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Provisional version

Honouring of membership obligations to the Council of Europe by Greece

Report¹

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¹ Assembly decision. Reference to committee: Reference 4779 of 22 January 2024.

A. Draft resolution²

1. Greece became the 11th member State of the Council of Europe (the Council) on 9 August 1949, only a couple of months after its establishment by the 10 founding countries. Upon its accession, the country committed itself to respect the obligations incumbent upon every member State under Article 3 of the Statute with regard to pluralist democracy, the rule of law and human rights. To date, Greece has signed and ratified 108 Council Treaties, and has signed 58 without ratification. Since the latest periodic review, 5 Treaties have been signed without ratification, and 11 have been ratified, 10 of which have entered in force.
2. The latest periodic review was held in 2018, just a few years after Greece had emerged from the most severe systemic economic crisis in its recent history. In its [Resolution 2203 \(2018\)](#), the Parliamentary Assembly concluded that the country was generally fulfilling its membership obligations and that its democratic institutions functioned in line with the Organisation's standards but identified various concerns and made recommendations across all three pillars of the Organisation's mission.
3. Since then, Greece has notably ratified:
 - 3.1. the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (ETS No. 198);
 - 3.2. the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) (ETS No. 210);
 - 3.3. Protocols No. 15 (ETS No. 213) and No. 16 (ETS No. 214) to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
4. The deep and prolonged economic recession which struck Greece from 2009 to 2015 had significant adverse effects on the economy and the labour market. Consequently, the country was required to make harsh structural reforms and introduce austerity measures – spending cuts and tax increases – to bring its deficit under control, which helped the economy to gradually recover with growth, but triggered intense social discontent and gave rise to widespread protests.
5. With considerable sacrifices by its citizens, Greece has achieved significant progress. Fifty-two years after its restoration, the Hellenic Republic is characterised by stable state institutions and constitutional guarantees that ensure fundamental freedoms, the orderly alternation of governments in power, and a legal framework for the protection of fundamental rights and liberties. Greece now enjoys robust economic conditions, its asylum system has been reformed, and its democratic environment strengthened. Key improvements since 2017 include a reduction in overall unemployment from 20.7% to below 8%, and a decrease in female unemployment from 25% to 9.8%, marking the lowest level since records began. The ratio of Greek sovereign debt to GDP has fallen by 30 percentage points. Relative to the European Union average, growth is high and tax rates are low. As a symbol of this recovery, on 11 June 2025, the Eurogroup elected Mr Kyriakos Pierrakakis, Greece's Minister of Finance, as its president. Progress have also been made in the digitalisation of government operations and e-administration.
6. Simultaneously, Greece plays an important role on the international stage. The country has taken a leadership role in the process of European integration of the Western Balkans. Its diplomatic influence has also extended to security and defence matters within the Mediterranean area, due to its critical position along sensitive migration routes: it acts as a major frontline supervisor of Europe's external borders.
7. At the same time, the Assembly notes significant persisting challenges with regard to the functioning of democratic institutions in the country. *Inter alia*, corruption among high level public officials; government interference in sensitive judicial investigations; legislation jeopardising the action of civil society organisations in the field of migration and asylum; violence against migrants by internal security forces; and the use of Predator spyware against politicians and journalists are matters of concern.
8. The Assembly takes great interest in the plans by the ruling majority to amend the Constitution, in particular to make judicial removal procedures independent of political power and to review the method of appointing judicial officials. This proposal could potentially enhance the transparency and robustness of the political and judicial system, while also promoting a spirit of compromise between political forces in order to secure a qualified majority.

² Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the Committee on 7 September 2026.

9. In line with the recommendations it made in 2018 related to worrying shortcomings, the Assembly calls on Greece to:
 - 9.1. issue a declaration authorising national NGOs to lodge collective complaints, in accordance with the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Providing for a System of Collective Complaints (ETS No. 158);
 - 9.2. ratify Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 177), which protects citizens from discrimination by any public authority “on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status”;
 - 9.3. ratify the European Convention on Nationality (ETS No. 166);
 - 9.4. sign and ratify the European Charter for Regional Minority Languages (ETS No. 148), and ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157).
10. As Greece has not taken into account these last two Conventions, it is subject only to the general rules of the Organisation and the European Court of Human Rights (the Court) regarding protection of national minorities. The Assembly regrets that the Greek authorities do not currently intend to ratify these two Conventions, referring, in particular, to the legal framework established by the Treaty of Lausanne for the Muslim Minority in Thrace and to the protection afforded under Greek law to the rights to individual self-identification and freedom of association. The Assembly also calls upon the Greek authorities to invest in the preservation of Vlach heritage in Northern Greece.
11. The Assembly notes with satisfaction the dismantlement of the Golden Dawn party – which espoused an ideology with neo-Nazi overtones – after its founder and leader, along with senior members, were found guilty of “leading and belonging to a criminal organisation [...] masquerading as a political party”. Furthermore, the Assembly notes that the three members of Parliament who were elected in June 2023 on a list regarded as an offshoot of Golden Dawn have been stripped of their seats by the country’s highest court.
12. When it comes to combating discrimination, the Assembly appreciates that Greece adopted, on 16 February 2024, the law No. 5089/2024 legalising same-sex marriage and granting adoption rights to all couples.
13. The Assembly views with concern the reported cases of ill-treatment, abuse, or even racist behaviour by internal security forces, particularly against Roma, supported by the Court’s case-law, as well as the fact that since 2018 the Greek authorities have not yet established an effective and fully independent police complaints body.
14. The Assembly expects that the compliance measures taken by Greece to enforce the Court’s judgments and harmonize its legal framework with the Court’s case-law will enable the full and effective enforcement of the Court’s decisions, especially regarding the actions of enforcement agents, the conditions of detention, lawfulness of detention and the reception conditions of foreigners, the right of liberty, enforcement of final domestic judicial decisions, freedom of expression and freedom of association.
15. Likewise, the Assembly expects that the new judicial map and the practical reforms of the judicial system will help to improve the situation in the areas of delays for judgment – both in civil and criminal proceedings – enforcement of courts’ decisions, and independence of judges.
16. Equally, the Assembly expects that the comprehensive 2025-2030 action plan for the overhaul of the prison system will address the prison crisis and bring Greek prisons in line with the standards set out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT).
17. Progress must be achieved in the field of fighting corruption, relying on the GRECO (Group of States against Corruption) recommendations. In particular, two major cases involving elected representatives and public officials currently under criminal investigation need to be transparently and satisfactorily concluded:
 - 17.1. the inadequate and delayed implementation of essential European Union-funded rail infrastructure projects, which led to the Tempi railway disaster of 26 February 2023, costing the lives of 57 people;
 - 17.2. the massive fraud concerning European Union agricultural subsidies.

18. The Assembly urges Greece to grant constitutional status to the National Transparency Authority (NTA) in order to strengthen its independence, effectiveness, political accountability to the Parliament, and domestic and international credibility. Moreover, the NTA should be responsible for supervising the financing of political parties and monitoring the financial interests and asset declarations of political office holders.

19. Furthermore, the Assembly believes that the ongoing constitutional amendment should be used as an opportunity to prevent the excessive recourse to term extensions for the positions of the heads of all independent administrative authorities with constitutional status. The Assembly thus recommends the Greek Parliament adopt the provision proposed by the government with the purpose of amending Article 101A of the Constitution in the following way:

19.1. public call for expressions of interest;

19.2. proposition of a three-candidate shortlist by a council of experts;

19.3. selection by a special parliamentary committee instead of the Conference of Presidents, and withdrawal of the current three-fifths majority requirement.

20. With particular regard to the Ombudsman, despite its constitutional status, which should grant pre-eminent legal authority, its powers are constrained. The Assembly calls for an alignment of its status with all Principles on the Protection and Promotion of the Ombudsman Institution (the Venice Principles), including:

20.1. the remuneration of the Ombudsman and their staff;

20.2. the Ombudsman statutory term;

20.3. the scope of its mandate, which should cover all general interest and public services provided to the public, whether delivered by the State, by municipalities, State bodies or private entities;

20.4. *locus standi* and suspensive effect of the filing of a request or complaint on time-limits to apply to the courts;

20.5. sufficient and independent budgetary resources;

20.6. sufficient staff and the ability of the Ombudsman to select their own staff.

21. In keeping with its [Resolution 2513 \(2023\)](#) on “Pegasus and similar spyware and secret State surveillance”, the Assembly reiterates its request that the Greek authorities:

21.1. inform it, as well as the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission), about the use of Predator spyware in its country;

21.2. conduct effective, independent, and prompt investigations into all confirmed and alleged cases of abuse of Predator spyware, provide sufficient redress to targeted victims in cases of unlawful surveillance, and apply adequate sanctions, either criminal or administrative, in order to punish all abuses committed;

21.3. refrain from using blanket secrecy rules to deny access to information on the use of Predator spyware to oversight mechanisms and targeted persons.

22. The Assembly asks Greece to make further progress in ensuring the compliance of its legal framework and practices with the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) in areas such as regulation, ownership transparency, pluralism, public service media, and funding.

23. The Assembly finds that Greece, although confronted by the challenge of being one of the main entry points for migrants into Europe, has been able to develop a system of controlled border management, in anticipation of the entry into force of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum. The Assembly, however, emphasises the imperative for the country to refrain from violations of international law, including the renunciation of any pushback operations, and to give full implementation to the judgements of the Court. Greater efforts are also needed to improve the reception conditions and assistance to vulnerable people.

24. The Assembly concludes that, while democracy in Greece remains firmly rooted and resilient, sustained efforts and constructive political dialogue must converge to protect it and further entrench the rule of law.

B. Explanatory memorandum prepared by Ms Castel and Ms Kumpula-Natri, co-rapporteurs

1. Introduction

1. On 5 December 2023, the Monitoring Committee decided to prepare a periodic report on the honouring of membership obligations to the Council of Europe by Greece.³ The preparatory work only started in full on 9 September 2025 with an exchange of views with members of the Greek delegation. Members representing both the majority and the opposition welcomed the periodic review as an important opportunity to highlight the significant transformations that had occurred in Greece in recent years.

2. On 27-29 April 2026, the co-rapporteurs carried out a fact-finding visit in Athens to assess the honouring of Greece's membership obligations to the Organisation. On this occasion, they discussed recent political developments, including the draft amendments to the Constitution and issues relating to the rule of law, human rights and democracy (checks and balances; effectiveness of the judicial system; fight against corruption; freedom and pluralism of the press; role of civil society; aftermath of the Predator scandal; whistleblower protection; migration policy; rights of ethnic minorities, and conditions of detention). Particular attention was also paid to the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (the Court). The co-rapporteurs welcomed the very high level in which they were received, including by the President and the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic. The delegation also met with members of the government, the Greek delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly, the leaders of the main opposition parties, the Ombudsman, the heads of several other independent administrative authorities, and several non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

3. The preliminary draft report prepared on the basis of this visit was tabled before the Committee on 24 June 2026. Both majority and opposition representatives acknowledged it was comprehensive and well-balanced. The Chairperson of the Greek delegation to the Assembly was therefore asked to convey this document to the government, Parliament and different political forces, who were given six weeks to provide the Committee with written comments if they so wished. Ms Dora Bakoyannis, Chairperson of the Greek delegation, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr George Papandreou and Mr Dimitrios Mantzos, on behalf of PASOK-KINAL parliamentary group, sent commentaries.

2. Electoral system and political environment

4. The Voulí ton Ellinon, a unicameral assembly seating in Athens, consists of 300 members⁴ elected for a four-year term by direct universal suffrage. "The electoral system and electoral districts are set by a law which applies to the elections held immediately after the next ones."⁵ According to the law in effect, the electoral system is one of proportional representation with a majority bonus. 250 seats are allocated through multi-member proportional representation with open lists and a 3% electoral threshold: 12 members are elected from a national constituency and 238 are elected from 58 regional constituencies.⁶ The other 50 seats are allocated as follows: 20 seats plus 1 seat for every 0.5% increment above 25% of the votes cast for the list that finished first at the national level; the remainder are allocated proportionally to the results obtained at the national level.

5. The electoral system therefore significantly favours the party that comes out on top: if it wins 39% of the votes, it carries a bonus of 50 seats, no less than one-sixth of the full number. The main opposition groups sitting in the Voulí consider that this system certainly helps to ensure a stable and effective majority for governing the country, but that it results in an excessive reduction in the representation of dissenting views and thus weakens parliamentary oversight.

6. Since the lists are "open," the electorate may cast a preferential vote for up to four candidates on the list of their choice. Once the ballots are counted, the 243 seats allocated under the proportional system are distributed according to the Hagenbach-Bischoff and highest-averages methods among all lists that have surpassed the 3% threshold of valid votes. The candidates who received the most votes in their name on each of the lists are given a seat first.

³ Reference 4779 of 22 January 2024 valid until 22 January 2027.

⁴ "The number of members of the House of Representatives is set by law but may not be fewer than two hundred or more than three hundred." (Article 51, Paragraph 1, of the Constitution).

⁵ Article 54, Paragraph 1, of the Constitution.

⁶ The number of seats allocated to each regional constituency ranges from 1 to 18, depending on the population. In the seven constituencies with only 1 seat, the voting system is effectively a single-member, first-past-the-post system; as a result, proportional representation actually applies to only 243 seats.

7. If parliamentary elections are held less than eighteen months after the previous election, members of Parliament are elected from closed lists drawn up by political parties, with no option for preferential voting.
8. The minimum age to run for office is 25. Voting is mandatory for all voters under the age of 70, with a penalty of imprisonment for a term of one month to one year; however, no convictions have ever been handed down. In 2019, the minimum voting age was lowered from 18 to 17.
9. In the 25 June 2023 general election, outgoing Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, leader of the New Democracy (ND, EPP/CD), won a new term. Holding 156 seats out of 300, ND's parliamentary majority allows the party to govern without forming coalitions.⁷
10. Before the ongoing political reconfiguration following the creation of the new movement ELAS, the left-wing opposition was divided among five parties,⁸ holding 95 seats altogether:
 - 10.1. PASOK-KINAL (Panhellenic Socialist Movement-Movement for Change), Greece's traditional social-democratic force (SOC, 32 seats);
 - 10.2. SYRIZA, originally the rally of the radical left, now a more centre-left movement (UEL, 25 seats);
 - 10.3. KKE, i.e. Communist Party of Greece (UEL, 21 seats);
 - 10.4. New Left, resulting from a social-liberal split within SYRIZA (12 seats);
 - 10.5. Course of Freedom, resulting from an earlier Eurosceptic split within SYRIZA (5 seats).
11. Several far-right groups entered Parliament concomitantly:
 - 11.1. Greek Solution (populist, 11 seats);
 - 11.2. Victory Democratic Patriotic Movement (orthodox national-conservative, 8 seats);
 - 11.3. Spartans (ultra-nationalist, 3 seats).
12. Following a ruling of the Supreme Special Court,⁹ the three Spartans MPs were declared to have lost their seats on 12 June 2025, as it was held that their party deceived voters, being essentially a successor to Golden Dawn, which had been declared a criminal organisation by judicial decision. The Supreme Special Court furthermore ruled that these seats could not be filled by substitute candidates of the same party, with the result that their voters have effectively been disenfranchised, and that for the first time in its history the Parliament is now operating with three fewer MPs.
13. General elections are scheduled for July 2027.
14. The last annual publication of the Economist Intelligence Unit,¹⁰ part of The Economist Group, ranked Greece in 24th place among the "full democracies", alongside 25 other countries including 13 European Union (EU) Member States, while the last 13 were considered "flawed democracies". Greece moves up one spot, with the following grades: 10.00/10.00 on electoral process and pluralism; 6.79/10.00 on functioning of government; 7.22/10.00 on political participation; 7.50/10.00 on political culture; 8.82/10.00 on civil liberties.
15. On 26 May 2026, former Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announced the creation of a new party, called Greek Left Alliance – or ELAS, an acronym taken from the communist resistance army during World War II –, styled as a movement to unite the left beyond his original far-left base. He calls for a collective effort to create a broad progressive alliance embracing the radical left, social democracy and political ecology. Consequently, on 1 June 2026, seven MPs left the social-liberal party New Left, which means it has fallen below the 10-seat threshold set by Parliament for a parliamentary group.
16. On 1 April 2026, the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) requested the waiver of parliamentary immunity for eleven members of parliament and two ministers as part of an investigation into crimes affecting

⁷ [20th Parliamentary Term Composition](#) [in Greek].

⁸ In addition to ND, only the PASOK-KINAL, SYRIZA and the KKE are represented in the PACE. None of the far-right parties currently sits there. See the [composition](#) of the Greek delegation.

⁹ A special body that sits only when a case falling within its special jurisdiction arises, in particular "the judgment on incompatibilities or the forfeiture of a deputy" (Article 100, Paragraph 4, of the Constitution).

¹⁰ "Democracy Index 2025".

the financial interests of the EU.¹¹ Numerous members of the ruling party are suspected of having made fraudulent claims for agricultural subsidies for the benefit of others of up to 45 million euros per year. Since 2017, at least 100 people have been accused of making fraudulent claims for European funding distributed under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for land they did not farm.

17. On 3 April 2026, three members of the government – the Minister of Climate Crisis and Civil Protection, the Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Food, and the Deputy Minister of Health – resigned from the government. On 6 April 2026, the Prime Minister requested the lifting of immunity of 11 ND MPs who are under investigation in the same case. The Prime Minister underlined that the fraud began before he came to power in 2019 and vowed to imprison the “thieves” responsible and to reclaim the funds. Farmers massively protested against the scam, as the EU had held up their direly needed subsidies as long as the fraud situation had not been clarified.

18. On 18 April 2026, only two weeks after being appointed, the new Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Food resigned in turn due to revelations that he had allegedly used his connections as a ND official to secure a position as an expert at the Ministry of Education in 2007 without possessing the required academic degrees.

19. On 25 and 26 May 2026, 39 people were arrested as part of the Greek and European investigation into the massive fraud concerning EU agricultural subsidies, 17 of them in the North of the country, particularly in the second-largest city, Thessaloniki, and the other 22 in Crete.

20. Alongside these allegations of corruption, the government is also being questioned for a lack of transparency in the matters of the Predator scandal and of the Tempi railway disaster of 26 February 2023 which cost the lives of 57 people, shocking the entire country. More than three years later, the investigation into responsibility for the disaster, as well as into the actions that followed, remains pending. Despite the criminal charges brought by the EPPO on 11 December 2023 against 23 suspects, including 18 public officials, concerning the deficient and delayed completion of critical railway infrastructure projects funded by the EU amounting to 700 million euros,¹² the parliamentary majority archived charges against ministers, giving a sense of impunity based on political power and putting at risk the citizens’ trust in the state. It is indicative that the European Parliament, on 7 February 2024, urged Greece to conduct a judicial investigation into the Tempi train disaster, to be carried out “swiftly and comprehensively, covering all actors involved, including responsible government officials”.¹³

3. Constitutional amendments

21. On 2 February 2026, Prime Minister Mitsotakis announced the launch of the process to revise the Greek Constitution – promulgated in 1975 after the fall of the military junta – to address contemporary challenges. “It is time to undertake bold reforms that will strengthen the authority of institutions and citizens’ trust, introducing measures to improve the functioning of the political system in the face of the major challenges of our time and in line with new realities” he said in a televised address.¹⁴ The conservative government considers that the Constitution must be viewed not as a static document, but as a practical tool enabling reforms that make the state more citizen-friendly and the political system more trustworthy. The main changes proposed concern ministerial accountability, private universities, cost of party programs, fixed election cycles, civil service tenure, direct election of the President of the Republic, and the selection of judicial leadership.

3.1. *The constitutional amendment process*

22. The 1975 Greek Constitution is highly rigid. Article 110 first proclaims the general principle of the inviolability of all constitutional provisions that define the foundation of the regime and its form as a parliamentary Republic. It then prohibits the revision of a series of specifically designated articles relating to the separation of powers as well as to individual rights and freedoms.¹⁵ The prescribed revision process follows two stages – determination of the need for revision¹⁶ and then the revision itself¹⁷ – which are necessarily separated by parliamentary elections, requiring two successive legislatures to approve its principle and terms.

¹¹ [Greece: New developments in EPPO's probe into large-scale agricultural subsidy fraud | European Public Prosecutor's Office](#)

¹² [Greece: EPPO charges 23 suspects with crimes involving railway signalling systems | European Public Prosecutor's Office](#)

¹³ European Parliament resolution of 7 February 2024 on the rule of law and media freedom in Greece – [2024/2502\(RSP\)](#).

¹⁴ [PM calls for 'bold' constitutional changes to tackle modern challenges | eKathimerini.com](#)

¹⁵ Article 110, Paragraph 1.

¹⁶ Article 110, Paragraph 2.

¹⁷ Article 110, Paragraph 3.

23. In accordance with Greek tradition, both the initiative and the conduct of a constitutional revision fall within the purview of the deputies, to the exclusion of executive bodies – though the Prime Minister is generally a member of the Vouli and leader of the parliamentary majority, in line with the principle of organic unity between Parliament and the Government that characterises the organisation and functioning of most parliamentary systems. The Greek Constitution has undergone four revisions: while the first and the third, in 1986 and 2008, were relatively limited in scope, the 2001 revision affected no fewer than 82 of the 120 articles of the fundamental law and the 2019 revision introduced significant changes, particularly regarding the election of the President of the Republic and other institutional provisions.

24. A constitutional revision must be initiated by at least 50 members of parliament, that is one sixth of the members of the Vouli. The proposed amendment is then examined by a special parliamentary committee, constituted proportionally from the various political groups, which sets its own duration once formed, without the possibility of subsequent extension. Then, in a resolution adopted by a three-fifths majority of its members, or 180 deputies, the Vouli must recognise the necessity of the amendment through two votes held at an interval of at least one month. Initiating the amendment procedure thus requires broad political consensus, transcending the divides between the governing majority and the opposition. The resolution establishing the necessity of the revision must additionally identify the constitutional provisions to which the procedure applies: separate votes, requiring a three-fifths majority, are held for each of them.

25. Once this two-step process of recognising the need for revision and determining the provisions to be revised, is completed, the work halts until the next term. In contrast to the “ordinary Vouli” or the “first Vouli,” Greek constitutional doctrine refers to the decision-making legislature as the “Revision Vouli” or “Revisional Vouli.”

26. This second body decides on the provisions to be revised by an absolute majority of its members in committee and then in plenary session. In the event that only an absolute majority of the members of the first Vouli – and not a three-fifths majority – had determined the need to revise specific provisions of the Constitution, these may nevertheless be reconsidered, debated, and amended by the Revisionary Vouli, provided that the latter decides by a three-fifths majority. This is referred to as a “reversal of majorities.”

27. Once the constitutional law is adopted, it is published in the Official Gazette within ten days, by decision of the President of the Vouli, without being subject to promulgation by the executive branch, unlike ordinary laws. Its entry into force is further subject to the passage of a parliamentary motion. Finally, it is prohibited to undertake a new revision within five years of the completion of the procedure.

3.2. Main topics and first votes

28. Concerning ministerial accountability (Article 86), the constitutional revision aims to establish proper mechanisms to bring ministers, deputy ministers, and government officials to justice, to avoid decisions based on parliamentary power balances. The government seeks to align with other European countries, where judicial referral processes are independent of political majorities. The Prime Minister said he intends to fight against the so called “deep state”: “A public administration that is efficient and citizen-friendly must now be driven by continuous evaluation and must place the concept of tenure on an entirely new footing.”¹⁸ On 14 January 2026, in view of this forthcoming revision of Article 86 of the Greek Constitution, the then President of the Assembly, Mr Theodoros Roussopoulos, asked the Venice Commission to prepare a study on best practices in the Organisation’s Member States “as regards the issue of and procedure for criminal prosecution of members of government”. The Venice Commission is expected to adopt the requested report in the autumn of 2026.

29. Another point is related to the regulation of the activities of private universities (Article 16). The government has made clear its intention to dismantle what it considers to be the “outdated monopoly” currently governing the higher education sector. To legally allow the establishment of private universities, an amendment is required to the constitutional text in force, which stipulates – an exception in Europe – that universities are an exclusively state-run and tuition-free service.

30. The government also wishes to enshrine in the Constitution a binding fiscal rule requiring all future governments to avoid increasing the budget deficit or public debt, and, crucially, to refrain from passing fiscal costs onto future generations (Article 79). This measure is portrayed as essential for Greece’s long-term stability by preventing the country falling into a Sisyphean cycle of recurring economic crises. ND has called on PASOK to support this revision, arguing that it would guarantee that the country “never again slips down

¹⁸ [Ibid.](#)

the dangerous path of populism,”¹⁹ and that it follows the same logic as the fiscal stabilization during the Samaras-Venizelos coalition (2013-2015).

31. The constitutional amendment draft includes other significant initiatives aimed at strengthening state institutions and the rule of law, to ensure accountability, efficiency, and prevent future governments from eroding the quality of public services, such as:

31.1. the establishment of a single six-year term for the President of the Republic (Article 30, Paragraphs 1 and 5);

31.2. allowing the dissolution of Parliament on a government proposal and a parliamentary decision, and not only on the grounds of an “exceptionally important national issue”, to renew the popular mandate (Article 41, Paragraphs 2 and 5);

31.3. reinforcing the institutional role of MPs, particularly in legislative work and parliamentary scrutiny, and requiring members of the government to respond to parliamentary oversight (Article 60);

31.4. extending postal voting to voters residing in Greece, rather than limiting it to Greeks living abroad (Article 51, Paragraph 4).

31.5. removing the possibility of granting an amnesty for political crimes (Article 47, Paragraphs 3 and 4);

31.6. a new appointment procedure for senior judges, involving a special parliamentary committee and selection from lists of three candidates proposed by the full benches of the courts (Article 90, Paragraph 5);

31.7. a new selection procedure for Presidents and Members of independent authorities which would resolve the problem of (Article 101A);

31.8. shifting to a performance-based evaluation of civil servants (Article 103);

31.9. greater independence for the judiciary in the appointment of the governing bodies of the courts;

31.10. better protection of journalists, including vis-à-vis their employers (Articles 14 and 15).

32. The requirement to secure a three-fifths majority of the national legislature severely reduces the government’s ability to amend the Constitution, regardless of its stated ambitions. Among the other groups considered individually, only PASOK-KINAL and SYRIZA have enough elected representatives to provide the Prime minister with the support needed to form a qualified temporary majority and reach the threshold of 180. If a comprehensive compromise cannot be obtained with either of them, support will have to be sought among a heterogeneous coalition of smaller parliamentary groupings, possibly including the two far-right ones still represented, as well as some of the 51 deputies registered as independents.

33. Following the submission of the proposal by the parliamentary majority on 2 June 2026, a special parliamentary committee was established. Then, on 27 July 2026 a total of 39 individual provisions were put to a vote, corresponding to 33 distinct constitutional articles. Although all the proposed reforms secured the support of an absolute majority in parliament, they failed to achieve the required three-fifths majority. Consequently, a second vote is expected to take place in early September 2026.

4. Implementation of Assembly Resolution of 2018

34. In its above-mentioned 2018 [Resolution 2203 \(2018\)](#), the Assembly, with respect to Greece:

34.1. welcomed the ratification of the European Social Charter in 2016 but encouraged the authorities to make a declaration enabling national NGOs to submit collective complaints;

34.2. stressed that corruption represented one of the root causes that contributed to the economic and sovereign debt crisis, and therefore commended the authorities for the measures they have taken to ensure transparency of party funding and to fight corruption;

¹⁹ [Ibid.](#)

34.3. called on the authorities to end the practice of detention of immigrant children and to intensify efforts to improve living conditions and the integration of refugees and migrants;

34.4. lamented that the combination of the economic crisis and the migration crisis has provided fertile ground for extremist ideas to flourish, and called on the Voulí to ratify Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights;

34.5. reiterated its call to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and to fully implement the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights to enhance the rights of minorities;

34.6. called on the authorities to enhance the transparency and accountability of the judicial system as requested by GRECO (Group of States against Corruption);

34.7. expressed its remaining concern about the problem of ill-treatment by police, and urged the authorities to establish an effective and fully independent police complaints body;

34.8. encouraged the authorities to further enhance the independence of the media;

34.9. called on the Voulí to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

35. On several of these issues, the views of the government majority, on the one hand, and those of the parliamentary opposition and NGOs, on the other, differ, in some cases radically.

36. The European Social Charter²⁰ is supplemented by an additional protocol,²¹ adopted on 9 November 1995 and entering into force on 1 July 1998, which introduces a formal procedure that allows collective complaints about social rights violations in Member States. Although Greece swiftly ratified this additional protocol,²² it has still not issued a declaration authorising national NGOs to lodge collective complaints, despite the recommendation made by the Assembly in 2018.

37. In the general election of 6 May 2012, the Golden Dawn party, espousing an ideology with neo-Nazi overtones, won 6.97% of the vote and 21 seats in the Voulí. In the following European elections of 25 May 2014, Golden Dawn became the country's third-largest party, with 9.40% of the vote, repeating this performance in the general elections of 25 January 2015 and 20 September 2015. Nevertheless, on 7 October 2020, at the end of a five-year investigation, Nikolaos Michaloliakos, the party's founder and leader, along with six of its senior members, were found guilty in the first instance of "leading and belonging to a criminal organisation [...] masquerading as a political party". Consequently, it was effectively dismantled, its main leaders were imprisoned, and its political activities were prohibited. On 11 March 2026, on appeal, around forty former MPs and members of Golden Dawn were sentenced to terms of up to 13 years in prison for the murder of a rapper in 2013. Unlike in many other European countries, there is currently no far-right party in Greece with sufficient political strength to be considered a potential partner in a future governing coalition. Furthermore, as explained above, MPs who had been elected in June 2023 on a list regarded as an offshoot of Golden Dawn were stripped of their seats by the country's highest court.

38. Greece has not yet ratified Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights.²³ To recall, this protocol protects citizens from discrimination by any public authority "on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status."

39. However, when it comes to combating discrimination, the government highlights what it describes as a landmark legislation: in 2024, Greece became the first Christian Orthodox-majority country and the fifteenth EU Member State to legalise same-sex marriage, and adoption rights were granted to all couples.²⁴

²⁰ European Social Charter (Revised on 3 June 1996) ([European Treaty Series – No. 163](#)).

²¹ Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Providing for a System of Collective Complaints ([European Treaty Series – No. 158](#)).

²² Law 2595/1998 "Ratification of the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter (1988) and the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter providing for a Collective Complaints Mechanism (1995)" (24 March 1998).

²³ Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ([European Treaty Series – No. 177](#)).

²⁴ Law 5089/2024 "Equality in civil marriage; amendment of the Civil Code and other provisions" (16 February 2024).

40. Greece has not ratified either the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages²⁵ or the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.²⁶ Consequently, the country is not required to apply the specific obligations set out in these instruments and is subject only to the general rules of the Organisation and the Court regarding protection of national minorities. Moreover, the country has no intention to ratify these two texts, arguing that they run counter to its position on minorities whose members identify themselves as Macedonians and Western Thrace Turks. Currently, any association whose name includes these terms faces a refusal of administrative registration or even dissolution. Accordingly, in line with the Lausanne Treaty,²⁷ the authorities classify the Western Thrace Turks as part of the “Muslim minority in Greece” which also includes the Muslim Roma and the Pomaks.

41. Civil society has repeatedly reported cases of ill-treatment, systematic abuse, or even racist behaviour by internal security forces, particularly against Roma, pointing at a culture of impunity for such acts. These allegations are supported by the Court’s case-law. Furthermore, since 2018, the Greek authorities have not yet established an effective and fully independent police complaints body. The Ombudsman’s 2025 annual report²⁸ highlights a 50% increase in complaints and allegations of misconduct by security forces, including torture, violence, and racist behaviour between 2024 and 2025.

42. The Istanbul Convention²⁹ was ratified by Greece on 18 June 2018 and entered into force in the country only a couple of months after the adoption of the Assembly’s resolution, on 1 October 2018.³⁰ Greece was the 32nd Council of Europe Member State to join this binding instrument aimed at creating a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combat violence against women, including psychological, physical or sexual violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion or sterilization, so-called honour crimes and sexual harassment.

43. Still in the field of women’s rights, more than 5 000 persons have installed the “Panic button” app implemented by the Ministry of Citizen Protection against domestic violence and approximately 100-120 reports are recorded daily. In 2025, 19 500 cases were brought before the justice system, while more than 1 300 victims were taken to hospitals. At the same time, around 1 600 victims received shelter in safe houses. In total, over 30 000 calls related to domestic violence incidents were recorded. Up to the moment of writing there has been a reduction in 2026 of about 15% in domestic violence incidents. Around 500 offenders are currently in prison.

5. Execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights

44. According to the Council of State, the number of judgments before the Court against Greece pending enforcement has been steadily decreasing since 2019, even if a slight increase was recorded in 2025, resulting from changes in the Court’s working methods. Furthermore, Greece has taken compliance measures to enforce the Court’s judgments and harmonize its legal framework with the Court’s case-law. Greek law does not currently provide for a legal remedy to raise complaints regarding the non-enforcement of the Court’s judgments in cases where no individual compliance measures are taken or where inappropriate or insufficient measures are taken; the applicants have no choice but to refer the matter to the Committee of Ministers. The same applies when general measures are not taken or are inappropriate or insufficient, in which case such communications may be submitted by NGOs, international organisations, and official national human rights bodies. Legal provisions exist to request the reopening of proceedings, at all levels of jurisdiction, following a decision by the Court finding that a national court’s decision was issued in violation of a right to a fair trial or a substantive right of the Convention and/or its Protocols, in order to ensure the full and effective enforcement of the Court’s decisions.

45. A significant number of issues are pending related to cases or groups of cases currently under the Committee of Minister’s supervision. The information contained in this part is taken from a document issued

²⁵ [European Treaty Series – No. 148](#).

²⁶ [European Treaty Series – No. 157](#).

²⁷ Under the Treaty of Lausanne, the recognised minority in Thrace is the Muslim Minority, comprising persons of Turkish, Pomak and Roma origin. Its members enjoy full constitutional rights, specific protections concerning religion, education and civil rights, and freedom of individual self-identification.

²⁸ [Annual report 2025 \[in Greek\]](#).

²⁹ Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ([European Treaty Series – No. 210](#)).

³⁰ Law 4531/2018 “I) Ratification of the Council of Europe preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and adaptation of Greek legislation, II) Transposition of Framework Decision 2005/214/JHA, as amended by Framework Decision 2009/299/JHA, regarding the application of the principle of mutual recognition to monetary penalties, and III) Other provisions falling within the competence of the Ministry of Justice, transparency, and human rights and other provisions” (5 April 2018).

by the Court.³¹ However, the Greek government authorities and the parliamentary majority consider that appropriate legal measures have been taken regarding the conditions of detention, the right of liberty, and the lawfulness of detention and the reception conditions of foreigners, because of a law very recently adopted.³² Most of Court judgments quoted below are “under enhanced supervision” by the Committee of Ministers. Some judgements were handed down more than a decade ago – and one of them dates from nearly two decades ago. In addition to the consideration of the Assembly’s recommendations, this list provides a good overview of the areas where the Greek legal system still has shortcomings with regard to the rule of law:

45.1. on the actions of enforcement agents: lack of effective investigations after ill-treatment by coastguards against migrants and failure to demonstrate that the use of force had been absolutely necessary;³³ failure to protect lives during search and rescue operation at sea and degrading treatment on account of body searches by coastguards;³⁴

45.2. relating to the conditions of detention: inhuman or degrading treatment on account of poor detention conditions in overcrowded prisons (excessive number of detainees per cells, no ventilation, no personal space, lack of medical care for sick detainees, etc.) and lack of effective remedy to complain thereof;³⁵

45.3. regarding lawfulness of detention and the reception conditions of foreigners: degrading treatment of asylum seekers or irregular migrants detained in various facilities;³⁶ lack of effective remedy to complain about the living conditions and delayed medical treatment;³⁷ poor living conditions in the Reception and Identification Centres of asylum seekers, including vulnerable individuals, as well as delayed medical assistance;³⁸

45.4. in the scope of the right of liberty: unlawfulness of detention of a foreign national applicant subject to expulsion, inadequate information concerning legal and factual grounds of detention and lack of an effective and accessible remedy to challenge the lawfulness of detention;³⁹ impossibility to complain against pushback; violation of the applicant foreign nationals’ right to liberty on account of the applicant’s detention prior to pushback; lack of an effective remedy in respect of alleged violations of Articles 2 (right to life) and 3 (prohibition of torture) of the Convention committed during the impugned pushback;⁴⁰

45.5. relating to enforcement of final domestic judicial decisions: non or delayed compliance of the Administration with domestic court judgments ordering the lifting of land expropriation orders interfering with the owner’s right to peaceful use of their property;⁴¹ delayed compliance of the Administration with various types of domestic court judgements;⁴² recurring problems in the legal system in relation to the removal of burdens and the amendment of urban plans;⁴³

45.6. on freedom of expression: disproportional criminal convictions for insult, defamation, or malicious defamation;⁴⁴ unjustified civil convictions inflicted for having offended the plaintiffs, mostly in articles published in the press, through defamation or insult;⁴⁵

45.7. on freedom of association: refusal to register associations or dissolution of associations from the Muslim minority in Thrace on the ground they represented a danger for public order, and disproportionate actions against the latter as they did not advocate the use of violence or anti-democratic or anti-constitutional means;⁴⁶ refusal to register an association on the ground that the use of the word

³¹ Department for the Execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights – Country Factsheet – Greece (last update 1 December 2025).

³² Law 5307/2026 “Implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, other provision of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, and other urgent provisions” (11 June 2026)

³³ Sidiropoulos and Papakostas group, 33349/10+ (judgment final on 25 April 2018). Alkhatib and Others group v Greece, 34704/08+ (judgment final on 16 April 2024).

³⁴ Safi and Others, 5418/15 (judgment final on 7 October 2022).

³⁵ Nisiotis group, 34704/08+ (judgment final on 20 June 2011).

³⁶ Muhammad group, 14606/20 (judgment final on 21 January 2011).

³⁷ H.A. and Others group, 4892/18 (judgment final on 13 June 2023).

³⁸ A.R. and Others group, 59841/19 (judgment final on 18 April 2024).

³⁹ M.D. group, 60622/11+ (judgment final on 13 November 2014).

⁴⁰ A.R.E., 15783/21 (judgment final on 30 June 2025).

⁴¹ Kanellopoulos group, 11325/06 (judgment final on 21 May 2008).

⁴² Mastrogiannis, 34151/13 (judgment final on 2 June 2022).

⁴³ Micha and Others, 13991/20 (judgment final on 8 January 2020).

⁴⁴ Katrami group, 19331/05+ (judgment final on 6 March 2008).

⁴⁵ Vasilokis group, 25145/05+ (judgment final on 17 April 2008).

⁴⁶ Bekir-Ousta group, 35151/05+ (judgment final on 1 January 2008).

“Macedonian” in its name and the purpose proclaimed in its statutes contravened public order and jeopardised the harmonious coexistence on the Florina region.⁴⁷

6. Constitutional guarantees of independence and self-governance of the judiciary

46. Judicial power in Greece is divided into three branches with one supreme court on top of each of them:

46.1. the Supreme Court of Areios Pagos is the highest court for civil and criminal justice;

46.2. the Council of State is the supreme administrative court;

46.3. the Court of Audit is the supreme financial court and supreme audit institution.

47. The review of constitutionality is carried out by all courts, regardless of their level, and there is no supreme constitutional chamber.

48. The judiciary is composed exclusively of career judges and prosecutors, who belong to a unified corps of magistrates. Their recruitment, promotion, rights, and obligations are regulated by a common legal framework. The personal and functional independence of judges is fully protected by the Constitution:⁴⁸ courts are composed of regular judges who enjoy both functional and personal independence; judicial inspections are carried out exclusively by other judges of a superior rank; judges are appointed for life, and they can only be dismissed pursuant to a court judgement, in limited cases such as a criminal conviction, serious disciplinary offense, permanent illness or disability, or professional incompetence.

49. The sole exception to the principle of self-governance consists in the promotion to the top positions of the judiciary: the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of each supreme court, the Prosecutor of the Supreme Court, the Commissioner of the Court of Audit, and the Commissioner of the Administrative Court is decided by the Cabinet of Ministers, from among the members of the respective Supreme Court.⁴⁹ The Council of State has stated that this exception to the principle of the judicial self-governance is justified by the principle of democratic legitimacy. The reasoning is that the Cabinet of Ministers, which enjoys the confidence of Parliament,⁵⁰ possesses the necessary democratic legitimacy to make such appointments. However, for the first time, following recommendations issued by GRECO and the European Commission Rule of Law Report, a recent legislative reform provides for the formal participation of the judiciary power in the selection of its own leadership,⁵¹ which represents a major step in strengthening judicial independence.

50. At the same time, according to the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index 2025,⁵² Greece ranks 48th globally among 143 countries, marking a decline of one position compared to the previous year. The country's overall performance in upholding the rule of law remains problematic, especially at the regional level, where it ranks 29th out of 31 countries in the EU, European Free Trade Association (EFTA), and North America region. One of the most concerning areas identified in the report is order and security, where Greece ranks last in this geographic zone and 71st globally, reflecting issues such as police violence and arbitrariness, crime, and the inefficiency of law enforcement authorities. There has also been a significant decline in the justice system, both civil and criminal, where delays and weak enforcement of court decisions remain major challenges. Greece's performance in areas such as constraints on government powers and open government also remains troubling, ranking 23rd and 29th out of 31, respectively, at the regional level. Corruption, according to the report, continues to be a significant problem, with Greece ranking 53rd globally and 27th among the 31 countries of its category. Overall, the areas of fundamental rights and regulatory enforcement remain relatively stable, with Greece ranking 47th and 54th globally, and 29th regionally in both categories.

51. Nevertheless, the government highlights practical reforms that have recently improved the functioning of the judicial system as a whole: a new judicial map was drawn and the number of courts, which was close to 200, has almost been halved. This has made it possible to streamline the organisation of the courts, to distribute judicial resources more effectively and to reduce delays, thus addressing the historically slow

⁴⁷ House of Macedonian Civilization and Others, 1295/10 (judgment final on 9 October 2015).

⁴⁸ Articles 87 and 88 of the Constitution.

⁴⁹ Article 90, Paragraph 5 of the Constitution.

⁵⁰ Article 84 of the Constitution

⁵¹ Article 27 of Law 5123/2024 “Modernisation of the legal framework governing liens and the establishment of a Unified Electronic Registry of Liens on movable property, claims, and other rights, and other provisions” (19 July 2024), as amended by Article 36 of Law 5197/2025 “Amendments to the legislative framework of the National School of Judicial Officers, the Code of Organization of Courts and Status of Judicial Officers, the Code of Notaries, and other provisions” (16 May 2025).

⁵² [WJP Rule of Law Index | Greece Insights](#).

administration of justice. This reform⁵³ was part of Greece's modernisation plan and has been supported by the EU as part of the European Recovery Plan. In the first year of implementation, the time required for first-instance courts to issue decisions has been cut in half, from 705 to 364 days. This improvement applies to 92% of cases nationwide. A particularly striking transformation is observed at the Athens First Instance Court, the largest in the country, where the estimated time for issuing a decision has been reduced from four years to one and a half years. Impressive progress is also recorded in Thessaloniki and Piraeus.

7. Independent Authorities and fight against corruption

7.1. *Independent Public Authorities with a constitutional status*

52. Independent Public Authorities fall into two categories: over thirty bodies created by law, which are accountable to the Government,⁵⁴ and the five established by the Constitution, whose personal and functional independence are guaranteed.⁵⁵ The prerogatives for these bodies are the following:

52.1. public mediation;⁵⁶

52.2. protection against the collection, processing, and use of personal data, particularly by electronic means;⁵⁷

52.3. oversight and imposition of administrative sanctions against radio and television;⁵⁸

52.4. protection of the secrecy of letters and free correspondence or communication, in whatever form;⁵⁹

52.5. oversight of the hiring of most government and all public sector employees.⁶⁰

53. The heads of these five administrative authorities with constitutional status are appointed for a fixed term, determined by the secondary legislation⁶¹ by a decision of the Conference of Presidents, adopted by a three-fifths majority of its members. However, since it is not always possible to secure such a majority, as a fail-safe mechanism, their term is automatically extended indefinitely until the appointment of new members, which helps to avoid vacancy.

54. This measure raises concerns in several respects. First, it creates harmful uncertainty for the actions of the impacted bodies. Second, it leads to excessive term extensions that hinder their adaptability to the socio-economic context. Third, it could encourage the leaders of these bodies to refrain from fully exercising their independence, in the hope of the government not feeling the need to appoint a successor to them. For instance, the government tried twice to replace the current Ombudsman, who was appointed in July 2016 for a six-year term, without managing to secure the required majority in favour of the candidate it had put forward. Similarly, the Acting President, as well as the six members of the HDPA's Board and their substitutes – whose terms are also limited to six years – were appointed between 2011 and 2021.

55. This situation is paradoxical. Despite their constitutional status, which should grant pre-eminent legal authority, these entities generally appeared constrained in exercising their powers, whether in the defence of human rights, the regulation of economic lobbying,⁶² the prevention of conflicts of interest,⁶³ sanctions

⁵³ Law 5108/2024 "Unification of the first instance courts, territorial restructuring of the civil and criminal courts, and other provisions" (2 May 2024).

⁵⁴ It is unclear what the exact number of non-constitutional Independent Authorities is at present, given that new ones are regularly established.

⁵⁵ Article 101A of the Constitution.

⁵⁶ The Greek Ombudsman, legally based on Article 103, Paragraph 9, of the Constitution.

⁵⁷ The Hellenic Data Protection Authority (HDPA), legally based on Article 9A of the Constitution.

⁵⁸ The National Council for Radio and Television (NCRTV) legally based on Article 15, paragraph 2, of the Constitution.

⁵⁹ The Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy (ADAE), legally based on Article 19, Paragraph 2, of the Constitution.

⁶⁰ The Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP), legally based on Article 103, Paragraph 7, of the Constitution.

⁶¹ Each of the five secondary legislation acts set the term of office for senior executives at six years not renewable.

⁶² The registering and regulating of lobbying activities, established by the law 4829/2021 "Enhancing transparency and accountability in State institutions, restoring the integrity of the Unified Mobility System, and other provisions" (1 September 2021) remains deeply inefficient. Last year, less than ten meetings were registered by MPs, members of government cabinet, director general of administrations or mayor. The ministers do not publish their agenda. Besides, the regulation only covers the specialized companies under contract, but not inhouse lobbying.

⁶³ Asset declarations of public figures are neither published nor audited. Cooling-off period is not enforced.

applicable to radio and television operators,⁶⁴ or the supervision of telecommunications.⁶⁵ Notably, the Ombudsman status does not comply with several “Venice Principles”:⁶⁶

55.1. principle 3 (salary levels for the Ombudsman and their staff, and provisions relating to the Ombudsman’s pension);

55.2. principals 5 and 10 (statutory term of Ombudsman);

55.3. principle 13 (mandate on all general interest and public services provided to the public, whether delivered by the State, by the municipalities, by State bodies or by private entities);

55.4. principle 19 (*locus standi* and suspensive effect of the filing of a request or complaint on time-limits to apply to the courts);

55.5. principle 21 (sufficient and independent budgetary resources);

55.6. principle 22 (sufficient staff and ability of Ombudsman to select his own staff).

56. While the Ombudsman and the HDPA top management team stood out for their commendable openness to dialogue and a clear willingness to shed light on the Monitoring Committee work, the same could not be said of the other two, i.e. the ADAE and the NCRTV, who rather gave the co-rapporteurs the impression of seeking to evade their legitimate questions.⁶⁷

7.2. The National Transparency Agency

57. The National Transparency Agency (NTA), established in 2019 by an ordinary law,⁶⁸ wields extensive powers without enjoying the independence that is desirable for such a body. It was designed as a single authority bringing together the responsibilities of several pre-existing inspection bodies which worked in a scattered manner, including public administration inspectors, health and welfare inspectors, public works inspectors, transport inspectors, and the General Secretariat for Anti-Corruption. Its mission consists of promoting transparency and integrity, thus improving public sector efficiency by: designing and implementing policies to detect, prevent, and combat corruption; strengthening accountability and trust in public administration; creating a coherent national framework against corruption. More concretely, it conducts inspections and audits across public and some private sectors, investigates cases of fraud, misconduct, and corruption, coordinates and oversees anti-corruption policies, receives and handles complaints and reports from citizens, and ensures compliance with laws.

58. The NTA’s Governor is appointed by the government, after a favourable opinion of the Vouli. The NTA suffers from two major drawbacks that undermine the fight against corruption in Greece: it is structurally too closely linked to the government to remain free from politicisation and to offer the minimum guarantees of independence required by European standards; it concentrates excessive powers in the areas of administrative inspection, auditing and anti-corruption, to the detriment of administrative authorities with constitutional status.

59. The perception of corruption is high among Greek households⁶⁹. In the view of NGO activists, there is no culture of integrity in Greece.⁷⁰ The Ombudsman, for its part, countered that the problem, whilst serious, should not be generalised, since corruption is no longer endemic.⁷¹

⁶⁴ NCRTV is under-resourced and under-staffed, with no expert professionals such as lawyers or political scientists.

⁶⁵ The ADAE is responsible for checking the providers of network but not competent to investigate on the devices and spywares like Predator. And for his part, the HDPA is only responsible on the protection of personal data, not on digital communication.

⁶⁶ Principles on the protection and promotion of the Ombudsman Institution (“The Venice Principles”), adopted by the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) at its 118th Plenary Session (Venice, 15-16 March 2019), endorsed by the Committee of Ministers at the 1345th Meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (Strasbourg, 2 May 2019) – [CDL-AD\(2019\)005](#).

⁶⁷ Interviews on 27 and 29 April 2026.

⁶⁸ Law 4622/2019 “Executive State: organisation, operation, and transparency of government, public bodies, and central administration” (7 August 2019).

⁶⁹ According to a November 2025 NTA poll, 83% of respondents believe corruption exists in Greece “to a very large or quite large extent,” with 85% believing Greek society tolerates it.

⁷⁰ Roundtable discussion on 27 April 2026.

⁷¹ Interview on 28 April 2026.

60. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),⁷² the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP) for 2022-2025, adopted by the Ministerial Council,⁷³ provided a comprehensive and operational strategy for preventing and combating corruption across both the public and private sectors. Most notably, among OECD countries, Greece ranked second in improvement of strategic anti-corruption frameworks and fifth in policy design. The NTA serves as the central coordinating body for the integrity system, responsible for preparing, monitoring, evaluating, and updating the NACAP, as well as coordinating its implementation in collaboration with all co-competent bodies.

61. NGOs do not share this view. They consider the NACAP to be ineffective document with only minor actual anti-corruption initiatives, most of them irrelevant or overly generic while others have already been implemented or legislated. In addition, they underscore that key GRECO recommendations are being ignored.

62. Lastly, the financial statements of political parties for 2024 were not published within the statutory deadline but the Committee for the Investigation of Declarations of Assets (CIDA), i.e. the parliamentary oversight body responsible for political funding, failed to respond to a Vouliwatch complaint in June 2025 and, shortly afterward, extended the deadline without acknowledging the complaint, raising serious questions about the credibility of its function.

7.3. GRECO recommendations

63. In its last report on Greece, which was adopted on 27 March 2026 and published on 26 May 2026,⁷⁴ GRECO sets out a balanced assessment of the improvements made by Greece in anti-corruption measures. This second compliance report assesses the measures taken by the national authorities to implement the recommendations made public by GRECO on 3 March 2022⁷⁵ and still pending on 26 June 2024.⁷⁶

64. GRECO welcomes the adoption of the code of conduct addressed to political advisors⁷⁷ and of the practical guidance appended to it but emphasises the need for all persons with top executive functions (PTEFs) to be subject to the same level of financial disclosure as members of the government regarding publication of liabilities, assets, and interests. GRECO also welcomes the publication of the lists of associates by each ministry and the publication of a systematised list by the Presidency of the Government as a step towards greater transparency, and further looks forward to receiving an update when the authorities will be able to provide more complete information on the remuneration, specific functions and ancillary activities of each associate. GRECO expresses satisfaction about the adoption of a rather comprehensive code of conduct addressed to members of the government and deputy ministers,⁷⁸ and encourages the authorities to provide hands-on guidance to enhance its practical value.

65. GRECO notes that the Code of Administrative Procedure was amended to strengthen the public's right to access administrative documents by clarifying that they can be requested either anonymously or identifiably by any individual or legal entity, both in person and electronically, and without the previous prerequisite of "reasonable interest", unless the document contains personal data.

66. GRECO notes: first, the strengthening of the General Secretariat for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs' decision-making power regarding the management of conflicts of interest; second, the ongoing work to improve the system for submitting declarations of conflict of interest and to develop new guiding materials on the General Secretariat's website; third, the publication of the decisions refusing authorisation of specific post-government activities of former PTEFs; fourth, the articulation of the procedure for submitting complaints to the Ethics Committee.

67. GRECO appreciates the extension of post-employment rules, which now cover political advisors, as well as the strengthening of the post-employment regulatory framework through the recently adopted Codes of

⁷² "Anti-Corruption and Integrity Outlook 2026: Greece" (24 March 2026).

⁷³ Council of Ministers' Act No. 19 (12 July 2022): Approval of the National Strategic Plan for the Fight Against Corruption (NACAP) 2022–2025.

⁷⁴ Fifth evaluation round – Preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments (top executive functions) and law enforcement agencies – Second compliance report – [GrecoRC5\(2026\)1](#).

⁷⁵ Fifth evaluation round – Preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments (top executive functions) and law enforcement agencies – Evaluation report – [GrecoRC5\(2020\)4](#).

⁷⁶ Fifth evaluation round – Preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments (top executive functions) and law enforcement agencies – Compliance report – [GrecoRC5\(2024\)1](#).

⁷⁷ [Code of Ethics for Transferred Employees and Special Advisors](#) (Decembre 2024) [in Greek].

⁷⁸ [Code of Ethics for Members of the Government, Deputy Ministers, and General and Special Secretaries](#) (2024) [in Greek].

Conduct, which address conflicts of interest arising from pre- and post-government activities, but looks forward to receiving information on further measures to be taken regarding the length of the cooling-off period.

68. GRECO acknowledges that the necessary regulations have been adopted by the NTA and the Ministry of the Interior to pave the way for the risk assessment and management in the public sector but looks forward to receiving in due course an update on the completion of the arrangements establishing a structural unit entrusted with risk assessment and devising the anti-corruption strategy.

69. GRECO notes that the development of a confidential counselling mechanism for providing confidential counselling to police officers on ethical and integrity matters, which has been entrusted to the newly established Directorate of Ethics and Internal Audit, must now be completed effectively. GRECO acknowledges the initial steps taken to develop the integrity checks mechanism following the reorganisation of the police and looks forward to receiving an update in due course.

70. GRECO welcomes the extension of the scope of the Whistleblower Protection Act to include persons reporting misconduct relating to bribery and influence peddling, as defined by the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code, but observes that whistleblower protection does not yet extend to violations outside the sphere of criminal law, and that the Directorate of Ethics and Internal Audit is expected to reassess the adequacy of the existing framework.

71. GRECO welcomes the recent amendments to the Police Personnel Disciplinary Law, which strengthen the independence of administrative inquiries, and the fact that police complaint investigations will be streamlined and assigned to the newly created Directorate of Ethics and Internal Audit. GRECO also notes positively the steps taken to consolidate and improve the management of police complaints, including strengthened oversight by the new Directorate of Ethics and Internal Audit through an electronic tracking system.

72. Overall, in its 2024 compliance report, GRECO deemed only 6 out of 17 recommendations set out in the Fifth Round Evaluation Report were partly implemented and none of them satisfactorily implemented. In its most recent compliance report, it concludes that Greece has satisfactorily implemented 6 recommendations and partly implemented the 11 others. As GRECO considers that Greece is therefore still not in sufficient compliance with its rules, the national authorities are asked to provide a report on the progress in implementing the outstanding recommendations.

8. Press freedom

73. For the fourth year in a row, Greece ranked last among the EU countries in the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) press freedom index. After a significant improvement in 2019 and 2020, with the country rising to 65th place, it dropped to 89th place worldwide out of 180 countries in 2025. The primary reason for this decline to 2017 levels was the assassination of journalist Giorgos Karaivaz in 2021. Since then, no further assassinations or imprisonments of journalists have been recorded in Greece. The NGOs met also noted a slight improvement since the beginning of the year, as it now ranks Greece 86th, with the following details: 94th on political indicator; 129th on economic indicator; 73rd on legal indicator; 126th on social indicator; 72nd on security indicator.⁷⁹

74. Despite ongoing efforts to professionalise and depoliticise the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT) and the Athens News Agency / Macedonian News Agency (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, still operates under the authority of the Prime Minister's Office.

75. The control of private media by vested interests is of concern. The concentration of traditional media assets in the hands of wealthy families, shipping magnates and football club owners 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. 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.

⁷⁹ [Greece | RSF](#).

76. Since the entering into force of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA)⁸⁰ in August 2025, Member States of the EU are required to enact reforms to align their legislation with the new Regulation. Greece, however, has made only limited progress in ensuring the compliance of 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. A law, adopted in 2025, includes EMFA-related provisions on state advertising expenditure and a national plan for the safety of journalists.⁸¹ 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.

9. Predator scandal

77. The Predator scandal broke in March 2022 when journalist Thanasis Koukakis discovered that his phone had been infected with Predator spyware and that he had been placed under surveillance by the Greek National Intelligence Service. Four months later, Mr Nikos Androulakis, leader of the opposition party PASOK-KINAL, also discovered that his phone had been targeted by Predator while he was a member of the European Parliament. More than 100 public figures, including ministers in Kyriakos Mitsotakis's government, journalists, business leaders, and high-ranking military officials, eventually discovered that they were targeted by the Predator software. This highly invasive technology allows hackers to infiltrate cell phones, access messages and photos, and even remotely activate the microphone and camera. These revelations were followed by numerous allegations, sparked public outrage, and led to parliamentary and judicial investigations. The European Parliament expressed its concerns, listing Greece among the EU countries suspected of abusing spyware, alongside Hungary, Poland and Spain.

78. On 30 July 2024, a prejudicial order of the Prosecutor of the Supreme Court exonerated the intelligence services and the political officials implicated, ruling that there was no evidence that the use of Predator had been ordered by the Greek government. However, several shortcomings in the investigation were revealed by the Greek media and the victims' lawyers, who denounced an "attempt to cover up the case" and "collusion between the judiciary and the government." Only two confirmed victims of Predator were questioned by the Supreme Court, the Greek employees of Intellexa – the company mainly implicated – were not heard, and access to its bank accounts was not requested.⁸²

79. In [Resolution 2513 \(2023\)](#) adopted on 11 October 2023, the Assembly urged Greece:

79.1. "to inform the Assembly and the Venice Commission⁸³ about the use of Predator and similar Spyware, within three months;"

79.2. "to conduct effective, independent, and prompt investigations into all confirmed and alleged cases of abuse of spyware and provide sufficient redress to targeted victims in cases of unlawful surveillance;"

79.3. "to refrain from using blanket secrecy rules to deny access to information on the use of spyware to oversight mechanisms and targeted persons;"

79.4. "to apply adequate sanctions, either criminal or administrative, in cases of abuse."

80. On 26 February 2026, the Second Single-Member Misdemeanor Court of Athens handed down a prison sentences of 126 years and 8 months to four individuals – Israeli and Greek shareholders of the companies Intellexa and Kriel, the alleged suppliers of the Predator software – for "violation of the confidentiality of telephone communications", "repeated unauthorized access to a system containing personal data", and "unlawful access to data". Under Greek sentencing laws, the defendants must therefore serve a mandatory eight years of that term, though the sentence has been suspended pending an appeal.⁸⁴ In addition, given the seriousness of the charges and the evidence gathered during the trial, the judge decided to transfer the case to the Athens Public Prosecutor's Office to investigate allegations of espionage by these four individuals and eight others, as well as any other persons who may be involved in this case, citing the possibility of collaboration with foreign countries. The prosecutor noted, first, that one-third of Predator's victims were also under surveillance by the EYP, and second, that Predator is not available to private individuals but offered for

⁸⁰ 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) (Text with EEA relevance).

⁸¹ Law 5253/2025 "Application of the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA – Regulation 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024) and to the public broadcaster ERT S.A." (20 November 2025).

⁸² [Athens court convicts four over Greece spyware saga | Courthouse News Service.](#)

⁸³ The European Commission for Democracy through Law.

⁸⁴ [Predator Scandal: Four Intellexa Executives Convicted in Greek Wiretapping Case - GreekReporter.com.](#)

sale only to government agencies, which undermines the government's claims that these were mere coincidences.

81. On 27 April 2026, the Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Court decided to drop the case concerning the involvement of several prominent Greek figures, despite the significant new evidence that emerged during their trial. Mr Zacharias Kesses, an Athens attorney and legal representative of several of the confirmed Predator surveillance targets,⁸⁵ has identified not less than ten specific blind spots in the ruling:⁸⁶ espionage was ruled out without ever being investigated; the logic used to rule out espionage does not hold; a key piece of evidence was dismissed without explanation; an employee's testimony pointing to an intelligence connection was not followed up; key Intellexa personnel and foreign nationals escaped scrutiny; a key suspect's ties to Greek intelligence went unexamined; a tampered document bearing Intellexa fingerprints was not taken into account; a witness testimony alleging political protection was disregarded; Intellexa's marketing materials, presented at trial, were also overlooked; a state funding scheme and alleged judicial interference were not considered.

82. Concerns around impermissible access of senior government officials to information obtained via electronic surveillance have also emerged in the context of the agricultural funds misuse scandal investigated by the EPPO. Former Deputy Minister of Digital Governance, Mr 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 Control Agency for Guidance and Guarantee Community Aid – an inquiry committee of the Voulí – that he had been informed as early as June 2024 from government sources close to the Prime Minister's office that his telephone had been placed under surveillance. This was one year before the EPPO transmitted the case file to Parliament with a view to investigating and prosecuting offences committed by members of the government.

10. Migration

10.1. Legal framework

83. On 3 September 2025, the Greek Parliament passed a law providing for the forced return of rejected asylum seekers to their countries of origin or safe third countries.⁸⁷ The new legislation also introduces the offense of illegal residence, punishable by two to five years in prison and a fine of 5 000 euros. "Third-country nationals subject to return orders will be detained until their departure," warned Minister of Migration and Asylum Athanasios Plevris. The possibility for rejected asylum seekers to obtain a residence permit after seven years of residence in Greece is also eliminated. Finally, prison sentences of at least three years are provided for foreign nationals subject to return orders who return to Greece without proper documentation. The law, coming two months after the suspension of asylum application reviews for a period of three months, further tightens Greek migration policy.

84. The left-wing opposition, international bodies, and NGOs strongly challenged these measures. On 29 August 2025, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that certain provisions of the law "risk penalizing people in need of international protection [...] including for example asylum seekers whose claims have not been assessed on the merits but have been rejected as inadmissible on the grounds of the 'safe third country' concept".⁸⁸ Indeed, since 2021, Greece recognises Türkiye as a safe third country for asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Somalia.

85. For their part, the Greek authorities claim they have managed to put an end to the inhumane conditions experienced by asylum seekers during the first years of the refugee crisis, such as those in the Moria and Idomeni camps. They claim that the country, despite remaining one of the main entry points for migrants into Europe, has transitioned from a state of chaos to a system of controlled border management, in anticipation of the entry into force of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum, adopted in 2024 and whose main provisions will come in force on 12 June 2026.⁸⁹ This legislative package⁹⁰ aims to address the many shortcomings of European asylum policy by strengthening border controls, notably to reduce irregular arrivals, and by organising the management of asylum, particularly in crisis situations. On 3 March 2020, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen stated: "The Greek authorities are facing a very difficult

⁸⁵ He had been invited to take part in the 27 April 2026 roundtable discussion with the NGOs but was unable to attend due to current events.

⁸⁶ [Predator Scandal: 10 Blind Spots in the Decision to Drop the Case - tovima.com](https://www.tovima.com/predator-scandal-10-blind-spots-in-the-decision-to-drop-the-case/).

⁸⁷ Law 5226/2025 "Revision of the framework and procedures for the return of third-country nationals – Other measures introduced by the Ministry of migration and asylum" (8 September 2025).

⁸⁸ <https://www.unhcr.org/gr/en/unhcr-comments-draft-law>

⁸⁹ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en

⁹⁰ Nine regulations and one Directive.

task in containing the situation [...]. This border is not only a Greek border, but it is also a European border [...]. I thank Greece for being our European shield in these times.”⁹¹

86. The Ministry of Migration and Asylum refutes the criticism expressed by NGOs concerning the lack of medical care and social assistance in the system of encampment.⁹² He underscored his commitment to the social integration of third-country nationals, particularly unaccompanied minors,⁹³ families,⁹⁴ asylum seekers from countries deemed unsafe, and beneficiaries of international protection. The General Secretariat of Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection (GSVIP) exercises strategic, coordinating and institutional responsibilities regarding the protection of minors – especially those unaccompanied or separated from their families –, persons with disabilities, persons with serious illnesses, pregnant women, single parents with underage children, victims of trafficking, victims of torture or other forms of serious violence, and elderly persons. This entity was established in 2023⁹⁵ and falls under the responsibilities of the Minister of Migration and Asylum.

10.2. Accidents at sea

87. On 14 June 2023, the *Adriana*, a trawler carrying approximately 750 migrants – mostly from Egypt, Syria, and Pakistan – sank in international waters off the coast of Pylos, in the Ionian Sea. Only 104 people survived. The Greek port authorities stated that the migrants followed the smugglers’ orders, which were to refuse any assistance and to carry on at all costs, because their goal was to reach Italian territorial waters. In any case, the Greek coastguards claimed they remained nearby to rescue the migrants if necessary, and, when the fishing boat capsized and eventually sank, launched a large-scale search and rescue operation.

88. However, last November, more than two years after the disaster, the current head of the Greek Coast Guard and three other senior officers of the Port Police were prosecuted for failure to assist a person in danger and involuntary manslaughter. The prosecutor of the Court of Appeals confirmed several serious failures on the part of Greek authorities that led to the shipwreck. He asserted that no rescue or hazard prevention operation was initiated, even though the Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre and a vessel from the border surveillance agency Frontex had warned the Greek coast guard of the presence of this ship overloaded with migrants in their area of operation. The prosecutor’s office also notes that more than fifteen hours elapsed between the first distress alert regarding the *Adriana* and the Greek coastguard’s intervention.

89. For his part, still last November, the Greek Ombudsman questioned why the Ministry of the Navy had still not initiated disciplinary proceedings against the coast guard and deemed that this lack of response from the government “contributes little to boosting the morale of the cadres of the Hellenic Coast Guard, the men and women who perform their duty honourably and scrupulously. Just as it does little to protect the prestige of the Force and its international reputation.” Over the past fifteen months, two successive heads of the Hellenic Coast Guard have retired.

90. Again, just recently, on 3 February 2026, fifteen migrants died after a speedboat carrying them collided with a Greek coastguard vessel off the coast of the island of Chios. Two members of the coastguard were also taken to hospital, with one man discharged and a woman held for further examinations after suffering what officials described as a “mild concussion”. Greek authorities said the speedboat was making dangerous manoeuvres and that a pursuit was under way at the time of the collision. Twenty-four people, most of them of Afghan nationality, were rescued. The incident comes amid continued scrutiny of Greece’s handling of migrant crossings following the Pylos shipwreck. The Minister of Migration and Asylum said the deaths were a “tragic incident” while speaking during a debate in parliament about toughening criminal penalties against traffickers.

10.3. Pushbacks

91. In January 2025, the Strasbourg Court judged that Greece carries out a “systematic practice” of pushbacks and that “in the current state of national practice, domestic remedies indicated by the Government are not effective concerning complaints stemming from *refoulement* as such and other alleged violations of the

⁹¹ <https://www.primeminister.gr/en/2020/03/03/23458>

⁹² The thirty holding centres have a capacity of 31,000 migrants and are currently housing 16,000. About 3,500 others are on detention because they have not left the country although not having been granted a residence permit.

⁹³ The number range of unaccompanied minors currently seeking refuge in Greece is estimated between 1,600 and 1,700.

⁹⁴ In the camps, families are housed in safe zones, and accommodation may be allocated to them in sixty dedicated buildings.

⁹⁵ Presidential Decree 77/2023 “Establishment of a Ministry and renaming of Ministries – Establishment, abolition and renaming of General and Special Secretariats – Transfer of responsibilities, service units, staff positions, and supervised entities” (27 June 2023).

Convention perpetrated in the course of said refoulement.”⁹⁶ To date, no pushback case has proceeded before the Greek Courts beyond the criminal preliminary examination stage. Public prosecutors have continued to shelve investigations into allegations of pushbacks, claiming insufficient indications of wrongdoing. Criminal complaints submitted by NGOs have been routinely archived as unfounded. In addition, the Greek administrative authorities did not take effective disciplinary action to ensure the accountability of officials implicated in fundamental rights violations. Official figures shared by the government in late 2025 in response to parliamentary questions revealed that none of the 42 sworn administrative inquiries conducted into allegations of fundamental rights violations from 2019 to 2025 have led to disciplinary action against Hellenic Coast Guard officials, and that out of the 39 disciplinary cases conducted against Hellenic Police officers for pushbacks in the same period, 25 were concluded, 8 were assessed and shelved and 6 were pending, but none led to disciplinary sanctions.

92. In a recent article,⁹⁷ the BBC claimed that the Greek police recruited migrants to violently push other migrants back across its land border with Türkiye. In spite of the Prime Minister’s denials, the BBC contends it has pieced together information from migrants, former mercenaries, boarder guard sources, official documents and leaked transcripts.

11. Conditions of detention

93. The Council of Europe’s European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), in a report on its periodic visit in January 2025 published on 4 March 2026,⁹⁸ along with the Greek authorities’ response, once again calls on Greece to address the persistent problems of prison overcrowding, poor detention conditions, and staff shortages. The report examines the treatment and conditions of detention of inmates in seven men’s prisons and two women’s prisons, as well as in several police facilities. The findings of the 2025 visit confirm that the structural problems of overcrowding and severe staff shortages, exacerbated by additional shortcomings in the prisons visited, continue to undermine the proper functioning of the prison system. As a result, many prisoners are held in poor and dangerous conditions.

94. Detention conditions in men’s prisons continue to fall short of acceptable and legal minimum standards. Urgent improvements should focus on reducing cell occupancy rates, investing in maintenance, improving hygiene, and expanding the range of activities offered to inmates. In addition, prisoners placed in solitary confinement or isolation units should have daily access to an outdoor area and adequate supervision. The CPT also calls for a coherent strategy to reduce the prison population that prioritizes alternatives to imprisonment and non-custodial measures.

95. Staffing levels were insufficient in all the prisons visited, in some instances allowing the most powerful groups of inmates to act with impunity. The CPT calls for the implementation of a national strategy aimed at preventing violence among prisoners, prioritizing increased staffing levels and the training and support of staff. Furthermore, long-standing structural deficiencies in the provision of healthcare remained evident in all prisons visited. The CPT calls for substantial investment and a comprehensive reform of health services in prisons, based on a needs assessment.

96. The report also assesses the situation of prisoners with disabilities, older prisoners, and transgender individuals deprived of liberty, many of whom unmet needs and did not receive adequate support. Concerning women in prison, the CPT deplores the insufficient use of non-custodial alternatives and community-based measures for women, including pregnant women and mothers of young children. The CPT received several allegations of physical ill-treatment of female prisoners by male prison staff. Self-harm should not be punished with disciplinary sanctions, and restraints should not be used against women following such incidents.

97. The CPT has again received credible allegations of physical ill-treatment of detainees by the police, with the aim of extracting confessions or punishing certain behaviours. It calls for additional measures to be taken to actively promote a professional police culture within the Hellenic Police. Such measures should be supported by the implementation of safeguards from the outset of deprivation of liberty, the adoption of non-coercive interrogation techniques, the systematic electronic recording of police interrogations, and greater police accountability. The CPT also examined several deaths that occurred in police premises, including that of a foreign national in September 2024 at a police station, and noted that several cases could have been prevented. It recommends improving the care and supervision of vulnerable or at-risk persons, and requests information on the results of the investigation conducted into this death.

⁹⁶ A.R.E., 15783/21.

⁹⁷ [Greek police using masked 'mercenaries' to push migrants back across border](#), 14 April 2026.

⁹⁸ [Visit report Greece – January 2025](#).

98. Acknowledging the key role of the CPT in the reform process, the Greek authorities have presented a new 2025-2030 action plan for the overhaul of the prison system, under the coordination and supervision of the Prime Minister's office. According to the CPT, this comprehensive reform plan, detailed and quantified, represents a significant advance in both cooperation and strategic planning to address the prison crisis. The Greek authorities provided detailed replies to the CPT's recommendations, and several of them have already been implemented fully or partially. Legislative changes and substantial investments in infrastructure aim to improve detention conditions and bring Greek prisons in line with CPT standards.

12. Strategic lawsuits against public participation

99. NGOs have reported several cases of judicial harassment against human rights defenders, which can be considered as strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs).⁹⁹ These charges are seen as a retaliation for their work defending the rights of migrants, including "participation and membership of a criminal organisation", "facilitating the entry into Greek territory of a third-country national" and "facilitating the unlawful residence of a third country national for profit and on a repeated basis." Yet, the Anti-SLAPP European Directive¹⁰⁰ is clearly aimed to curb the weaponisation of litigation against journalists, civil society organisations and human rights activists. It provides cross-border safeguards, early dismissal of manifestly unfounded claims, and a right to compensation. Now in its transposition phase, EU Member States are expected to align national laws with the text. The Greek authorities are urged to take proactive steps to ensure its timely and effective implementation. Nevertheless, beyond individual cases, the strengthening of the legal arsenal against human right defenders seems problematic.

100. A 2022 law established a "Registry of Greek and foreign non-governmental organisations",¹⁰¹ operated by the Special Secretariat for the Coordination of Stakeholders of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. The latter is responsible for registering in it "all Greek and international volunteer organisations and civil society organisations that meet the minimum necessary requirements for participation in the implementation of actions related to international protection, migration, and social integration. Non-profit organisations, volunteer organisations, and any similar organisation, whether Greek or international, that is not registered in the registry may not participate in the implementation of actions related to international protection, migration, and social integration within Greek territory, and in particular in the provision of legal, psychosocial, and medical services [, or] in the provision of material reception." The article adds a heavily restrictive framework in terms of statute, staff competencies, funding and audit of the relevant organisations.

101. Such registries are widely criticised, including by the Conference of INGOs of the Council, who said it was detrimental to "freedom of association and the protection of civil society space."¹⁰² The new proposals follow on from a range of measures introduced last year dealing with transparency and preventing criticism by NGOs of the government's migration policy.

102. Furthermore, a very recent law¹⁰³ appears to exert a higher degree of coercion on the activists acting on behalf of a registered NGO, as it introduces a threat of criminalizing their activities. Certain misdemeanours are transformed into criminal offences, if committed by members of a group entered in the country's registry of NGOs. The mere membership in such a registered organisation will reclassify incrimination such as facilitation of illegal stay, or refusal to hand a travel document, to felony.

103. Its Article 15 ("Obligations of Private Individuals and Public Officials and Penalties") amends as follows Article 24 of the Immigration Code: if "a member of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) registered in the Registry of Greek and Foreign NGOs under Article 78 of the Code of Legislation on the Reception, the international protection of third-country nationals and stateless persons, and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced foreigners" "facilitates the entry into or exit from Greek territory" or "the illegal residence of a third-country national or obstructs the investigations of the police authorities to locate, arrest,

⁹⁹ [Greece: Continued judicial harassment against migrants' rights defender Panayote Dimitras](#).

¹⁰⁰ 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') transposed by Law 5326/2026 "Measures to protect against strategic lawsuits designed to discourage public participation, in accordance with Directive (EU) 2024/1069 – New framework for management compliance with court decisions – Other provisions (4 August 2026).

¹⁰¹ Article 78 of law 4939/2022 "Ratification of the Code of Legislation on the Reception, International Protection of Third-Country Nationals and Stateless Persons, and Temporary Protection in the Event of a Mass Influx of Displaced Foreigners" (10 June 2022).

¹⁰² Opinion on the compatibility with European standards of recent and planned amendments to the Greek legislation on NGO registration – [CONF/EXP\(2020\)4](#) (2 July 2020).

¹⁰³ Law 5275/2026 "Promotion of legal migration policies and the transposition of Directive (EU) 2024/1233" (21 February 2026).

and deportation” the latter “without undergoing [specific] inspection [,] imprisonment of at least ten (10) years and a fine of at least fifty thousand (50 000) euros shall be imposed.”

104. Following the same logic, its Article 16 (“Obligations and penalties imposed on carriers”) amends Article 25 of the Immigration Code, concerning the obligations of those who transport third-country nationals and the applicable penalties: “drivers of any type of transport vehicle carrying third-country nationals from abroad into Greece who do not have the right to enter Greek territory or who have been denied entry for any reason, as well as those who receive them at entry points, at external or internal borders, in order to transport them into the country or to the territory of another EU Member State or a third country, or who facilitate their transport or provide them with accommodation for the purpose of concealment, shall be punished [...] with imprisonment of at least ten (10) years and a fine of sixty thousand (60 000) to one hundred thousand (100 000) euros for each person transported, if the perpetrator [...] is a member of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) registered in the Registry of Greek and Foreign NGOs under Article 78 of the Code of Legislation on the Reception, international protection of third-country nationals and stateless persons and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced foreigners.”

105. The Greek authorities claim that police officers, coastguards and all employees of public administration are subject to the same requirements to remain vigilant against traffickers, so as not to be instrumentalised or even weaponised. The Ombudsman himself expresses mix feelings about the registration: he endorses the principle, insofar as it promotes transparency, but underlines that the very bureaucratic and demanding requirements for registration are a burden for many of NGOs.

106. Upon the decision of the Monitoring Committee, a request was submitted on 29 June 2026 to the Venice Commission for an urgent opinion to clarify the legality of Greek Laws 4939/2022 and 5275/2026 concerning human rights defenders supporting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Greece. The Venice Commission informed that its opinion will unfortunately not be ready before this report is discussed in Committee but that it should be issued before the autumn part-Session: if relevant, its findings and conclusions will be dealt with in an addendum to the report.