Country Report – Greece (2026)

1. Delays in the administration of Justice and Initiatives to speed up justice

Delays in case management timelines and the delivery of judgments may, in certain cases, amount to a *de facto* **denial of justice**, effectively undermining citizens' right to judicial protection and acting as a deterrent to the country's economic development.
This reality is reflected: a) In ECtHR judgements finding a violation of Art. 6 ECHR, due to the length of proceedings: According to the Court's statistics (1959-2022) out of the 969 judgements, which have found at least one violation against Greece, 545 concern the length of proceedings.
The data reveals that the excessive length of proceedings (Article 6 § 1) is not just a frequent issue, but the dominant factor in Greece's legal friction with the ECHR.

- Out of the 969 cases where a violation was found, 545, representing **56.2%**, were specifically due to the excessive duration of domestic cases.
- To put this in perspective, Greece has more violations due to the length of proceedings (545) than it does for all other types of violations combined (424).
- The ECtHR, through its pilot judgments, ruled that the delays in proceedings before civil courts [*Glykantzi* judgment of 30.10.2012], criminal courts [*Michelioudaki* judgment of 3.4.2012], and administrative courts [*Athanasiou* judgment of 21.12.2010] do not merely constitute a violation of Articles 6 § 1 and 13 of the ECHR—namely, the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time and the right to an effective remedy—but also reveal the existence of a serious problem of a systemic nature. Although these judgments were issued over 10 years ago, the problem unfortunately remains unchanged. The recent judgment in *Vervele v. Greece* (26.8.2025), which not only condemned Greece for the slow administration of justice but also deemed the compensatory remedy of Law 4239/2014 ineffective, serves as an emphatic reminder of this reality.

b) In the most recent statistics on justice across EU Member States, published by the European Commission in the latest edition of the *EU Justice Scoreboard 2025*:

According to the most recent data considered by the European Commission for Greece (based on the latest available data (reference year 2023) used in the EU Justice Scoreboard 2025), the estimated time required for judicial resolution of civil, commercial, administrative, and other cases at first instance stands at **642 days**—the slowest in the European Union. The estimated time required for judicial resolution of civil and commercial disputes at first instance in Greece is **771 days**; at second instance, it is **673 days**. No data were provided for the *Areios Pagos*(Court of Cassation).

The data for administrative justice at first and second instance are marginally better (**439 days** and **703 days** respectively). However, the *Council of State* remains the slowest administrative court in Europe, requiring **1,232 days** to deliver a judgment.

In criminal matters, data from the Athens Court of First Instance (the largest Court of first instance in the country), as documented in a World Bank study on the effectiveness of recently introduced reforms, conclude that three-member court panels have been reduced by half. Nevertheless, the increase in single-judge formations has not been sufficient to schedule a greater total number of hearings at the Athens Court of First Instance. The study attributes this inability to schedule additional sessions to a shortage of available courtrooms, insufficient human resources, and, most critically, a lack of prosecutors available to attend additional hearings.

In court registries, despite efforts undertaken, the time required for issuing certificates—which are essential for commercial transactions—remains unsatisfactory.

What should be emphasised, however, is the **positive impact of transferring certain judicial functions to advocates** (including matters relating to recognition of associations, prenotations of mortgage, certificates of inheritance). This transfer has borne out the position long held by the legal profession and has yielded excellent results. These matters are now handled and processed expeditiously, with competence and efficiency, by advocates, whilst simultaneously freeing up resources within the judicial system. The success of this initiative demonstrates that the legal profession is not only willing to assume additional responsibilities to improve the administration of

justice but also possesses the expertise and organisational capacity to fulfil them effectively, in the public interest.

The extension of this transfer to include payment orders for recovery of possession of leased premises (pursuant to recent amendments to the Code of Civil Procedure) is, indisputably, a positive step. In the current circumstances, it ought to be complemented by the introduction of mandatory legal representation in transactions involving real estate and certain categories of other significant contracts, with a view to enhancing legal certainty in commercial dealings and preventing litigation and reducing the burden on the courts.

2. Constitutional reform

As the constitutional amendment process gets underway, the Greek Bar has formulated specific proposals in anticipation of the review:

(a) Ensuring the independence of the selection of judicial leadership

The selection of the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the Supreme Courts should be rendered independent from the executive branch.

This is a demand upon which the majority of the legal community converges in public discourse. However, to date, the necessary parliamentary majority to permit the required constitutional amendment has not been achieved.

(b) Prohibition on the appointment of retired judges to public positions

There is an urgent necessity to sever the umbilical cord between the executive branch and the judiciary by prohibiting the appointment of retired judges to public positions (whether in independent authorities or otherwise) for a minimum period of, for example, four years—commonly referred to as a **cooling-off period**.

(c) Granting the legal profession a formal right of audience in the Supreme Judicial Council

It is now appropriate to consider the institutional entrenchment of the right of Bar Associations to express their opinion before the Supreme Judicial Council concerning the professional status of judges. Advocates are, by operation of law, essential joint

participants in the justice system. Their position is fundamental, equal, independent, and necessary for its administration (Article 2 of the Code of Advocates). Bar Associations—as institutional advisers to the State—are charged with safeguarding the functioning of an independent judiciary, which renders justice in the name of the Greek people, as well as with formulating assessments and proposals for improving the functioning and administration of justice (Article 90(b) and (f) of the Code of Lawyers). These provisions, which constitute binding rules of law with constitutional foundation, manifestly support the expression of opinion by Bar Associations regarding the professional status of judges, particularly in matters of promotion and evaluation.

(d) Amendment of Article 86 of the Constitution concerning ministerial responsibility

The objective is to remove the requirement for parliamentary majority approval before ministers may be prosecuted.

3. Application by the Athens Bar Association to the European Court of Human Rights following a Council of State ruling holding that the Athens Bar Association lacks standing to bring an action for annulment against the appointment of members of independent authorities without the constitutionally required majority

The application by the Athens Bar Association to the **European Court of Human Rights** has been declared admissible at the preliminary stage. The application concerns the dismissal by the *Council of State* (as inadmissible for lack of standing) of the action for annulment of the appointment of members of the independent authorities National Council for Radio and Television and Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy.

Following official notification from the ECtHR, the application was declared admissible, having passed the Court's initial admissibility filter. Furthermore, it has been designated an **"impact case"** and is accordingly being examined as a matter of priority by the Court.

It is recalled that, by Application No. 6312/25, the Athens Bar Association lodged an application with the ECtHR against Judgments 1639/2024 and 1641/2024 of the

Plenary Session of the *Council of State*. Those judgments had dismissed as inadmissible, on grounds of alleged lack of standing, the actions for annulment brought by the Association against the appointment of members of the Independent Authorities ESR (National Council for Radio and Television) and ADAE (Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy), without the special three-fifths majority of the Conference of Presidents of Parliament required by the Constitution.

Before the ECtHR, issues have been raised concerning the violation of **Article 6(1)** of the European Convention on Human Rights (right of access to a court), as well as violations of **Articles 8 and 10** of the Convention (respect for private life and freedom of expression).

The case raises issues of fundamental importance for the democratic functioning of the State and the protection of the **Rule of Law**, as Independent Authorities constitute essential pillars of democracy and the protection of citizens' rights.

The Athens Bar Association will continue its efforts before the ECtHR, with the objectives of securing acknowledgment of ***locus standi*** of Bar Associations to challenge acts affecting democracy, justice, and the Rule of Law; protecting the constitutional framework governing the composition of Independent Authorities; and safeguarding the substantive independence of rule-of-law institutions that serve as institutional counterweights to political power.