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LEGAL MATTERS

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE NEWS AND NEWSMAKERS THAT SHAPE
EUROPE'S EMERGING LEGAL MARKETS



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Greece: Reforming Civil Justice – Efficiency, Structural Change, and Legal Certainty

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The timely administration of justice constitutes a fundamental element of the rule of law and a key factor for legal certainty and economic development. Over the past decade, Greece has undertaken a series of reforms aimed at improving the efficiency of civil justice and reducing delays in judicial proceedings. This article examines the evolution of these reforms, focusing on measures intended to improve the efficiency of civil and commercial litigation at first-instance courts, beginning with the major amendment of the *Greek Code of Civil Procedure* (GCCP) in 2015, followed by procedural adjustments in 2021 and the structural reorganization of the civil court system in 2024, as well as additional legislative improvements adopted in 2025 and 2026. By combining procedural modernization with institutional restructuring, these reforms seek to enhance judicial efficiency and strengthen confidence in the Greek legal system.

The effective and timely administration of justice constitutes a fundamental element of the rule of law and a key factor for the stability of economic transactions. In recent years, the functioning of civil courts in Greece has been the subject of continuous reform efforts aimed at improving the speed of judicial proceedings and enhancing the overall efficiency of the judicial system. A major step in this direction was taken in 2015, when the GCCP underwent an extensive reform designed to accelerate civil litigation. The reform introduced significant procedural changes, placing greater emphasis on written submissions and restructuring the ordinary procedure in order to facilitate faster adjudication, notably through stricter procedural deadlines. At the same time, the reform significantly limited the oral examination of witnesses before the court and strengthened the use of sworn affidavits as an evidentiary means, which increasingly replaced the traditional live examination of witnesses during the hearing, thereby reinforcing the written character of the proceedings.

As part of the continued modernization of civil procedure, a further amendment to the GCCP took place in 2021. This reform aimed to enhance the efficiency of proceedings through improved case management and the gradual expansion of digital tools within the judiciary. In particular, the reform introduced the possibility of electronic service of procedural documents and procedural adjustments concerning civil proceedings before the Su-

preme Court (*Areios Pagos*), contributing to the digital transformation and modernization of civil justice.

To this end, major structural reforms were introduced in 2024, marking a significant reorganization of the Greek civil court system and the implementation of a new judicial map. The most notable institutional change was the abolition of the Courts of Peace (*Eirinodikeia*) as a separate level of jurisdiction and the unification of the first instance of jurisdiction, with magistrate judges being integrated into the Courts of First Instance. This aimed to distribute cases more rationally. In addition, the reform introduced regional seats of the Courts of First Instance, which were established in order to ensure geographical accessibility to justice while maintaining the structural consolidation of the first degree of jurisdiction.

In 2025, further amendments to the GCCP were adopted to accelerate proceedings and reduce the backlog of pending cases. These reforms include the shortening of several procedural deadlines within the ordinary procedure, the introduction of specific deadlines within which judges are expected to issue their decisions, and the strengthening of the binding character of certain procedural time limits, aiming to enhance predictability and procedural discipline. At the same time, the reform promotes digital procedural acts and encourages the use of alternative dispute resolution methods such as mediation and arbitration.

The reform process continued in February 2026 with additional amendments to the GCCP. The measures aimed to improve case management mechanisms, accelerate the delivery of judicial decisions, and expand the use of digital technologies in court operations. These reforms are noteworthy because they combine procedural improvements with structural reorganization of the judicial system, reflecting a broader strategy to strengthen the effectiveness of civil justice.

Efficient judicial systems play a crucial role in supporting economic development and reinforcing investor confidence, as the timely and predictable resolution of disputes constitutes a fundamental element of a stable legal environment. In this respect, the ongoing modernization of the Greek civil justice system is expected to enhance dispute resolution reliability and contribute positively to Greece's attractiveness for international investment. ●