rationale for adopting a provision or amending existing legislation. Instead, the regulatory impact analysis often simply states what is being enacted or changed. In most instances, we were unable to identify specific data within the regulatory impact analysis to substantiate the proposed measures.

196. Whereas the Standing Orders of the Hellenic Parliament require a specific time interval between the conclusion of the sessions of the competent committees and the start of the plenary discussion,³⁰⁷ it was observed that in the majority of cases (37 out of 47) the drafting of the committee report – which *a fortiori* must precede its submission or distribution to MPs – bears the date of just one day before the start of the discussion of the bill in Plenary.
197. Six years since the introduction of the citizens' legislative initiative into the Constitution,³⁰⁸ the law defining the terms and conditions for the implementation of this provision is yet to be adopted.

Independent authorities

198. In early January 2026, the President of the Parliament publicly expressed support for amending constitutional provisions so as to allow appointment of members of independent authorities by simple majority vote where a $3/5$ majority cannot be secured. Opposition parties expressed severe concerns at those statements.³⁰⁹

Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy (ADAE)

199. Yet again in 2025, the former President of the Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy (Αρχή Διασφάλισης του Απορρήτου των Επικοινωνιών, ADAE), Christos Rammos, cited attacks and obstacles he faced while exercising his lawful powers as head of the independent authority in the course of investigation of the “Greek Watergate” Surveillance Scandal.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ Article 91(7) of the Standing Orders states: “The report of the standing committee is distributed to MPs at least two days before the first sitting which has been designated for the discussion of the bill or law proposal.” Article 93(2) states: “Bills and law proposals enter the order of the day at an appropriate time, in order for the commencement of the debate in principle to be at least three days away from the day of the submission of the report or from the expiration of the deadline for the submission of the report of the competent committee.”

³⁰⁸ Article 73(6) Constitution.

³⁰⁹ Kathimerini, ‘ΠΑΣΟΚ και ΣΥΡΙΖΑ κατά Ν.Δ. για τις Ανεξάρτητες Αρχές’, 2 January 2026, [URL](#).
³¹⁰ European Commission, 2022 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Greece, SWD(2022) 508, 13 July 2022, 20, fn. 173.

200. During his examination as a witness in the Predatorgate trial on 9 December 2025, Mr Rammos spoke of a character assassination against him and of obstruction of ADAE's investigation.³¹¹ "They called me a 'Syriza delivery boy' and a 'traitor.' The authorities were annoyed by our revelations, by our investigations, by what I said to the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee," Mr Rammos testified in court.³¹² He also spoke of attacks and a campaign of character assassination against him in July 2025, when he stepped down from his position of President of ADAE.³¹³

Hellenic Data Protection Authority (DPA)

201. The DPA emphasises again in its latest annual report that it still operates under conditions of chronic understaffing, limited institutional independence, financial constraints, and an immediate risk related to its accommodation.³¹⁴ These structural deficiencies have serious repercussions for the effective protection of personal data and for Greece's compliance with European law.

202. First, the DPA is affected by a particularly severe shortage of staff. Its staffing levels have never been aligned with the extensive range of responsibilities arising from European and national legislation, nor with the workload these responsibilities entail. The Authority's Secretariat currently comprises of approximately 50 active staff members out of the 91 established posts provided for in its new Organisational Statute (PD 30/2024).³¹⁵ These posts are distributed among specialised scientific personnel with legal, IT, and communication expertise, as well as permanent administrative and financial staff. The Authority's staffing levels are significantly lower than those of corresponding supervisory authorities in other Member States. By way of comparison, the respective authority in Hungary employs 128 staff members, while in the Netherlands the number exceeds 270. Moreover, according to a study conducted by the DPA, the performance of its tasks requires a minimum total of 135 established posts in order to meet its core obligations.³¹⁶

203. In addition, the Authority's operational funding is insufficient to adequately support infrastructure, accommodation, staff mobility, training, and effective participation in EU-level cooperation mechanisms. Concerns regarding the DPA's budgetary independence have been formally raised at EU level, accompanied by recommendations calling for greater transparency and enhanced parliamentary oversight. At the same time, comparatively low salary levels hinder the Authority's ability to attract and retain highly qualified personnel, underscoring the need for a dedicated remuneration framework or targeted financial incentives.³¹⁷

³¹¹ Business Daily, 'Κατάθεση Ράμμου για Predator: Παρεμπόδιση ελέγχων και προδήλως παράνομη δράση', 9 December 2025, [URL](#).

³¹² Reporters United, 'Μπάτε σκύλοι, υποκλέψτε!', Instagram post, 9 December 2025, [URL](#).

³¹³ Pod, 'Ο Χρήστος Ράμμος για το σκάνδαλο των υποκλοπών και τις περιπέτειες της ΑΔΑΕ', [URL](#); The TOC, 'Ράμμος: «Υπήρξε δολοφονία χαρακτήρα - Οι ανεξάρτητες αρχές είναι αποδεκτές όσο δεν ενοχλούν»', 18 July 2025, [URL](#); Dnews, 'Χρήστος Ράμμος: «Δέχθηκα δολοφονία χαρακτήρα»', 17 July 2025, [URL](#); 'Καταπέλτης ο Χρήστος Ράμμος για την κυβέρνηση - Τι αποκάλυψε για τις υποκλοπές', 18 July 2025, [URL](#).

³¹⁴ DPA, *Annual Report 2024*, June 2025, 26, [URL](#).

³¹⁵ PD 30/2024, Gov. Gazette A' 89/13.06.2024.

³¹⁶ DPA, *Annual Report 2024*, June 2025, 26-27.

³¹⁷ *Ibid*, 27-29.

204. Closely linked to the above, the requirement that the Authority recruit staff exclusively through another independent body, namely ASEP, prevents it from responding in a timely and effective manner to its staffing needs, due to the rigidity and duration of the relevant procedures. This lack of flexibility undermines both the Authority's operational independence and its effectiveness. The issue was formally raised at EU level during the 2021 Schengen evaluation and resulted in binding Council Recommendations requiring Greece to ensure that the Authority selects its own staff and that recruitment procedures are accelerated in line with the GDPR. The necessary legislative reform of the recruitment framework has not taken place.³¹⁸

205. Finally, the DPA has been facing a prolonged and unresolved accommodation crisis since 2019. Repeated tender procedures and direct lease negotiations have failed, largely due to restrictive public-sector rent ceilings that do not reflect prevailing market conditions. Legal uncertainty regarding the location of the Authority's seat has further complicated the process. As a result, the Authority faces a serious and immediate risk of being left without suitable office premises, highlighting the urgent need for legislative intervention and more flexible housing arrangements.³¹⁹

National Transparency Authority (NTA)

206. **Management:** As stated in our previous contribution, Article 53 L 5143/2024 amended Article 90(3) L 4622/2019, partially modifying the qualifications required of candidates for the position of Governor of the National Transparency Authority.³²⁰ One of the amendments concerned the removal of the requirement that candidates hold a degree in specific fields (law, economics, business administration, natural sciences, public administration, or international studies) while another concerned the addition of a second sentence to point (c) of Article 3, pursuant to which experience in positions of responsibility is assessed as an additional qualification. As we already noted last year,³²¹ the impact assessment accompanying the bill made no reference to the reasons for which this amendment was deemed necessary, while both the timing and the nature of the amendment raised serious concerns as to the objectives it sought to serve.

207. We recall at this point that the position of Governor of the Authority had been vacant following the resignation of Angelos Binis in July 2022 and that a question submitted by Vouliwatch in 2023 regarding the reasons for the delay in launching the selection procedure was never answered.³²² We also note that a January 2025 parliamentary question from six independent Members of Parliament to the Minister of Interior regarding the appointment of the Governor of the NTA appears from the website of the Hellenic Parliament to remain unanswered to date.³²³

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 29-31.

³²⁰ Hellenic Parliament, *Ρυθμίσεις για τους χερσαίους συνοριακούς σταθμούς, την ενίσχυση των Οργανισμών Τοπικής Αυτοδιοίκησης και λοιπές διατάξεις*, [URL](#).

³²¹ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, para 186.

³²² Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2024 Rule of Law Report, January 2024, para 98, fn. 185.

³²³ Hellenic Parliament, *Κοινοβουλευτικός Έλεγχος – Ερώτηση: Διορισμός του διοικητή της Εθνικής Αρχής Διαφάνειας*, 29 January 2025, [URL](#).

208. In March 2025, almost three years after the post became vacant, a call for expression of interest was issued for the selection of the position of Governor of the NTA.³²⁴ In May 2025, the final list of proposed candidates was published, with the candidate who had obtained the highest score being the one who had served as Interim Governor from 2022 until then.³²⁵ The only difference in the scores obtained by the first and second candidates concerned the category of “administrative and operational experience in positions of responsibility.”

209. In the summer of 2025, the appointment of Alexandra Rogkakou as Governor of the NTA was approved by the competent parliamentary committee. According to press reports, the proposal for her appointment was supported exclusively by the New Democracy party.³²⁶ It is worth noting that, once again, comments were made by opposition parties regarding the delay in launching the call for the position and the “tailor-made amendment of the law” concerning the qualifications required of the Governor.³²⁷

210. **Lack of effectiveness and transparency of NTA investigations:** In September 2025, the European Commission stated: “The National Transparency Authority is one of the independent authorities comprising the monitoring mechanism. The Commission will continue focusing its attention on ensuring that it has the appropriate means to perform efficient and effective investigations.”³²⁸

211. There is still no available information on the methodology by which the NTA investigates incidents of **Enforced Disappearance of People Seeking Asylum**, since its “Management – Assessment Procedure for Push Back Complaints” (Διαδικασία Διαχείρισης – Αξιολόγησης Καταγγελιών Επαναπροωθήσεων) manual has been neither published nor disclosed in related requests for access to documents. The Authority has still not released a single inspection report on push back allegations since the one it published in May 2022, nor has it provided any other information on its handling of such complaints, despite Commission recommendations to do so.³²⁹ Its latest annual report refers to “2 systemic audits on push backs” without further context or information.³³⁰

212. The only such information obtained to date has been retrieved through a request to the European Commission for public access to documents and an ensuing complaint

³²⁴ NTA, ‘Πρόσκληση εκδήλωσης ενδιαφέροντος Για την πλήρωση της θέσης του Διοικητή της Εθνικής Αρχής Διαφάνειας’, 7 March 2025, [URL](#).

³²⁵ NTA, ‘Οριστικοί πίνακες υποψηφίων για την πλήρωση της θέσης του Διοικητή της Εθνικής Αρχής Διαφάνειας’, 15 May 2025, [URL](#).

³²⁶ ERT News, ‘Βουλή: Εγκρίθηκε ο διορισμός της Αλεξάνδρας Ρογκάκου ως επικεφαλής της Εθνικής Αρχής Διαφάνειας’, 1 August 2025, [URL](#).

³²⁷ PASOK, ‘Χώρις διαφάνεια ο διορισμός της Διοικήτριας της Εθνικής Αρχής Διαφάνειας’, 1 August 2025, [URL](#); Hellenic Parliament, Ακρόαση, από τα Μέλη της Επιτροπής, σύμφωνα με την υποπερ. II) της περ. α) της παρ. 2 και την παρ. 3 του άρθρου 43Α του Κανονισμού της Βουλής και με το άρθρο 90 του ν. 4622/2019 (Α' 133), όπως ισχύουν, της προτεινόμενης από το Υπουργικό Συμβούλιο, κυρίας Αλεξάνδρας Ρογκάκου, για διορισμό ως Διοικήτριας της Εθνικής Αρχής Διαφάνειας (Ε.Α.Δ.) και έγκριση της σχετικής πρότασης, 31 July 2025, [URL](#).

³²⁸ European Commission, Reply to written question E-2785/2025, 26 September 2025.

³²⁹ Notably, European Commission, Meeting with National Transparency Authority 22/04/2024, Ares(2024)5611616, 23 April 2024.

³³⁰ NTA, Annual Report 2024, August 2025, 33.

to the European Ombudsman.³³¹ According to a September 2024 note submitted by the NTA to DG HOME and disclosed by the European Commission upon request for public access to documents,³³² the state of play and outcome of push back investigations conducted by the NTA until that time was as follows:

State of play of NTA investigations into push back incidents: 12 September 2024			
Subject matter of investigation	Days	Conclusion	Outcome
Systemic investigation into management of migration flows ³³³	134	29 Mar 2022	No violation.
Evros incident of Frontex interpreter ³³⁴	375	12 Dec 2022	No violation. Disclosure to government and to the Public Prosecutor of Xanthi
194 incidents in 2020-2021 in Evros and the Aegean Sea	498	19 Jul 2023	184 archived, 4 previously investigated, 6 incorporated in audit activities.
Samos incident reported on 17 Feb 2022 by The Guardian ³³⁵	504	25 Jul 2023	No violation.
13 push incidents in 2021-2022 in Evros and the Aegean Sea	720	29 Apr 2024	1 closed with no violation, 12 pending.
Lesvos incident reported on 19 May 2023 by the New York Times ³³⁶	326	19 Apr 2024	Submission to the Naval Court Prosecutor.

213. The above information indicates that NTA inspections into push back incidents overwhelmingly result in closure of cases, in sharp contrast to consistent available evidence (see [Enforced Disappearance of People Seeking Asylum](#)). It also shows that most NTA inspections have exceeded one year and at least one has been pending for at least two years, without known follow up. This raises concerns as regards both the adequacy and the promptness of investigations conducted by the Authority, as repeatedly conveyed by civil society organisations to the Commission.³³⁷

214. Serious concerns as to the effectiveness of NTA investigations have arisen again in the context of the [“Greek Watergate” Surveillance Scandal](#). In her testimony before the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Athens, the NTA Governor explained that the Authority's inspection into potential provision of the Predator spyware consisted in verifying the subject matter of contracts entered into by the authorities for potential confirmation of purchase of the Predator spyware, despite acknowledging that purchase of the spyware could not have been a lawful subject matter of public

³³¹ European Ombudsman, 'How the European Commission dealt with a request for public access to documents concerning investigations into violations of fundamental rights of third country nationals in Greece', Case 3851/2025/PVV, 9 January 2026, [URL](#).

³³² NTA, *Ενημερωτικό Σημείωμα*, Ares(2025)9266319, 12 September 2024.

³³³ NTA, 'Έκθεση Έρευνας ΟΜ3/4_2022', 10 May 2022, [URL](#).

³³⁴ New York Times, 'E.U. Interpreter Says Greece Expelled Him to Turkey in Migrant Roundup', 1 December 2021, [URL](#).

³³⁵ The Guardian, ‘“It’s an atrocity against humankind”: Greek pushback blamed for double drowning’, 17 February 2022, [URL](#).

³³⁶ New York Times, 'Video Shows Greece Abandoning Migrants at Sea', 19 May 2023, [URL](#).

³³⁷ Meeting minutes of the Legal Aid Working Group CEAS Sub-Working Group, 21 January 2026, Item 1.

procurement. The NTA Governor also explained that the Authority's audit of EYP relied on the replies it received by the EYP Appeals Prosecutor.³³⁸

Independent Authority for Market Supervision & Consumer Protection

215. L 5255/2025 established an independent authority under the name "Independent Authority for Market Supervision and Consumer Protection" (Ανεξάρτητη Αρχή Ελέγχου της Αγοράς και Προστασίας του Καταναλωτή).³³⁹ Pursuant to Article 3(4) L 5255/2025, upon the commencement of the Authority's operation, all powers and competences of certain bodies are abolished and transferred thereto, including those of the independent authority Consumer's Ombudsman (Συνήγορος του Καταναλωτή).

216. OKE has expressed serious concerns regarding the abolition of the Consumer's Ombudsman, noting *inter alia* that: the merger of the Ombudsman with other state authorities that fall within the administrative hierarchy of the public administration (i.e. do not operate independently) lacks any evident purpose or necessity; that the loss of the Ombudsman's institutionally guaranteed independence constitutes a regression in terms of institutional safeguards for citizens; and that the merger of services generally appears to serve political objectives rather than a regulatory intervention aimed at substantive improvement of the existing framework.³⁴⁰ Moreover, the Hellenic Parliament Scientific Service pointed out that the administrative and operational coexistence, within the same Authority, of the competence for the amicable settlement of consumer disputes with supervisory and sanctioning powers, as well as with the exercise of representative actions, does not appear to be fully aligned with the spirit and purpose of relevant EU standards.³⁴¹

Obfuscated Migration Ministry mechanisms

217. We reiterate that the mechanisms set up within the Ministry of Migration and Asylum for the purpose of ensuring compliance with fundamental rights and with the Charter of Fundamental Rights horizontal enabling conditions are neither independent from government nor effective in performing prompt and thorough assessment of potential human rights breaches. Our concerns are corroborated by the practice adopted by the bodies in question so far.

218. **Special Committee for Fundamental Rights Compliance:** Minutes of meetings of the Special Committee for Fundamental Rights Compliance (Ειδική Επιτροπή Συμμόρφωσης με τα Θεμελιώδη Δικαιώματα) held under the Ministry of Migration and Asylum have only been disclosed to the Home Affairs Monitoring Committee established under Article 38 of the Common Provisions Regulation in 2025 following

³³⁸ in.gr, 'Δίκη για υποκλοπές: Έψαχναν μέσω παραστατικών και τεχνικών προδιαγραφών για να... βρουν το παράνομο Predator', 19 December 2025, [URL](#). For analysis, Inside Story, 'Υποκλοπές: Ένας δικαστής κάνει όσα δεν έκανε ο Άρειος Πάγος', 22 December 2025.

³³⁹ L 5255/2025, Gov. Gazette A' 219/28.11.2025.

³⁴⁰ OKE, Γνώμη της Ο.Κ.Ε. επί του σχ/ν «Σύσταση και λειτουργία Ανεξάρτητης Αρχής Εποπτείας της Αγοράς και Προστασίας του Καταναλωτή, ρυθμίσεις για την Επιτροπή Ανταγωνισμού και λοιπές διατάξεις», 18 November 2025, 11-12, [URL](#).

³⁴¹ Hellenic Parliament Scientific Service, 'Έκθεση επί του νομοσχεδίου «Σύσταση και λειτουργία Ανεξάρτητης Αρχής Ελέγχου της Αγοράς και Προστασίας του Καταναλωτή, ρυθμίσεις για την Επιτροπή Ανταγωνισμού και λοιπές διατάξεις», 26 November 2025, 10, [URL](#).

express requests by civil society members of said Monitoring Committee.³⁴² The meetings appear to be limited to discussions of fundamental rights issues stemming from a variety of sources e.g. Frontex FRO complaints, media or NGO reports. However, meeting minutes reveal that the Committee stops short of performing a thorough assessment of issues and of ensuring any follow up thereto. For instance, the Frontex FRO complaint and New York Times report on push backs discussed under **Enforced Disappearance of People Seeking Asylum** were only mentioned in one meeting in 2023, without further follow up. In addition, there are no clear indications or the criteria used for consulting the specific public sources for the purposes of such discussions.³⁴³

219. For example, at its August 2025 meeting, the Special Committee for Fundamental Rights Compliance held a discussion on the three-month ban on access to asylum introduced by Article 79 L 5218/2025.³⁴⁴ The discussion was limited to a presentation of the ban by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, without further comments or concerns.³⁴⁵

220. **Fundamental Rights Officer:** The FRO is required to transmit admissible complaints of fundamental rights breaches in reception and asylum procedures to the NTA or to "the responsible bodies".³⁴⁶ Quarterly reports submitted by the FRO to the Home Affairs Funds Monitoring Committee demonstrate, however, that the overwhelming majority (nearly 90%) of complaints deemed admissible by the FRO have been transmitted to services *within* the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. These services correspond to the alleged actors responsible for fundamental rights breaches or to their hierarchy.³⁴⁷

221. The FRO has no set criteria or guidelines for the purpose of deciding which authority is competent for deciding on a complaint. This seems to be decided directly by the FRO on a case-by-case basis in a manner that exceeds the competences granted to the Office by domestic law.³⁴⁸

222. More importantly, the transmission of admissible complaints to Ministry of Migration and Asylum services and communication of their reply appears to mark the closure of the case without a finding on the existence or not of a fundamental rights violation and

³⁴² Despite a legal obligation on the Special Committee for Fundamental Rights Compliance to submit annual reports to the Monitoring Committee: Article 3(3) MD 102496/2025, Gov. Gazette B' 3183/24.06.2025.

³⁴³ European Commission, Letter to five civil society organisations, Ares(2024)9031451, 17 December 2024; Meeting minutes of the Legal Aid Working Group CEAS Sub-Working Group, 22 September 2025, Item 2.5.

³⁴⁴ L 5218/2025, Gov. Gazette A' 125/14.07.2025.

³⁴⁵ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Συμπληρωματική Αναλυτική Αναφορά Πεπραγμένων της Ειδικής Επιτροπής για τη Συμμόρφωση με τα Θεμελιώδη Δικαιώματα [Ιανουάριος – Ιούνιος 2025], 193852/2025, 13 October 2025.

³⁴⁶ Article 49(1) L 4960/2022.

³⁴⁷ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Ενημερωτικό Σημείωμα Υπεύθυνου Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων προς την Ειδική Επιτροπή για τη Συμμόρφωση με τα Θεμελιώδη Δικαιώματα, 26 August 2025: From launch to 31 July 2025, the FRO has deemed 19 complaints admissible. Of those, 12 were transmitted to the Secretary-General for Reception, 1 to the Secretary-General for Migration Policy, 2 to both Secretaries-General, 2 to the Director of the Asylum Service, and only 2 to the NTA.

³⁴⁸ Meeting minutes of the Legal Aid Working Group CEAS Sub-Working Group, 22 September 2025, Item 2.5.

without recommendations from the FRO to the authorities.³⁴⁹ These concerns have already been raised in the context of the Monitoring Committee of Home Affairs Funds,³⁵⁰ and dispel the Greek government's view that Greece is "the only [Member State] with a 'whistle blower' mechanism in the person of the [FRO]...".³⁵¹

Implementation of judgments

European Court of Human Rights

223. Judgments of the Strasbourg Court pending execution raise issues directly pertaining to rule of law safeguards monitored by the Rule of Law Report such as the independence and effectiveness of the Greek justice system, the accessibility of courts or the treatment of associations.

- ❖ **Effectiveness of investigations into unlawful conduct by law enforcement:** The A.R.E. v. Greece case has been classified under enhanced supervision in the Committee of Ministers on account of the "seriousness of the issue highlighted by the European Court of Human Rights".³⁵² The Greek government has conceded that the judgment "raises a multitude of issues".³⁵³ Yet, its January 2026 Action Plan appears to be largely limited to references to trainings attended by police officers and judges.³⁵⁴ No reference is made to measures aimed at addressing the practice of **Enforced Disappearance of People Seeking Asylum** and the flaws of criminal investigations thereon. As for the Sidiropoulos & Papakostas v. Greece group of cases, also under enhanced supervision at the Committee of Ministers, the Greek government reiterated in December 2025 its request for closure of supervision of the group with the exception of the Alkhatib v. Greece case.³⁵⁵
- ❖ **Prison conditions:** Nearly 15 years after the *Nisiotis v. Greece* judgment,³⁵⁶ Greece has failed to implement necessary reforms to address systemic failures in preventing prison overcrowding and ensuring conditions compatible with Article 3 ECHR. The Greek government has been called to effectively implement a Strategic Plan for Prisons.³⁵⁷ Instead of such a plan, a 21-page

³⁴⁹ Note, for instance, reporting in Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Συμπληρωματική Αναλυτική Αναφορά Πεπραγμένων της Ειδικής Επιτροπής για τη Συμμόρφωση με τα Θεμελιώδη Δικαιώματα [Ιανουάριος – Ιούνιος 2025], 193852/2025, 13 October 2025.

³⁵⁰ Monitoring Committee for Home Affairs Funds, 4th Meeting, 26 June 2025, [URL](#).

³⁵¹ European Commission, *Mission Report: Visit of... to Greece / 17 – 19 March 2025*, Ares(2025)9329218, 21 March 2025, 2.

³⁵² State Legal Counsel, Reply to parliamentary question, 103-3852/A2588.1, 26 August 2025, para 15, [URL](#).

³⁵³ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Reply to parliamentary question, 144891/2025, 5 August 2025, [URL](#).

³⁵⁴ Greek government, *Action Plan A.R.E. v. Greece*, DH-DD(2026)37, 5 January 2026, paras 8, 10, 13.

³⁵⁵ Greek Government, *Action Report in the Sidiropoulos & Papakostas v. Greece group of cases*, DH-DD(2025)1506, 17 December 2025, 35.

³⁵⁶ ECtHR, *Nisiotis v. Greece*, App No 34704/08, 20 June 2011.

³⁵⁷ Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, CM/Del/Dec(2022)1428/H46-13, 9 March 2022, para 4.

Action Plan 2025-2030 was presented in June 2025 by the Secretariat-General for Anti-Crime Policy.³⁵⁸ As the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) indicated,³⁵⁹ the Action Plan provides for maintenance of existing prisons and promotion and use of alternatives to imprisonment, as well as a 268m € programme for the construction of eight new prisons. This will increase the overall capacity of the prison estate by almost 4,000 places by 2030. These developments clearly show prioritisation of prison expansionism,³⁶⁰ contrary to repeated Council of Europe recommendations to use prisons as a last resort and to expand the use of alternatives and the suspension of sentences.³⁶¹ In July 2025, the prison population surged by 20.8% within two years as a result of penal austerity and restriction of releases and alternatives to imprisonments. The Ombudsman, in its capacity as National Preventive Mechanism against Torture, confirmed overcrowding with poor infrastructure, hygienic conditions and medical and psychiatric treatment. Furthermore, the actual total capacity of Greek penitentiary facilities is lower than the 10,763-figure reported by the Ministry of Citizen Protection and should be redefined in line with CPT observations.³⁶² Accordingly, Article 3 ECHR breaches continue to occur on account of overcrowding in facilities such as Korydallos and Diavata. Domestic remedies³⁶³ introduced to that effect are far from effectively implemented, while the use of alternatives remains minimal.³⁶⁴

❖ **Registration of associations:** The *Bekir Ousta v. Greece* group remains under supervision 17 years after the ECtHR delivered its ruling.³⁶⁵ The Committee of Ministers employed strong language in its June 2025 decision and urged the Greek government to “rapidly adopt the necessary measures within a clear and established timeframe” following a report from a Committee of Experts established to that effect.³⁶⁶ The Greek government indicated in October 2025 its intention to pursue further legislative reform to align practice with the ruling, without yet committing to a specific timeline.³⁶⁷ The December 2025 decision of the Committee of Ministers strongly encouraged rapid adoption of promised amendments to the Civil Code aimed at clarifying that grounds for registration of associations must be interpreted in line with human rights

³⁵⁸ Kathimerini, 'Ο χάρτης των νέων φυλακών της χώρας – Η «Κ» παρουσιάζει το σχέδιο', 20 June 2025, [URL](#).

³⁵⁹ CPT, 'The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), led by its president, Alan Mitchell, held talks with senior government ministers in Athens on 19 June 2025', 21 June 2025, [URL](#).

³⁶⁰ HLHR, *Communication concerning Nisiotis group of cases*, 11 July 2025, para 3, [URL](#).

³⁶¹ Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, CM/Del/Dec(2025)1537/H46-14, 17 September 2025, paras 4 and 7.

³⁶² HLHR, *Communication concerning Nisiotis group of cases*, 11 July 2025, para 7.

³⁶³ Article 6a Penitentiary Code, L 2776/1999, Gov. Gazette A' 249/24.12.1999, inserted by Article 8 L 4985/2022.

³⁶⁴ HLHR, *Communication concerning Nisiotis group of cases*, 11 July 2025, 11 July 2025, para 6.

³⁶⁵ ECtHR, *Bekir Ousta v. Greece*, App No 35151/05, 11 October 2007.

³⁶⁶ Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, CM/Del/Dec(2025)1531/H46-19, 12 June 2025, para 5.

³⁶⁷ Greek Government, *Communication on the Bekir Ousta v. Greece group*, DH-DD(2025)1148, 2 October 2025, [URL](#).

standards.³⁶⁸ The structural deficiencies relating to freedom of association in Greece should be read in light of persisting concerns on **Registration Requirements** for civil society.

- ❖ **Excessive formalism of supreme courts:** The Plenary of the Council of State held a fresh hearing on 10 October 2025 on the domestic case leading to the *Zouboulidis v. Greece* (No. 3) judgment of the ECtHR.³⁶⁹ As regards general measures to ensure implementation of the judgment, the Greek government reported in May 2025 that the expert group established for the purpose of developing legislation on the liability of the state for actions or omissions of the judiciary has delivered its proposal and that legislative reform would follow.³⁷⁰ At the time of writing, no such bill has been tabled.
- ❖ **Absence of remedies against non-execution of domestic judgments:** The ineffectiveness of the measures set up by L 3068/2002 to address non-execution of domestic court rulings by the executive remains an open component of the *Kanellopoulos v. Greece* group under standard supervision at the Committee of Ministers,³⁷¹ under well-established Strasbourg case law. The ECtHR has recently reaffirmed in several October 2025 rulings that the administration continues not to comply with its duty to implement domestic judgments and that no remedies are available against such refusal, contrary to the rights to a fair trial and to an effective remedy.³⁷²
- ❖ **Accessibility and effectiveness of judicial review of detention orders:** Standard supervision of the *M.D. v. Greece* group³⁷³ remains open, despite prior requests on the part of the Greek government for closure of the cases. The government has incorrectly submitted to the Committee of Ministers that persons deprived of their liberty currently have access to legal aid.³⁷⁴ This view contradicts the government's own submissions to the same Committee in the context of supervision of a different group of cases.³⁷⁵

224. Greece remains the second Council of Europe Member State with the highest number of Rule 39 interim measures orders in 2025. Most interim measures indicated by the ECtHR to Greece still concern protection from imminent risk of *refoulement*.³⁷⁶

³⁶⁸ Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, CM/Del/Dec(2025)1545/H46-18, 4 December 2025, para 7.

³⁶⁹ ECtHR, *Zouboulidis v. Greece* (No. 3), App No 57246/21, 4 June 2024.

³⁷⁰ Ministry of Justice, Reply to parliamentary question, 135/2025, 23 May 2025, [URL](#).

³⁷¹ ECtHR, *Kanellopoulos v. Greece*, App No 11325/06, 21 February 2008.

³⁷² ECtHR, *Enosi Plioktiton Epaggelmaton Alieon I Mesogios & Fatouros v. Greece*, para 12; *Dervisis v. Greece*, App No 55398/20, 23 October 2025, para 12; *Sakellaris v. Greece*, App No 43594/16, 23 October 2025, para 11; *Megagiannis v. Greece*, App No 1868/18, 23 October 2025, para 11.

³⁷³ ECtHR, *M.D. v. Greece*, App No 60622/11, 13 November 2014.

³⁷⁴ Greek Government, *Action report on the M.D. v. Greece group*, DH-DD(2024)1070, 20 September 2024, para 22, [URL](#).

³⁷⁵ Greek Government, *Action plan in the M.S.S. v. Greece group*, DH-DD(2025)440, 9 April 2025, para 32, [URL](#).

³⁷⁶ ECtHR, *Interim measures accepted – By respondent State and key theme – January-June 2025*, [URL](#).

225. Greece has continued to demonstrate unacceptable contempt for the Rule 39 process and has proceeded to unlawfully removing refugees from its territory in direct breach of Court orders (see **Cross-Cutting Issues: Enforced Disappearance of People Seeking Asylum**). This has happened in approximately 20 cases of interim measures obtained by GCR from the ECtHR throughout 2025 and includes instances of chain refoulement to the country of origin.³⁷⁷ We have repeatedly highlighted instances of such contempt over the past three years.

226. We therefore reiterate our plea to the Commission to make recommendations to Greece to comply with Rule 39 interim measures indicated by the ECtHR and to refrain from any contempt of Court orders that jeopardises the integrity of the Convention system. This should also be read in light of threats directed at legal representatives of applications before the ECtHR (see **Hostile Environment & Criminalisation**).

Court of Justice of the European Union

227. On 3 July 2025, the CJEU delivered its judgment in C-610/23 *Al Nasiria* further to a preliminary reference from the Administrative Court of Thessaloniki. The Court found that Article 102(2) of the Asylum Code contravenes Article 47 of the Charter insofar as it foresees automatic rejection of asylum appeals as manifestly unfounded on the sole ground that the appellant did not appear in person before the Appeals Committee to attest their interest in continuing to pursue their case.

228. At the time of writing, the Greek government has taken no measures to comply with the CJEU ruling. The domestic rule in question has not been amended, despite two legislative reforms involving amendments to the Asylum Code since then. The Ministry of Migration and Asylum has in fact disregarded recommendations to that effect in consultations on related legislative reforms tabled after the ruling e.g. L 5226/2025.³⁷⁸ Appeals Committees continue to dismiss asylum appeals as manifestly unfounded based on the provision declared by the CJEU as contrary to EU law. Specifically, since the judgment, the Appeals Committees have dismissed more than 500 appeals and ordered removal of the persons from Greece based on this rule.³⁷⁹

Domestic courts

229. The Greek government continues not to comply with domestic court rulings directly relevant to matters coming under the scope of the Rule of Law Report. For instance, EYP has still not executed the April 2024 judgment of the Plenary of the Council of State which ruled as unconstitutional the legislative provision that prohibited the leader of the opposition party PASOK and former MEP Nikos Androulakis from being informed about his **Surveillance** by EYP.³⁸⁰ The case is now pending at the ECtHR.³⁸¹ EYP has

³⁷⁷ GCR, *Information Note on interventions and on interim measures granted by the ECtHR in cases regarding pushbacks*, 12 January 2026, [URL](#).

³⁷⁸ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, *Αναμόρφωση πλαισίου και διαδικασιών επιστροφών πολιτών τρίτων χωρών – Λοιπές ρυθμίσεις του Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου*, 17 July 2025, Article 40, [URL](#).

³⁷⁹ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, *Statistics*, [URL](#).

³⁸⁰ Council of State, *Decision 465/2024*, 5 April 2024.

³⁸¹ ECtHR, *Androulakis v. Greece*, App No 20986/24, Communicated on 18 December 2025.

equally failed to comply with domestic judgments relating to unfair transfer to other services of former EYP officials who have also reported to have been targeted by Predator spyware.³⁸²

230. Non-compliance with domestic court rulings includes instances of positive government action, namely through re-adoption of regulatory acts identical to acts quashed in judicial review. For instance, the Plenary of the Council of State announced on 21 March 2025 the impending annulment of JMD 538595/2023³⁸³ designating Türkiye as a safe third country for asylum seekers due to inadequate evidence assessment.³⁸⁴ Before the judgment was even made public on 6 June 2025, the Greek government issued JMD 63905/2025,³⁸⁵ an act identical to the annulled regulatory act. The new Joint Ministerial Decision has been brought again before the Council of State for judicial review.³⁸⁶ The case was heard on 4 November 2025. While the judgment of the Court is still pending, the government proceeded on 31 December 2025 with the adoption of a new, identical designation of Türkiye as a safe third country.³⁸⁷

231. We stress that in its recent judgment in *Enosi Plioktiton*, the Strasbourg Court stressed that an unjustified delay of one year in the execution of domestic rulings amounts to a breach of the right to a fair trial,³⁸⁸ corresponding to Article 47 of the Charter. In *Frantzeskaki v. Greece*, it reached a similar conclusion regarding a two-year delay.

232. Crucially, the ECtHR continues to reaffirm its settled position that Greek law lacks effective domestic remedies against non-compliance on the part of the executive with its duty to implement judgments of domestic administrative courts. The Court specifically reiterates in *Enosi Plioktiton* and in *Dervisis v. Greece* that the process foreseen in L 3068/2002 does not constitute an effective remedy.³⁸⁹

233. In light of the persisting problem of non-compliance on the part of the Greek government with judgments and decisions handed down by both European and domestic courts, including interim measure orders, we urge the Commission to set out specific recommendations to that effect in the Rule of Law Report. Such recommendations have been issued to other Member States such as Belgium.³⁹⁰

³⁸² Kathimerini, 'Δίκη για υποκλοπές: Τι κατέθεσαν πρώην στέλεχος της ΕΥΠ, δημοσιογράφος και δικηγόρος', 14 November 2025, [URL](#); To Vima, 'Θανάσης Κουκάκης: Στο ΣτΕ η υπόθεση για την παρακολούθηση από την ΕΥΠ', 14 November 2025, [URL](#).

³⁸³ JMD 538595/2023, Gov. Gazette B' 7063/15.12.2023.

³⁸⁴ Council of State, Decision 1048/2025, 6 June 2025.

³⁸⁵ JMD 63905/2025, Gov. Gazette B' 1727/08.04.2025.

³⁸⁶ GCR & RSA, 'Ministry of Migration and Asylum's persistence on Turkey's characterisation as a "Safe Third Country" for refugees returns to the Council of State', 11 June 2025, [URL](#).

³⁸⁷ JMD 250219/2025, Gov. Gazette B' 7407/31.12.2025.

³⁸⁸ ECtHR, *Enosi Plioktiton Epaggelmaton Aileon I Mesogios & Fatouros v. Greece*, App No 11009/23, 23 October 2025, para 11.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid*, para 12; *Dervisis v. Greece*, App No 55398/20, 23 October 2025, para 12.

³⁹⁰ European Commission, 2025 Rule of Law Country Chapter Belgium, SWD(2025) 901, 8 July 2025, 1, 2, 16-17; 2024 Rule of Law Country Chapter Belgium, SWD(2024) 801, 24 July 2024, 1, 28.

Enabling framework for civil society

2025 Rule of Law Report recommendation

Develop a regular and sustained structured dialogue with civil society organisations, and simplify registration requirements for civil society organisations in view of maintaining an open framework for them to operate.

Registration requirements

234. The Greek government has not implemented the European Commission's constant recommendations to develop a sustained structured dialogue with civil society and to simplify registration requirements for civil society organisations. Latest developments confirm that registration frameworks are still separately defined by different ministries, with some currently undergoing reform in a severely more restrictive direction.

235. **Migration Ministry registration rules:** Greece took no steps throughout most of 2025 to revise the arbitrary registration requirements imposed specifically on NGOs working with refugees and migrants,³⁹¹ more than three years since its assurances of reform to improve registration requirements.

236. United Nations Special Procedures reiterated their plea to the government in September 2025 to indicate whether these registration rules are in line with fundamental rights.³⁹² The Greek government's November 2025 response thereto states that "the authorities are evaluating the existing legal framework... On this basis, legislative updates aim to streamline the registration process by providing clearer criteria and centralized oversight, making it more transparent and efficient for NGOs to participate in relevant activities while ensuring the high quality of the services provided." The government adds that a working group set up under the Ministry of Migration and Asylum held a first meeting on 24 September 2025 "aiming to evaluate and revise the legal framework."³⁹³

237. The Greek government's assurances to the European Commission and to United Nations Special Procedures were in fact systematically contradicted by official discourse going in the exact opposite direction. The Ministry of Migration and Asylum has:

- ❖ Submitted before the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights in April 2025 that the existing "national legal framework has adopted appropriate provisions to ensure that civil society organizations can access reception

³⁹¹ Article 78 Asylum Code; JMD 10616/2020, Gov. Gazette B' 3820/09.09.2020.

³⁹² UN Special Rapporteurs on human rights defenders, on the freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and on the human rights of migrants, AL GRC 2/2025, 16 September 2025, [URL](#).

³⁹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Reply to UN Special Procedures, 135/2025, 12 November 2025, 4, [URL](#).

facilities and effectively provide support to those in need", without making any reference to planned amendments.³⁹⁴

- ❖ Stated in response to at least three parliamentary questions in October and November 2025 that it plans further restrictions (*αυστηροποίηση*) on registration requirements for NGOs working with refugees and migrants.³⁹⁵
- ❖ Confirmed in media interviews at the end of October 2025 that the legal framework on NGO registration will be rendered stricter through reform: "the framework will be rendered stricter... at the moment there is tremendous flexibility and the Ministry, as a rule, has NGOs as implementing branches. This framework will be restricted and the rights that NGOs have will also be given to other actors."³⁹⁶

238. These contradictions are fully reflected in the amendments proposed by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum in a migration bill put to public consultation on 30 December 2025.³⁹⁷ The bill was not shared with the European Commission before presentation to public consultation, contrary to prior assurances given by the Greek government.³⁹⁸ The regulatory impact analysis of the bill expressly states that "the current framework of supervision of Non-Governmental Organisations active in areas of increased public sensitivity does not provide sufficient guarantees of transparency, prevention of conflict of interests and correct management of public and EU funds, a matter that carries risks for legality and for the credibility of state activity."³⁹⁹

239. On the one hand, Article 54 of the bill amends Article 78 of the Asylum Code regarding the establishment of the NGO Registry and the NGO Members Registry at the Secretariat-General for Reception of Asylum Seekers under the Ministry of Migration and Asylum:

- ❖ Registration of civil society organisations on the NGO Registry is maintained as "compliance with the minimum requirements for participation in the performance of activities relating to international protection, migration and

³⁹⁴ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, *Comments on the "Memorandum on migration and border control" by Michael O'Flaherty, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, following his visit to Greece from 03 to 07 February 2025*, 17 April 2025, [URL](#).

³⁹⁵ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Reply to parliamentary question, 219224/2025, 14 November 2025, [URL](#); 197329/2025, 16 October 2025, [URL](#); 185960/2025, 2 October 2025, [URL](#).

³⁹⁶ Ethnos, 'Πλεύρης στο OPEN: Έχουμε τη σκληρότερη μεταναστευτική πολιτική στην Ευρώπη', 31 October 2025, [URL](#).

³⁹⁷ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Δημόσια ηλεκτρονική διαβούλευση για το σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου με τίτλο: «Προώθηση πολιτικών νόμιμης μετανάστευσης, ενσωμάτωση της Οδηγίας (ΕΕ) 2024/1233 σχετικά με ενιαία διαδικασία υποβολής αίτησης για τη χορήγηση στους υπηκόους τρίτων χωρών, ενιαίας άδειας διαμονής και εργασίας στην επικράτεια κράτους μέλους και σχετικά με κοινό σύνολο δικαιωμάτων για τους εργαζομένους από τρίτες χώρες που διαμένουν νομίμως σε κράτος μέλος, τροποποιήσεις του Κώδικα Μετανάστευσης και άλλες διατάξεις», 30 December 2025, [URL](#).

³⁹⁸ Meeting minutes of the Legal Aid Working Group CEAS Sub-Working Group, 21 January 2026, Item 1.

³⁹⁹ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Δημόσια ηλεκτρονική διαβούλευση για το σχέδιο νόμου του Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου με τίτλο: «Προώθηση πολιτικών νόμιμης μετανάστευσης...», 30 December 2025, Explanatory Memorandum, 6, [URL](#).

social integration". Failure to register on the Registry bars organisations from seeking state or EU funding and from performing any activity inside facilities managed by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. This includes camps, asylum offices, shelters for unaccompanied children etc.

Whereas the latter proposed provision appears to entail more limited consequences in case of non-registration compared to the current rules which prevent non-registered organisations from participating in any activity relating to international protection, migration or social integration on Greek territory, the reference to "compliance with the minimum requirements for participation in the performance of activities relating to international protection, migration and social integration" implies that any organisation active in these areas should observe the NGO Registry requirements.

- ❖ In addition, the scope of the NGO Members Registry remains intact in the proposed Article 78(4) of the Asylum Code. Registration of individual members, employees and partners of NGOs active in Greece on the NGO Members Registry is expressly set a prerequisite for their performance of any activity on the Greek territory and for their engagement with public authorities.

240. Therefore, the scope of registration obligations incumbent on civil society organisations and on their individual members, employees and partners who work with refugees and migrants remains intact. Mandatory registration is maintained as a general requirement and is not reserved for a limited class of civil society organisations and individuals working with them, say, those implementing services inside state facilities.

241. As for the actual requirements for registration of organisations on the NGO Registry, Article 54 of the bill introduces changes as follows:

- ❖ The prohibition on receiving regular state subsidies exceeding 50% of the NGO's budget is amended to 30%, excluding staff costs.
- ❖ The 1,000 € per annum cap for permitted contracts between the NGO and entities controlled by its management or family members thereof is repealed.
- ❖ The obligation of audited financial reports is maintained.
- ❖ The list of criminal offences barring registration is widely expanded to cover (i) prosecution of managers or legal representatives of the NGO for any felony and (ii) final conviction thereof for an array of misdemeanours including defamation, theft, forgery, breach of trust, breach of duty, false certificates, drug-related offences, sexual offences.⁴⁰⁰
- ❖ The government retains discretion to enact "additional requirements" for registration of civil society organisations by way of secondary legislation. The

⁴⁰⁰ Among other concerns, this contrasts to the respective requirements for registration on the Special CSO Registry (*Ειδικό Μητρώο Ο.Κοι.Π.*) of the Ministry of Interior, where registration is barred only upon irrevocable conviction for a felony or for the listed misdemeanours: Article 8(2) L 4873/2021, Gov. Gazette A' 248/16.12.2021.

registration process for both Registries is spelt out by way of secondary legislation. This is in stark dereliction of legal certainty and predictability standards coming under Article 12 of the Charter on freedom of association, among other fundamental rights.

242. On the other hand, Articles 15 and 16 of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum bill introduce specific criminal offences (ιδιώνυμα αδικήματα) under Articles 24 and 25 of the Migration Code with particularly severe sentencing against individuals on the basis of their membership of organisations registered on the NGO Registry:⁴⁰¹

- ❖ Facilitation of entry into or exit from the Greek territory of a third-country national is a felony punishable by a term of imprisonment of at least five years and a fine of at least 20,000 € regardless of whether the perpetrator sought profit. Commission of the act by a member of an NGO registered on the NGO Registry constitutes an aggravated version of the felony subject to a term of imprisonment of at least ten years and a fine of at least 50,000 €. This is heavier than the sentence foreseen for rape.⁴⁰²
- ❖ Facilitation of illegal stay of a third-country national on the territory or hindrance of police investigations aimed at locating them is a misdemeanour punishable by a term of imprisonment of at least two years and a fine of at least 5,000 € regardless of whether the perpetrator sought profit. Commission of the act by a member of an NGO registered on the NGO Registry converts the offence into a felony punishable by a term of imprisonment of up to ten years and a fine of at least 20,000 €. This is heavier than the sentence foreseen for torture.⁴⁰³ We note that, contrary to Article 1(1)(b) of the Facilitation Directive,⁴⁰⁴ recklessness suffices as *mens rea* for the commission of facilitation of illegal stay in Greek law.⁴⁰⁵
- ❖ Withholding or refusing to hand to the authorities a passport or travel document belonging to another person is a misdemeanour punishable by a term of imprisonment of at least one year and a fine of at least 3,000 € regardless of whether the perpetrator sought profit. Commission of the act by a member of an NGO registered on the NGO Registry converts the offence into a felony punishable by a term of imprisonment of up to ten years and a fine of at least 50,000 €.
- ❖ The Minister of Migration and Asylum may order the removal of the organisation from the NGO Registry where the “alleged perpetrator” (φερόμενος ως δράστης) of the aforementioned offences is a member of that organisation, regardless of whether the offence was committed during the exercise of professional functions or is in any way attributable to the organisation. Re-registration on the NGO Registry may only be requested by the organisation

⁴⁰¹ GCR et al., ‘Joint Civil Society Statement on the Migration Ministry bill’, 20 January 2026, [URL](#).

⁴⁰² Article 336(1) Criminal Code.

⁴⁰³ Article 137A(1) Criminal Code.

⁴⁰⁴ Council Directive 2002/90/EC of 28 November 2002 defining the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence [2002] OJ L 328/17.

⁴⁰⁵ Supreme Court, 383/2024, 21 February 2024.

after the alleged perpetrator has been irrevocably acquitted. This presupposes conclusion of criminal proceedings at all instances against the backdrop of the current **Length of Proceedings** in the Greek criminal justice system, that has led to cases of similar charges against human rights defenders pending for up to eight years (see **Hostile Environment & Criminalisation**).

- ❖ Acts by captains or drivers of any means of transport consisting in transport into the Greek territory of third-country nationals without a right to enter, collection thereof from points of entry with a view to further move them within the territory or to other EU Member States, facilitation of transport or securing shelter for concealment, are punished as felonies regardless of whether the perpetrator sought profit. Commission of any of those acts by a member of an NGO registered on the NGO Registry constitutes an aggravated version of the felony punishable by a term of imprisonment of at least ten years and a fine of at least 60,000 € per transported person.

243. The bill offers no justification or evidence on the necessity and proportionality of the above sentencing rules.

244. The effects of the proposed rules must be construed in the light of the aforementioned implementation of new criminal provisions on "illegal entry" and "illegal stay" that extends even to asylum seekers (see **Justice: Independence: Independence & Effectiveness of the Prosecution Service**). They create a real risk of unfair prosecution, conviction and disproportionately severe sentencing of NGO workers for performing activities protected by the EU asylum *acquis* and for providing assistance to persons seeking access to the Greek asylum process, in contravention of EU standards and relevant CJEU case law (for current practice, see **Hostile Environment & Criminalisation**).⁴⁰⁶ We also recall that, in previous years, the Ministry of Migration and Asylum insisted that providing assistance to persons subject to deportation proceedings in Greece was an unlawful activity and had rejected applications for registration on the NGO Registry on that ground.⁴⁰⁷

245. In addition, Article 48 of the bill amends Article 61 L 4609/2019 regarding programme contracts (*προγραμματικές συμβάσεις*) concluded by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. It repeals the possibility for the Ministry to enter into such contracts with NGOs and foundations (*κοινωφελή ιδρύματα*) and inserts the Church of Greece as a potential party to such contracts. The blanket exclusion of a class of economic operators from programme contracts breaches equal treatment requirements in EU public procurement rules, namely Article 18(1) of the Public Procurement Directive.⁴⁰⁸

246. The Council of State has yet to deliver its ruling on the compatibility of the legal framework of the NGO Registry with EU law, five years after judicial review applications were lodged.

⁴⁰⁶ CJEU, C-821/19 *Commission v Hungary*, 16 November 2021, paras 138-142.

⁴⁰⁷ RSA et al., 'Joint statement by 19 organisations active on refugee issues in Greece', 8 December 2021, [URL](#).

⁴⁰⁸ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement [2014] OJ L 94/65.

247. In the meantime, civil society in Greece still faces severe deficiencies in the application of the existing NGO Registry, which are continuously brought to the attention of the European Commission. For instance:

- ❖ Volunteers have been unable to register in the NGO Members Registry because the Ministry of Migration and Asylum does not accept the only officially available certificate of criminal record issued by the competent authorities in their country of origin, including EU Member States.
- ❖ Ministry of Migration and Asylum services insist on denying lawyers access to facilities e.g. CCAC Leros, citing the need for individual registration on the NGO Members Registry,⁴⁰⁹ contrary to Article 34 of the Lawyers Code.⁴¹⁰ DG HOME has also reported with regard to CCAC Lesvos that “Restrictions have been placed on NGOs. Following a directive from the authorities, an NGO has been excluded from operating inside the facility”, and with regard to CCAC Chios that “there are reports by NGOs and volunteers being prevented to enter the RIC in case there is no registration with [the Ministry of Migration and Asylum] or no clear project approval by [the Ministry of Migration and Asylum].”⁴¹¹

248. Finally, we recall that the NTA mentioned in 2023 a performance of eight audits of organisations registered on the NGO Registry of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum.⁴¹² No further information or context has been provided thereon by the NTA, nor does the Commission appear to have followed up on the matter. The Greek government has recently cited “recommendations from the National Transparency Authority” on revisions to the legal framework of the NGO Registry,⁴¹³ without further information on the content or direction of this input.

249. **Ministry of Interior registration rules & further proliferation of registries:** On 24 December 2025, the Ministry of Interior launched a public consultation on an ‘[Omnibus’ Legislation](#) proposal containing provisions on civil society and amendments to selected provisions of L 4873/2021.⁴¹⁴ The provisions were adopted by Parliament on 22 January 2026 and purport, among others, to:

- ❖ Establish an Observatory of CSOs and Other Non-Commercial Entities (Παρατηρητήριο Ο.Κοι.Π. και Λοιπών Φορέων Μη Εμπορικής Οικονομικής Δραστηριότητας, hereafter “CSO Observatory”) under the Ministry of Interior, with mandatory registration of civil society organisations, associations, non-commercial companies and foundations thereon. The CSO Observatory is to operate separately from the CSO Database (Δημόσια Βάση Δεδομένων Ο.Κοι.Π.),⁴¹⁵ the Special CSO Registry (Ειδικό Μητρώο Ο.Κοι.Π.)⁴¹⁶ and the

⁴⁰⁹ Meeting minutes of the Legal Aid Working Group CEAS Sub-Working Group, 21 October 2025, Item 2.1.

⁴¹⁰ Bar Association of Athens, Opinion 166/2021, 5 May 2021.

⁴¹¹ European Commission, *Bi-weekly update on the migratory situation in Greece (islands and mainland)* 24/09/2025, Ares(2025)8022774, 24 September 2025.

⁴¹² NTA, Annual Report 2023, September 2024, 36.

⁴¹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Reply to UN Special Procedures, 135/2025, 12 November 2025, 4.

⁴¹⁴ L 4873/2021, Gov. Gazette A' 248/16.12.2021.

⁴¹⁵ Article 6 L 4873/2021.

⁴¹⁶ Article 7 L 4873/2021.

Associations Registry (*Μητρώο Σωματείων Γενικού Σκοπού*) managed by the same Ministry.⁴¹⁷ The bill states that the Associations Registry forms an operational part of the CSO Observatory, and that organisations registered on the CSO Database and on the Special CSO Registry shall be registered on the CSO Database by the Ministry of Interior.

- ❖ Amend rules on interoperability of the CSO Database and Special CSO Registry with other registries by clarifying that special registries or records managed by other branches of government may become an operational part of the CSO Database and the Special CSO Registry. The proposal states, however, that registration of organisations and other entities on those registries is carried out in line with the respective legislative frameworks and that access thereto is reserved to authorised services tasked with implementing those frameworks.

250. On the one hand, the proposal does not provide sufficient clarity on the need for the establishment of – yet another – registry for civil society organisations. The Ministry of Interior deems the establishment of the CSO Observatory necessary given the “absence of a portal comprehensively reflecting the entities required to undergo registration”,⁴¹⁸ but appears to introduce a database extremely akin to the existing CSO Database.

251. On the other hand, the provisions on interoperability neither address the fragmented and inconsistent registration frameworks for civil society organisations in Greek law, nor do they ensure a uniform approach to accessibility and visibility of the various registries operated across government services. These continue to be separately regulated by different ministries,⁴¹⁹ without consistent rules across registries.

252. In light of the above, we yet again express serious concern at the persisting proliferation of parallel registration frameworks across different domestic legislative instruments and continuous deterioration of rules specifically targeting organisations working with refugees and migrants. These run counter to constant Commission, Council of Europe and United Nations recommendations for streamlined, simplified, predictable and proportionate registration rules for civil society and should urgently be reconsidered.

Hostile environment & criminalisation

253. Longstanding concerns regarding the hostile environment and intimidation faced by civil society organisations working with refugees and migrants in Greece were acknowledged by the ECtHR⁴²⁰ and reiterated in 2025 by main human rights monitoring

⁴¹⁷ Article 33 L 5027/2023, Gov. Gazette A' 48/03.03.2023.

⁴¹⁸ Ministry of Interior, Ανάλυση Συνεπειών Ρύθμισης: «Ρυθμίσεις για το ανθρώπινο δυναμικό του δημοσίου τομέα, τις Οργανώσεις της Κοινωνίας των Πολιτών, την ενίσχυση της Τοπικής Αυτοδιοίκησης, το Εθνικό Μητρώο Ζώων Συντροφιάς και λοιπές διατάξεις», 24 December 2025, 5, [URL](#).

⁴¹⁹ For example, rules on the publicity of the NGO Registry of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum are defined by its own Minister: Article 78(3) Asylum Code.

⁴²⁰ ECtHR, A.R.E. v. Greece, App No 15783/21, 7 January 2025, para 263.

bodies such as the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and United Nations Special Procedures.⁴²¹

254. Government attacks against organisations representing cases before courts: These concerns were further exacerbated following direct government attacks against lawyers assisting people unlawfully denied access to asylum in the summer of 2025. In an interview held on 20 August 2025 with ERT, the Minister of Migration and Asylum commented on a ECtHR Rule 39 order indicating interim measures to the Greek government to refrain from removing eight Sudanese asylum seekers from Greek territory until their applications for interim relief before domestic administrative courts were heard.⁴²² The applicants, represented by GCR and RSA, had been denied access to asylum and were subject to immediate deportation proceedings pursuant to an unlawful asylum ban introduced from 14 July to 14 October 2025 through a **Late & Irrelevant Amendment** in an unrelated bill.⁴²³

255. The Minister of Migration and Asylum stated that the eight applicants covered by the Court's decision are represented by two NGOs and publicly expressed surprise at the fact that NGOs registered on the NGO Registry of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum bring actions against said Ministry. The Minister further announced that there will be "administrative audits" (διαχειριστικός έλεγχος) of the NGOs in question and referred to them as NGOs solely engaging in bringing the Ministry of Migration and Asylum before the courts.⁴²⁴

256. Media outlet Kathimerini published a report on 21 August 2025, citing Ministry of Migration and Asylum sources indicating plans to de-register NGOs which oppose the government's migration policy, namely by conveying to migrants positions contrary to the official migration policy of the government and by taking legal action against detention orders and the suspension of the right to asylum.⁴²⁵

257. The above official statements have drawn immediate and sharp criticism from key monitoring bodies such as United Nations Special Procedures,⁴²⁶ the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, the Plenary of Greek Bar Associations, the GNCHR and UNHCR.⁴²⁷

⁴²¹ Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, *Memorandum on migration and border control, following the Commissioner's visit to Greece from 3 to 7 February 2025*, CommHR(2025)16, 17 April 2025, paras 33-34; UN Special Rapporteurs on human rights defenders, on the freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and on the human rights of migrants, AL GRC 2/2025, 16 September 2025.

⁴²² RSA, 'European Court of Human Rights blocks deportation of refugees detained by Greece under unlawful asylum suspension', 18 August 2025, [URL](#).

⁴²³ Article 79 L 5218/2025.

⁴²⁴ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 'Θ. Πλεύρης στην EPT: «Είναι σεβαστή η θέση των ΜΚΟ, αλλά αδιάφορη για το ΥΜΑ»', 20 August 2025, [URL](#); ERT, 'Θ. Πλεύρης στο EPTNews: Κυρώσεις για όποιον δεν σέβεται τις αποφάσεις της Πολιτείας για το Μεταναστευτικό – Διαχειριστικός έλεγχος για ΜΚΟ', 20 August 2025, [URL](#).

⁴²⁵ Kathimerini, 'Μεταναστευτικό: «Κόκκινη κάρτα» σε ΜΚΟ', 21 August 2025, [URL](#).

⁴²⁶ UN Special Rapporteurs on human rights defenders, on the freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and on the human rights of migrants, AL GRC 2/2025, 16 September 2025.

⁴²⁷ Council of Europe Conference of INGOs, 'CINGO President and Expert Council react to recent statements by Greece's Minister of Migration and Asylum', 5 September 2025, [URL](#); Plenary of Greek Bar Associations, 'Συνάντηση αντιπροσωπείας της Ολομέλειας με τον

258. The Commission has also been seized of the above attacks against legal practitioners and civil society through a letter addressed by 16 organisations to three Commissioners. Its response regrettably points to no specific action beyond “careful note of the issues” and mention of discussion of those matters between the Director-General of DG HOME and representatives of the Greek government.⁴²⁸ It also incorrectly disregards⁴²⁹ the enforcement powers held by the Commission on matters of civic space covered by the EU *acquis* and previously exercised vis-à-vis other Member States.⁴³⁰

259. The Minister of Migration and Asylum has expressly refused to retract the above statements against civil society organisations for their legal representation work. In a December 2025 reply to a parliamentary question, the Minister stated: “specifically on the question: ‘Will the responsible Minister of Migration and Asylum retract his public statements against NGOs that supported appeals of asylum seekers?’, my response is: No.”⁴³¹

260. The Minister has repeated the Greek government’s intention to perform stricter administrative audits of civil society organisations registered on the NGO Registry of the Ministry and to introduce further restrictions on registration.⁴³² These attacks are therefore inextricably linked to the deterioration of **Registration Requirements** for NGOs registered with the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, as analysed above.

261. **Proceedings in 2018 case against 24 NGO members on Lesvos:** Nearly eight years since the launch of criminal proceedings in the Emergency Response Centre International (ERCI) case covered in our previous submissions,⁴³³ the Three-Member Felony Court of Appeal of Northern Aegean (*Τριμελές Εφετείο Κακουργημάτων Βορείου Αιγαίου*) acquitted 24 NGO members on Lesvos of felony charges of smuggling, facilitation of illegal entry, money laundering and of forming and participating in a criminal organisation.⁴³⁴

262. **Criminal conviction of journalist in 2024 case overturned on appeal:** On 10 November 2025, the Three-Member Misdemeanour Court of Appeals of Piraeus (*Τριμελές Εφετείο Πλημμελημάτων Πειραιά*) acquitted on appeal Dutch journalist Ingeborg Beugel, who had been previously convicted at first instance for facilitating the unlawful stay of a

Υπουργό και την Υφυπουργό Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου’, 27 August 2025, [URL](#); UNHCR & GNCHR, ‘UNHCR and GNCHR express concern over rhetoric undermining civil society’, 28 August 2025, [URL](#).

⁴²⁸ European Commission, *Targeting and intimidation of civil society organisations providing legal support to persons denied access to asylum in Greece*, Ares(2025)8367532, 3 October 2025.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*: “As regards NGO registration, the Commission recalls that regulating aspects of civic space is not part the Commission’s mandate.”

⁴³⁰ Namely, CJEU, C-78/18 *Commission v Hungary*, 18 June 2020; C-821/19 *Commission v Hungary*, 16 November 2021.

⁴³¹ Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Reply to parliamentary question, 245987/2025, 23 December 2025, [URL](#).

⁴³² Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Reply to parliamentary question, 197329/2025, 16 October 2025; 185960/2025, 2 October 2025.

⁴³³ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, paras 220-222.

⁴³⁴ Sto Nisi, ‘Η δίκη των διασωστών που στοχοποιήθηκαν, διώχτηκαν και απαλλάχθηκαν’, 16 January 2026, [URL](#).

third-country national.⁴³⁵ Ms Beugel had provided shelter to an Afghan asylum seeker whose application had initially been rejected but who was eventually granted asylum. The Court found that her actions – offering temporary accommodation and support during a period when state asylum services were largely inaccessible due to the COVID-19 pandemic – did not constitute a criminal offence.⁴³⁶

263. Update on proceedings in 2022 case against NGO members on Kos: As reported in previous submissions,⁴³⁷ in December 2022 the founder of the Greek Helsinki Monitor was charged with forming a criminal organisation allegedly aimed at facilitating the illegal entry and stay of third-country nationals in Greece, purportedly acting “by profession” and for profit, on the basis that he notified Greek authorities of new arrivals so that their asylum applications could be registered and processed in accordance with the law. On 14 May 2024, an arrest warrant was also issued against the founder of the Norwegian NGO Aegean Boat Report, accused of collaborating with the Greek Helsinki Monitor founder in the same alleged offences. In 2025, a European Arrest Warrant was subsequently issued against the founder of Aegean Boat Report. We understand that the Prosecutor has reportedly requested that the case be committed for trial, and a decision thereon by the President of the Court of Appeal is currently pending.

264. Reports in 2025 of unnotified criminal proceedings against NGO member: Following prosecution in the aforementioned Kos case, Greek media reported in September 2025 that the Public Prosecutor of Athens had brought felony charges for breach of trust against the Greek Helsinki Monitor founder and his wife for alleged mismanagement of funds, further to a 2023 asset freeze that was lifted in 2024, and that the case is pending before the Investigative Judge (ανακριτής).⁴³⁸ However, as of January 2026, the individuals concerned had not been notified of any such developments.⁴³⁹

265. Conviction of volunteers in 2022 case: In October 2022, four foreign volunteers were convicted *in absentia* by the Single-Judge Misdemeanour Court of Patras (Μονομελές Πλημμελειοδικείο Πατρών) and sentenced to one year of imprisonment and a 5,000 € fine, suspended, for facilitating the illegal stay of third-country nationals by providing food and transporting undocumented migrants to health care facilities. Summons for the hearing were sent to the volunteers' Greek address, even though they had already returned to their home countries and had not been informed of the pending criminal proceedings so as to be able to notify the court of their current addresses. The ensuing conviction judgments were likewise delivered to the same address. As a result, the volunteers missed the deadline to appeal the conviction.

⁴³⁵ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, para 223.

⁴³⁶ Efsyn, ‘Η Μπέγκελ αθωάθηκε, η αλληλεγγύη νικήσε’, 10 November 2025, [URL](#).

⁴³⁷ Joint Civil Society Submission to the 2025 Rule of Law Report, January 2025, paras 231-232.

⁴³⁸ Racist Crimes Watch, ‘Panayote Dimitras: unaware of alleged criminal prosecution – aims to discredit him – GHM revenues are spent to achieve its objectives, concluded the Tax Office of Agia Paraskevi audit’, 19 September 2025, [URL](#).

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

Dialogue & participation in decision-making

266. The government has taken no steps to implement the Commission recommendation to set up a "structured dialogue" with civil society organisations, expressed in the past three Rule of Law Reports.⁴⁴⁰ The Ministry of Migration and Asylum, for instance, still does not hold structured meetings with civil society actors, thematic or otherwise.⁴⁴¹

267. On the contrary, the same Ministry has doubled down on intimidation of civil society organisations and has publicly expressed disinterest in engaging with them. In public statements made in August 2025 against lawyers and civil society organisations representing persons unlawfully denied access to asylum (see **Hostile Environment**), the Minister of Migration and Asylum declared that migration policy is not shaped by NGOs that enjoy lodging appeals or addressing him letters on a daily basis, and stressed that the positions of NGOs are "utterly irrelevant" to the Ministry.⁴⁴²

268. Further confirmation of those positions has come in October 2025 statements of the same Minister: "There are some NGOs that feel they can develop policy... What bothers me the most... is not when they do not work. It is when they want to develop policy... they have a different position on migration than the one shaped at the moment."⁴⁴³

269. Failure on the part of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum to engage with civil society extends to repeated failure to respond to requests for information raised by civil society actors represented in Monitoring Committees set up under Article 38 of the Common Provisions Regulation. All requests for information made in 2025 by civil society members of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) Monitoring Committee on matters relating to the exercise of the Committee's functions have remained unanswered by the responsible authorities.⁴⁴⁴ This raises serious concerns as to the ability of the

⁴⁴⁰ European Commission, 2025 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Greece, SWD(2025) 908, 8 July 2025, 2, 20-21; 2024 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Greece, SWD(2024) 808, 24 July 2024, 2, 31-32; 2023 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter Greece, SWD(2023) 808, 5 July 2023, 2, 28.

⁴⁴¹ The Greek government has reiterated assurances that the Ministry of Migration and Asylum "will hold biannual meetings organized in thematic pillars" with civil society: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Reply to UN Special Procedures, 135/2025, 12 November 2025, 5.

⁴⁴² Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 'Θ. Πλεύρης στην EPT: «Είναι σεβαστή η θέση των ΜΚΟ, αλλά αδιάφορη για το ΥΜΑ!», 20 August 2025; ERT, 'Θ. Πλεύρης στο EPTNews: Κυρώσεις για όποιον δεν σέβεται τις αποφάσεις της Πολιτείας για το Μεταναστευτικό – Διαχειριστικός έλεγχος για ΜΚΟ', 20 August 2025.

⁴⁴³ Ethnos, 'Πλεύρης στο OPEN: Έχουμε τη σκληρότερη μεταναστευτική πολιτική στην Ευρώπη', 31 October 2025.

⁴⁴⁴ RSA & GCR, Αίτηση ενημέρωσης αναφορικά με την από 22-06-2023 καταγγελία του Υπεύθυνου Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων (FRO) της Ευρωπαϊκής Συνοριοφυλακής και Ακτοφυλακής (Frontex) σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 69 παρ. 7 του Κανονισμού (ΕΕ) 2021/1060, β/191/18.12.2025, 18 December 2025; Νέα αίτηση ενημέρωσης αναφορικά με την ένταξη δράσεων στα προγράμματα TAME και ΜΔΣΘ που ερείδονται στο άρθρο 79 Ν 5218/2025 (Α' 125) περί αναστολής της υποβολής αιτήσεων ασύλου, β/190/18.12.2025, 18 December 2025; Αίτηση ενημέρωσης αναφορικά με την ένταξη δράσεων στα προγράμματα TAME και ΜΔΣΘ που ερείδονται στο άρθρο 79 Ν 5218/2025 (Α' 125) περί αναστολής της υποβολής αιτήσεων ασύλου, β/178/15.07.2025, 15 July 2025; Παρακολούθηση της συμμόρφωσης των προγραμμάτων του Ταμείου Ασύλου, Μετανάστευσης και Ένταξης (TAME) με τον Χάρτη Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης (ΧΘΔ), β/169/26.05.2025, 26 May 2025.

Monitoring Committee to effectively exercise its functions and to ensure that the design and implementation of EU Funds respect fundamental rights and incorporates civil society feedback, as consistently conveyed to the European Commission.⁴⁴⁵

Proposed recommendations: Checks & Balances

Apply the rules set by the Constitution, the Standing Orders of the Hellenic Parliament (Section of Parliamentary Business), L 4622/2019 and the Manual of Legislative Methodology for the preparation, submission and enactment of legislation, in accordance with the principles of the rule of law and of good law-making.

Extend public consultation periods for bills to at least 15 working days and provide for an additional consultation phase in case of subsequent introduction of substantial amendments to ensure an effective, inclusive and meaningful legislative process.

Restrict the use of 'omnibus' legislation and the introduction of ministerial amendments unrelated to the subject matter of bills under debate.

Urgently launch the National Codification Portal and ensure that consolidated versions of legislation in force, secondary legislation and case law are publicly accessible free of charge.

Promptly and fully comply with judgments and decisions of the CJEU, the ECtHR and domestic courts, including orders of interim measures.

Ensure that independent authorities and their members are adequately resourced, independent and unimpeded in the exercise of their functions.

Urgently revise rules on registration of civil society organisations to ensure alignment with the fundamental rights to freedom of association, privacy, data protection and non-discrimination.

Safeguard an open and enabling environment for civil society and human rights defenders and put an end to hostile official statements and measures against them.

Adopt guidelines clarifying that advice and assistance to persons irregularly arriving in Greece with the intention to apply for international protection and communication to that end are not construed as criminal conduct.

⁴⁴⁵ Meeting minutes of the Legal Aid Working Group CEAS Sub-Working Group, 17 November 2025, Item 2; 21 October 2025, Item 3: "The Ministry of Migration and Asylum has not replied to a single request for information submitted by civil society members on matters relating to the implementation of the Funds. These issues have already been brought to the attention of DG HOME."; 7 July 2025, Item 1.3; 10 June 2025, Item 1.2.

In Lieu of Epilogue

270. This year marks the sixth European Commission report on the state of the rule of law in Greece. Our organisations have continuously and closely engaged with the Rule of Law Report process through a thorough documentation of pervasive, interconnected issues and deficiencies within Greek institutions as we experience them in our daily work and reality. Yet, the state of Greek institutions depicted in the Commission's report varies dramatically from the findings we convey each year.

271. We maintain serious concerns at the failure of the European Commission to highlight chronic problems and structural deficiencies and to depict the reality of the rule of law in the country. We remain concerned that "the report seems to focus on 'positive developments', declarations on paper, assurances on future actions or merely on the fact that legislation has changed, while diligently shying away from addressing critical instances of lack of transparency, accountability or compliance with Rule of Law principles... Selective commentary of specific issues and/or specific time periods gives us particular pause, as the report draws a picture completely detached from the reality we experience, monitor and document."⁴⁴⁶

272. The flaws in the Commission's assessment of rule of law issues in Greece provide fertile ground for the Rule of Law Report to be relied upon in support of a domestic narrative of overall improvement,⁴⁴⁷ despite the persistence of serious and longstanding structural deficiencies. This enables the presentation of a distorted account of the state of the rule of law in Greece where selective or formal elements are foregrounded, while systemic shortcomings, gaps in implementation and the lived reality documented by civil society are marginalised. This weakens the Report's function as a tool for accountability and meaningful reform.

273. The above flaws also have substantial repercussions on compliance with EU law in the light of the Commission's own increasing reliance on the Rule of Law Report as a benchmark for, or even in lieu of, deciding on enforcement of EU standards in different policy areas. In essence, the Commission appears to present the Rule of Law Report as the sole forum for discussion of persisting breaches of certain Charter of Fundamental Rights or secondary EU law provisions. This is particularly the case for infringements coming under the remit of DG JUST and DG HOME, consistently highlighted in our contributions.⁴⁴⁸ Yet, no meaningful assessment of those issues takes place in the Rule of Law Report. Infringements of core EU principles therefore fall through the cracks of

⁴⁴⁶ RSA et al., 'New European Commission Rule of Law Report: Flawed and selective assessment of the state of the Rule of Law in Greece', 11 July 2025, [URL](#).

⁴⁴⁷ ERT News, 'Π. Μαρινάκης: Η επίσημη έκθεση της Κομισιόν για το κράτος δικαιου και την ελευθερία του Τύπου στην Ελλάδα είναι η καλύτερη των τελευταίων ετών', 6 September 2025, [URL](#); 'Π. Μαρινάκης για την έκθεση της Κομισιόν για το κράτος Δικαιου: Ο καλύτερος τρόπος να απαντάς στα ψέματα είναι τα στοιχεία και η αλήθεια', 9 July 2025, [URL](#).

⁴⁴⁸ European Ombudsman, *Decision on how the European Commission monitors fundamental rights compliance in the context of EU funds granted to Greece for border management*, Case 1418/2023/VS, 21 February 2025, para 25, fn. 23; European Commission, Letter to five civil society organisations, Ares(2024)9031451, 17 December 2024; Meeting minutes of the Legal Aid Working Group CEAS Sub-Working Group, 22 September 2025, Item 2.5.

institutional monitoring, while chronic, documented deficiencies in the judiciary and non-compliance with court rulings inevitably hamper domestic redress.

274. Our organisations will continue to defend the rule of law in Greece and to contribute the reality we experience to the available official monitoring processes through detailed, substantiated findings. We expect no less from the institutions tasked with safeguarding it.

CIVIL SOCIETY REPORT

RULE OF LAW

JAN 2026

