

vouliwatch

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



A N N U A L R E P O R T

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The following report relates to the activities of Vouliwatch for the period of March 2023 to March 2024.

Vouliwatch is an Athens based, registered non for profit organization with reg. no: **127494401000**



"Transparent Democracy" from the series Future Athens (2004) by Dimitris Tsoumpleskas.

VISION & APPROACH

In the wake of the economic crisis and in a country where politics has all too often been beset by scandals and corruption, Vouliwatch aims to contribute towards the establishment of an open and accountable political system that uses innovative digital technology to promote citizen participation in the political process and to rebuild trust in parliamentary democracy. In the heyday of Ancient Greek democracy, citizens actively participated in political dialogue, and Vouliwatch aims to revive this essential aspect of a democratic society through the use of digital technology.

Vouliwatch makes use of a digital platform that offers Greek citizens the opportunity to publicly question MPs and MEPs on the topic of their choice, and to hold their elected representatives accountable for their parliamentary activity. Moreover it acts as a parliamentary "watchdog" by providing first hand reporting on the latest legislative developments in parliament as well as by monitoring the voting behaviour of elected representatives.

Vouliwatch's scope expands beyond the digital realm as it is a strong campaigner and advocate for parliamentary openness, freedom of access to information, open government and political transparency.

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7. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Vouliwatch ("Vouli" means Parliament in Greek) is a non-partisan parliamentary monitoring and democracy watchdog organisation that was set up and legally registered in Athens in March 2014 in response to the rising disillusionment of a large segment of the Greek population towards parliamentary democracy and the broader Greek political system.

The organisation's main goal is to bridge the gap between citizens and their political representatives whilst promoting a culture of transparency, accountability and active citizenship. In doing so, Vouliwatch makes use of innovative digital technology applications whose purpose is to facilitate the monitoring of parliamentarians' activities, the transparent communication between MPs/MEPs and their constituents as well as the recording of all parliamentary activity.

Vouliwatch has managed in a very short space of time to establish itself as the leading advocacy and campaign organisation in Greece in the fields of transparency, open government and the freedom of access to information. Vouliwatch is a founding member of the ParliamentWatch Network, and is member of the United Nation's Coalition Against Corruption (UNCAC), ALTER-EU, the Open Spending EU Coalition and the Right to Information Network. Additionally, our organisation works regularly with international and supra-national institutions and organisations such as the European Parliament, the Commission, GRECO and the Open Government Partnership to advance and safeguard the principles of democracy, the rule of law and open government.

Vouliwatch is financially independent, it does not accept financial support from political parties, politicians nor corporations and does not wish to generate income through advertising on its website. It values its independence as it believes it to be one of its greatest assets.



At Vouliwatch, we are driven by a shared passion for good governance, transparency, and democratic accountability. Our team is a dynamic blend of professionals with diverse expertise, united by a commitment to empowering citizens and fostering a more open and inclusive political process in Greece.

Each member of our team brings unique skills and perspectives—from law and political science to civic technology and communication—that enable us to approach our mission holistically. With unwavering dedication, we work to shine a light on parliamentary procedures, promote active citizenship, and advocate for reforms that enhance transparency and participation.

Together, we are not just observers of democracy; we are active participants, using our knowledge and experience to bridge the gap between the public and their elected representatives. At Vouliwatch, we believe that transparency is the cornerstone of a thriving democracy, and we are committed to making sure that every citizen has the tools and information they need to hold those in power accountable.



Konstantinos Mentzelos
PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCHER /
CONTENT ADMINISTRATOR

Konstantinos studied Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Athens and holds a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Cyprus. He handles parliamentary research, collection and processing of parliamentary data. Keeps a concise and detailed record of all legislative and parliamentary votes. Manages and updates the profiles of MPs, their backgrounds and communication with their offices. He is responsible for and coordinates the university students and graduates who carry out their internship at the organisation, as well as Vouliwatch's volunteers network. Konstantinos believes in the principles of participatory democracy and the active monitoring of the legislature by citizens, whom he aspires to mobilise in this direction.



Stefanos Loukopoulos
CO-FOUNDER / DIRECTOR

Stefanos studied Political Science (BA), International Relations (MA), and International Conflict Analysis (MA) in the UK and Belgium. He has worked for several years in the NGO sector in London (Concern Worldwide) and Brussels (ELARD), as well as at the European Parliament. He is a founding member of the international network Parliamentwatch Network and has served as a member of the Social Accountability Council of ERT. In recent years, he has been actively involved at both national and international levels in the fields of open governance, transparency, and the right to access public information.



Gerasimos Livitsanos
PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT

Accredited parliamentary correspondent since 1994. Has been active in the field since 1992 and worked in 5 newspapers - magazines, 3 radio stations and currently in the digital press. He is a regular member of the Athenian Union of Editors of Daily Newspapers.



Maria Nathanail
HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS /
LEGAL ADVICE

Maria has studied Law, International Law and Gender Studies, in Athens and Paris. She has worked as an NGO legal adviser, an Attorney at Law, a Press Attachée of the Athens International Film Festival and has co-founded "MakeEnds-Meet Communications" creative agency. She strongly believes in the power of arts, innovation and everyday politics.



Christiana Stilianidou
LEGAL ADVISOR & RESEARCHER

She studied at the Law School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) and holds a Master's Degree in Criminal Sciences from the same school, as well as a Master's Degree in Forensic Psychiatry from the Medical School of NKUA. She is a lawyer, a researcher/contributor for the "Govwatch" observatory, and the editorial coordinator of the online scientific journal "CrimeTimes," published by the Crime Study Center. She believes that free access to public information and scientific knowledge is a necessary component of a strong and participatory democracy, promoting and empowering citizens' rights.

1



OPINIONS, ANALYSES & STUDIES



1.1 The Legislative Work of the Outgoing Parliament 2019-2023

In our analysis of the legislative work of the outgoing Parliament (2019-2023), we examined the passage of 394 bills that addressed critical areas such as healthcare, economic recovery, and education. Despite the high volume of legislative activity, our study highlighted significant concerns regarding the quality and transparency of the legislative process. Notably, a substantial portion of these laws included last-minute amendments that were often irrelevant to the primary bills, which impeded thorough debate and public scrutiny.

This practice underscored the need for structural reforms to ensure that legislation is introduced and debated in a manner that upholds democratic principles and allows for meaningful public engagement.

Our findings also revealed that 45% of the bills were passed under fast-track procedures, which further limited opportunities for comprehensive parliamentary debate. These insights emphasize the need for a more transparent and accountable legislative process, and we continue to advocate for reforms that would enhance public participation and ensure a higher quality of legislative work in future parliamentary terms.

1.2 How the Financial Situation of Members of Parliament Evolved Over the Years?

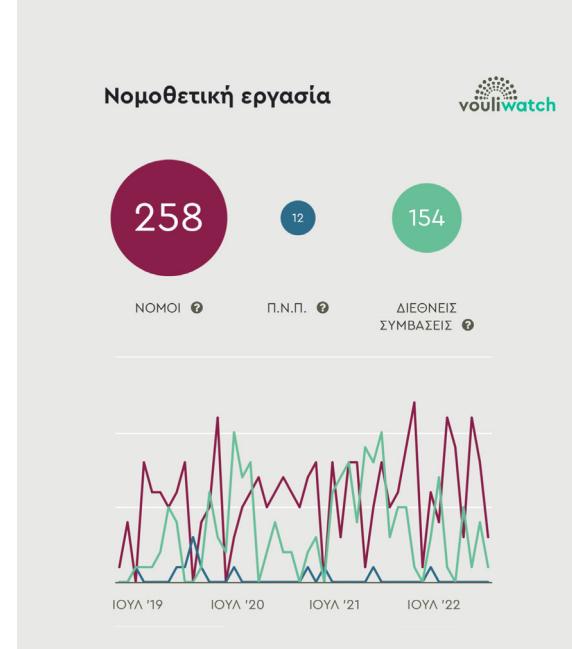
Our study on the financial situation of Members of Parliament (MPs) examined the data from asset declarations, focusing on how MPs' financial status evolved over time. The analysis revealed that among the declarations submitted, there were notable differences in asset ownership, with many MPs showing significant investments in properties, bank deposits, and shares. The report detailed the composition of MPs' wealth, noting that properties accounted for a substantial part of their assets, with several MPs declaring ownership of multiple real estate properties, both within Greece and abroad.

The data also highlighted variations in income sources among MPs, including parliamentary salaries, business activities, and other professional engagements. A considerable number of MPs reported changes in their financial situation between terms, reflecting shifts in income and investments. This detailed review of asset declarations provided an overview of the economic landscape of MPs, illustrating the diversity of their financial profiles and offering insights into how their economic activities align with their declared income sources.



1.3 Voulidata: the legislative work of the 9th Parliament in figures

Our analysis of the 9th Parliament's legislative work from July 2019 to July 2023 revealed several key issues that hindered the quality of legislation. While a significant number of bills were passed (424), a concerning finding was the frequent use of last-minute amendments. Over 50% of amendments were introduced at the final stage, often without proper parliamentary debate, reducing the transparency and thoroughness of the legislative process. Furthermore, more than 55% of these amendments were irrelevant to the core subject of the bills they were attached to, complicating the legislative process and undermining the coherence of the laws passed. The report also raised concerns about the adherence to public consultation rules. Many bills were pushed through without adequate public engagement, undermining the opportunity for citizens and stakeholders to provide meaningful input. This lack of consultation, combined with the excessive use of last-minute and irrelevant amendments, points to a pressing need for Parliament's leadership to strictly adhere to the rules of the legislative process.

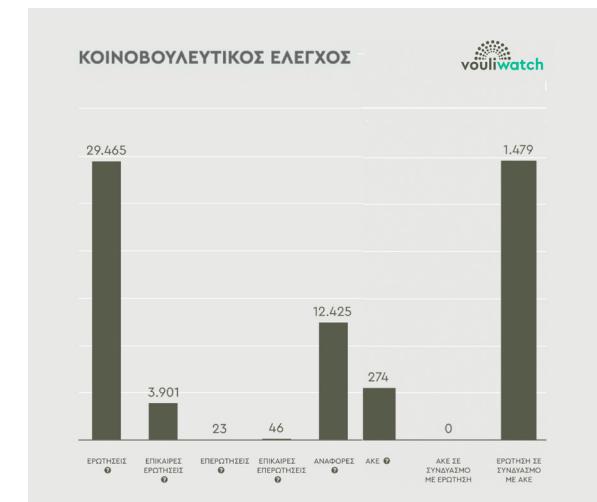


1.4 Voulidata: the parliamentary control of the 9th Parliament in figures

The "Voulidata" analysis of parliamentary control during the 9th Parliament provided a detailed overview of the oversight activities conducted from July 2019 to July 2023. During this period, MPs submitted numerous parliamentary questions, interpellations, and petitions as part of their efforts to

scrutinize government actions and policies. The report presented comprehensive data on the volume of these activities, illustrating how MPs utilized these tools to hold the government accountable on various issues ranging from public administration to economic policy.

The data highlighted the frequent use of parliamentary questions as a primary mechanism for oversight, reflecting the active role of MPs in engaging with governmental decisions. The analysis also provided insights into the topics most frequently addressed, offering a clear picture of the focus areas for parliamentary scrutiny during this term.



1.5 An analysis of the voting behavior of parliamentary groups (2019–2023)

Our analysis of the voting behavior of parliamentary groups during the 9th Parliament (2019–2023) provided a comprehensive overview of how parties positioned themselves on key legislative decisions. The data showed significant variation in the voting patterns of the different political groups, reflecting their stances on critical policy areas.

The study also detailed the frequency of unanimous votes and instances of cross-party agreements, offering insights into the areas where political consensus was achieved. By examining the voting records, Vouliwatch's analysis offered a clear depiction of the dynamics within the Greek Parliament, illustrating how party alignments and disagreements shaped the legislative landscape during this period.



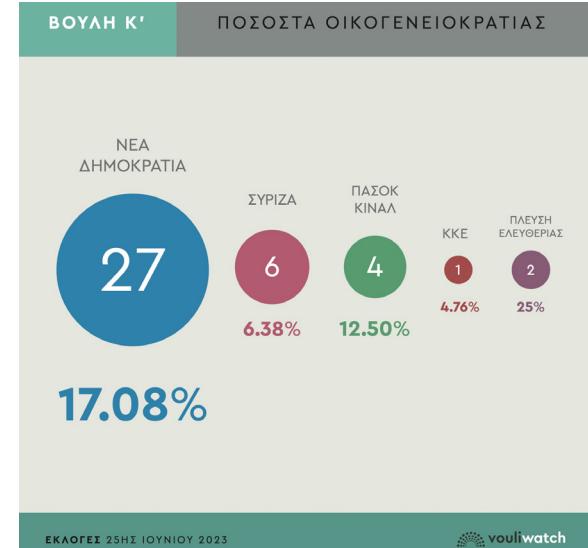
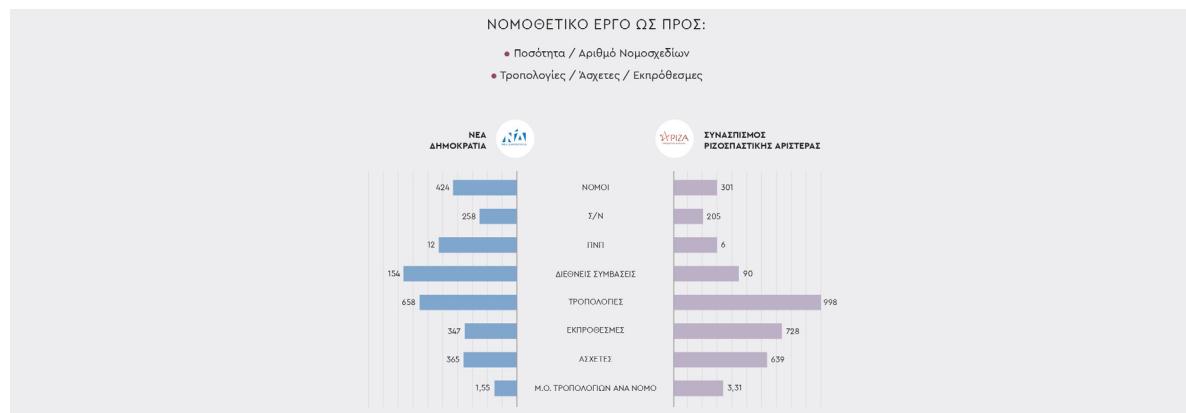
1.6 Last minute and irrelevant amendments: a comparative analysis

Our comparative analysis of legislative amendments posed during the SYRIZA and the New Democracy governments highlighted significant issues concerning last-minute and irrelevant amendments introduced by the main political parties. The data revealed that despite the improvement recorded during the New Democracy government (2019–2023), over 50% of the amendments were submitted at the last minute, often during the final stages of the legislative process, which limited the opportunity for thorough debate and scrutiny. Additionally, more than 55% of these amendments were classified as irrelevant to the main content of the bills they were attached to, raising concerns about the quality and coherence of the legislation being passed. These practices highlighted systemic issues in the legislative process, emphasizing the need for better implementation of the rules in place to ensure that amendments are relevant, properly debated, and transparent, allowing for more structured and effective law-making.

1.7 The composition of the new Parliament

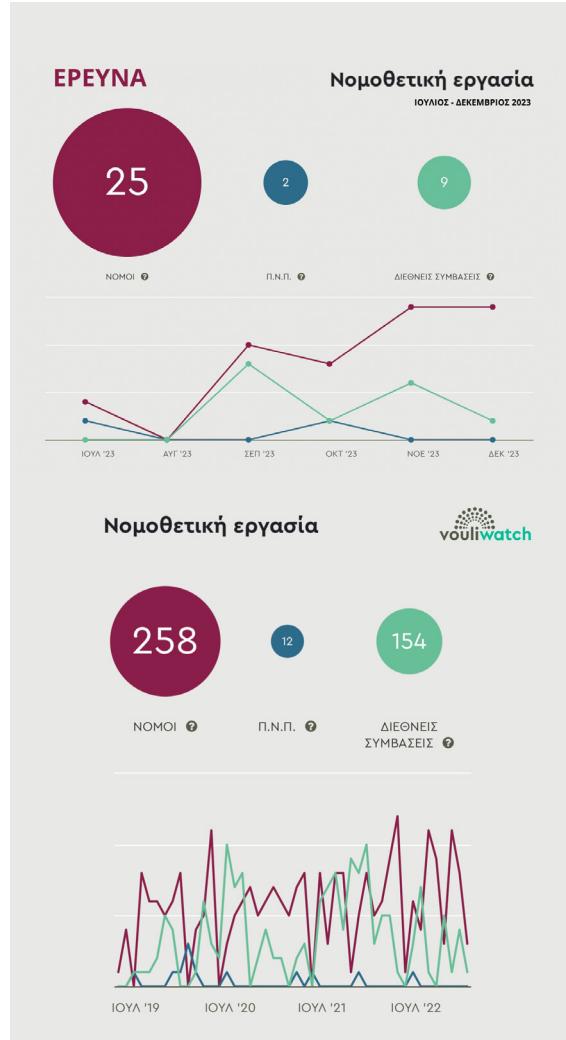
Our analysis of the composition of the new Parliament following the 2023 elections provides insights into the demographics and backgrounds of the 300 elected Members of Parliament (MPs). The new Parliament includes a diverse range of professionals, with significant representation from the legal, economic, medical, and educational fields. This mix of expertise reflects a broadening of the

professional backgrounds among Greece's lawmakers. Additionally, the Parliament saw a substantial renewal rate, with a notable number of first-time MPs bringing fresh perspectives into the legislative process. The analysis also highlighted the gender distribution and age profile of the new Parliament, offering a snapshot of the current state of representation in Greek politics.



1.8 Voulidata: the legislative work of the new Parliament in numbers

Our analysis of the legislative work of the new Parliament, as presented in the "Voulidata" report, provides a detailed overview of parliamentary activity in the first months of its term. The data captures the number of bills introduced and voted on, highlighting key areas of focus such as economic policy, public administration, and social welfare. The report also tracks the legislative output by month, illustrating the pace and intensity of law-making activities as the new Parliament begins its work.



The "Voulidata" report further examines the types of legislative initiatives undertaken, including both government proposals and those submitted by MPs and parliamentary groups. This quantitative review offers a snapshot of the new Parliament's early priorities and provides a clear picture of how legislative efforts are being directed to address pressing national issues.

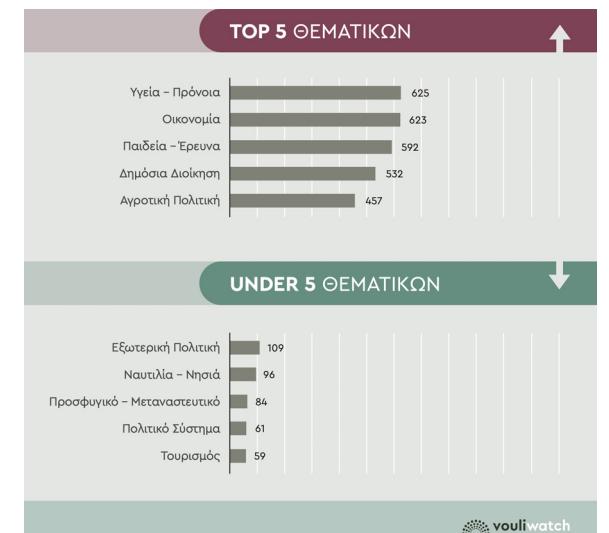
1.9 Voulidata: the parliamentary control of the new Parliament in numbers

Our analysis of the parliamentary control activities of the new Parliament, as documented in the "Voulidata" report, outlines the early oversight efforts undertaken by MPs. The data captures the volume of parliamentary questions, interpellations, and petitions submitted, highlighting the active role of MPs in scrutinizing government actions. The report also provides insights into the main topics addressed through these oversight tools, reflecting the areas of government policy that have attracted the most attention from MPs.

The report tracks the frequency and distribution of these parliamentary control mechanisms, offering a clear view of how MPs are utilizing their powers to hold the government accountable. This quantitative assessment of parliamentary control provides an overview of the new Parliament's initial engagement with its oversight responsibilities, underscoring the ongoing efforts to ensure transparency and accountability in governance.

1.10 New Parliament: Political consensus in the votes of the first 5 months

Our analysis of the voting behavior in the new Parliament, as detailed in the "Voulidata" report, provides an overview of the key votes and political dynamics in the first months of the parliamentary term. The data highlights the frequency of cross-party agreements and instances of political consensus, offering insights into how different parties aligned on crucial legislative decisions. The report captures voting patterns across a range of policy areas, illustrating where cooperation was achieved and where significant divides remained.



This early assessment of voting behavior helps map the evolving political landscape in Parliament and provides a snapshot of how political alliances and disagreements are shaping the legislative process.

1.11 Opinion: Interference in the independence of the Independent Authorities?

Our analysis focused on the process of selecting the heads of the Independent Authorities, specifically the Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy (ADAE) and the National Council for Radio and Television (ESR). The report highlighted concerns that arose due to the procedural irregularities in these appointments, where the proper rules were not fully adhered to. This has raised significant questions regarding the independence of these authorities, as the deviations from established procedures undermine the principles of transparency and impartiality that are critical to their functioning.

The analysis emphasized the potential risks associated with these appointment processes, as failing to follow the correct protocols can compromise the credibility and autonomy of these regulatory bodies. By documenting these procedural shortcomings, Vouliwatch aims to underscore the importance of safeguarding the independence of Independent Authorities to ensure they can effectively uphold their roles free from political influence.



2



CAMPAIGNS & ADVOCACY

2.1 Elections 2023: Vouliwatch's "#GoVote!" campaign

In the lead-up to the 2023 national elections, Vouliwatch launched the #GoVote campaign to encourage voter participation, particularly among young people and first-time voters. The campaign aimed to address voter apathy and empower citizens to engage actively in the democratic process. Through a series of social media initiatives, informative content, and interactive tools, #GoVote provided essential information on the voting process, the significance of participating in elections, and ways to evaluate political parties and their political programs.



The campaign successfully reached thousands of citizens across Greece, utilizing digital platforms to raise awareness and mobilize voters. Vouliwatch's #GoVote initiative emphasized the importance of informed voting and civic responsibility, contributing to a broader effort to strengthen democratic engagement in Greece.

2.2 Open letter to the President of the Greek Parliament

In 2023, Vouliwatch addressed an open letter to the President of the Greek Parliament, Kostas Tasoulas, calling for greater transparency and accountability in parliamentary procedures. The letter urged the President to ensure the proper implementation of parliamentary rules, especially concerning the timely publication of documents and data related to the legislative process. Vouliwatch emphasized the importance of adhering to established protocols to uphold the principles of openness and democratic integrity within Parliament. By publicly addressing these issues, Vouliwatch reinforced its role as a watchdog organization dedicated to promoting parliamentary openness and good governance in Greece.

2.3 Gift register for Members of Government: Vouliwatch's efforts for full disclosure

In 2023, Vouliwatch intensified its efforts to promote transparency regarding the acceptance of gifts by government officials through a series of targeted actions. Vouliwatch filed multiple Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, seeking access to the government's gift register to ensure public accountability and adherence to ethical standards. These requests aimed to reveal the details of gifts received by members of the government, which are legally required to be documented and published but are kept from public view. The lack of response and transparency from public authorities led Vouliwatch to challenge the government's refusal to disclose this information by appealing to the National Transparency Authority.

2.4 Gift register for Members of Parliament: Vouliwatch asks for its publication

In 2023 Vouliwatch campaigned for the publication of the gift register for Members of Parliament (MPs), as foreseen by Parliamentary rules. Vouliwatch submitted a formal request to the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Ethics, urging the immediate disclosure of gifts received by MPs and the establishment of a transparent and accessible gift registry. Despite these efforts, Parliament did not respond to Vouliwatch's call for transparency, raising concerns about the commitment of Parliament to adhere to established ethical standards.

According to Parliamentary rules, a gift register for MPs is required, yet it remains unpublished and inaccessible to the public. Vouliwatch highlighted the importance of this registry as a critical tool to prevent conflicts of interest and enhance public trust in the legislative process. By advocating for the enforcement of these regulations, Vouliwatch sought to ensure that all gifts to MPs are properly recorded and disclosed, reinforcing the need for openness and accountability in Parliament.

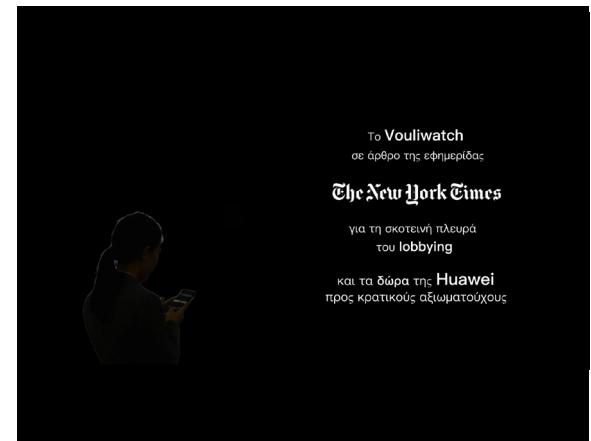


2.5 Vouliwatch's contribution in the New York Times's investigation of lobbying and political gifts in Greece

Vouliwatch contributed to a significant investigation by The New York Times into the lack of transparency surrounding political gifts and lobbying in Greece. The investigation focused on the practices of government officials and the challenges faced in accessing information about gifts received by members of the government. Vouliwatch played a key role by providing insights and context on the

systemic issues related to the non-disclosure of gifts, highlighting the persistent lack of accountability despite existing legal frameworks that require transparency.

Vouliwatch's involvement underscored its ongoing efforts to bring attention to the failure of public authorities to adhere to rules that mandate the publication of a government gift register. This collaboration not only amplified the issue on an international platform but also reinforced Vouliwatch's commitment to advocating for greater transparency in political practices. The investigation spotlighted the urgent need for reforms to ensure that all gifts received by government officials are properly recorded, disclosed, and made accessible to the public, in line with democratic standards.



2.6 Vouliwatch asks for the publication of the top 100 beneficiaries of the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility

Vouliwatch campaigned for the publication of the top 100 beneficiaries of Greece's allocations from the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), emphasizing the need for transparency in the distribution of public funds. Despite the significant impact of these funds on Greece's economic recovery and development, information about the main recipients remained undisclosed. Vouliwatch submitted a formal request to the government, urging it to publish a detailed list of the top 100 beneficiaries, arguing that public access to this data is essential for ensuring accountability and preventing misuse of funds.

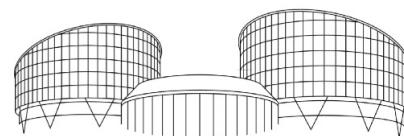
Vouliwatch highlighted that the lack of transparency surrounding the allocation of RRF funds could undermine public trust in the recovery process. By advocating for the disclosure of beneficiary information, Vouliwatch aimed to promote an open and fair distribution of resources, ensuring that the funds are used effectively and equitably to support Greece's recovery efforts.



2.7 "Petsas list": Vouliwatch appeals to the ECHR

In 2023, Vouliwatch filed an appeal with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) concerning the "Petsas List," which involved the controversial allocation of public funds to media outlets during the COVID-19 pandemic. Vouliwatch's appeal highlighted the Greek government's refusal to disclose detailed information about the criteria and process used for distributing these funds, despite multiple requests for transparency. The lack of a clear response from the government raised significant concerns about potential violations of freedom of information and the principles of transparency in the use of public money.

The case brought forward by Vouliwatch underscored the need for accountability in government spending, particularly when it involves the media, as it directly impacts the public's access to unbiased information. By appealing to the ECHR, Vouliwatch aimed to address the shortcomings in Greece's transparency obligations and advocate for stronger enforcement of citizens' rights to access information regarding the use of state resources.



EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

Vouliwatch vs Greece

Η 1η μας προσφυγή στο ΕΔΔΑ
για τη #Λίστα_Πέτσα

2.8 Recommendations for the improvement of the gift policy for government officials

Vouliwatch submitted detailed legislative proposals aimed at reforming the gift policy for government officials to enhance transparency and prevent conflicts of interest. The recommendations were a response to the ongoing lack of clear guidelines and enforcement regarding the acceptance and disclosure of gifts by public officials. Vouliwatch's proposals included the establishment of a mandatory and publicly accessible gift register, stricter rules for reporting gifts, and clearer penalties for non-compliance.

Vouliwatch also emphasized the need for an independent oversight body to monitor the adherence to these regulations, ensuring that all gifts received by government officials are appropriately recorded and disclosed. These legislative proposals were part of Vouliwatch's broader campaign to promote integrity and accountability in public service, reinforcing the importance of transparent governance practices in building public trust.

2.9 Vouliwatch pressures Minister of Interior to legislate for the Citizen's Legislative Initiative

Vouliwatch continued its campaign for the establishment of the Citizen's Legislative Initiative (CLI) in Greece, a tool that would empower citizens to propose laws directly to Parliament. Vouliwatch sent a letter to the Minister of the Interior, urging her to take immediate steps to introduce the necessary legal framework for this initiative. The letter emphasized that the CLI would enhance public participation in the legislative process and strengthen democratic engagement.

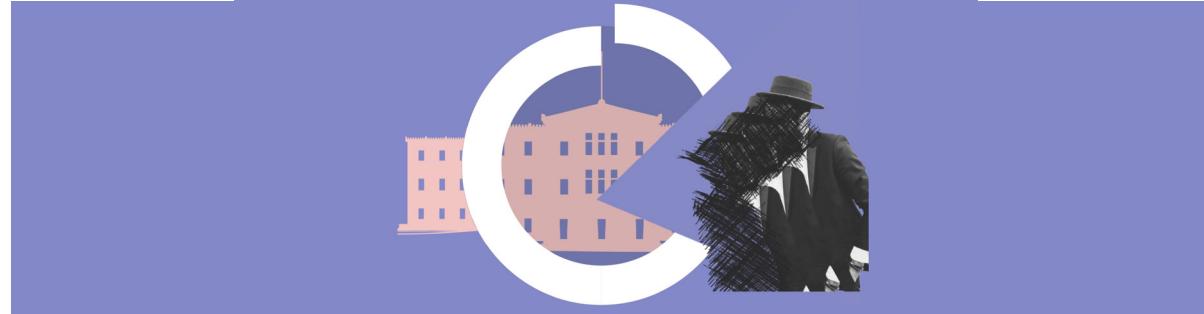
In response to Vouliwatch's actions, SYRIZA submitted a formal question in Parliament, asking the Minister of the Interior about the government's position on adopting the Citizen's Legislative Initiative. The question highlighted the importance of implementing the CLI to give citizens a direct voice in shaping legislation. Vouliwatch's advocacy reflects its commitment to promoting greater civic involvement and accountability in the legislative process.



2.10 Vouliwatch communicates its concerns to the EC regarding the selection of members of Independent Authorities

Vouliwatch took action to address concerns about the appointment procedures for members of Independent Authorities in Greece, specifically focusing on the Hellenic Authority for Communication Security and Privacy (ADAE) and the National Council for Radio and Television (ESR). Vouliwatch communicated its concerns to the European Commission, highlighting that the appointment process did not fully adhere to the established rules, raising questions about the independence of these bodies.

The intervention emphasized the importance of maintaining the impartiality of Independent Authorities, which play a crucial role in overseeing critical areas such as media regulation and privacy protection. By bringing these issues to the attention of the European Commission, Vouliwatch aimed to ensure that the appointment processes for these authorities are conducted transparently and in line with democratic standards, safeguarding their ability to operate without political interference.



2.11 Vouliwatch & Greek CSOs submit report on the state of the rule of law in Greece

Vouliwatch, in collaboration with other Greek civil society organizations, submitted a joint report on the state of the rule of law in Greece to the European Commission. The report highlighted a range of concerns, including issues related to judicial independence, media freedom, and transparency in government actions. The joint submission aimed to provide the European Commission with a comprehensive overview of the challenges facing Greece's democratic institutions and the ongoing threats to the rule of law.

The report specifically underscored the impact of these issues on citizens' rights and the overall functioning of democracy in Greece. By participating in this collective effort, Vouliwatch reinforced its commitment to advocating for stronger

rule of law standards and greater accountability in governance. The submission of the report was part of Vouliwatch's broader strategy to ensure that Greece remains aligned with European values of transparency, justice, and democratic integrity.



2.12 Vouliwatch & international rights organisations address media freedom concerns to the EC

Vouliwatch, together with international human rights organizations, sent a letter to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen expressing concerns about the deterioration of the rule of law in Greece. The letter highlighted specific issues, including threats to media freedom, the lack of judicial independence, and increasing challenges faced by civil society organizations. The signatories urged the European Commission to take concrete actions to address these critical concerns and to ensure that Greece upholds its commitments to democratic values and the rule of law.

This joint effort aimed to draw the European Commission's attention to the ongoing risks that these developments pose to fundamental rights and democratic governance in Greece. By taking part in this initiative, Vouliwatch reaffirmed its dedication to advocating for stronger protections of democratic principles and accountability at both the national and European levels.



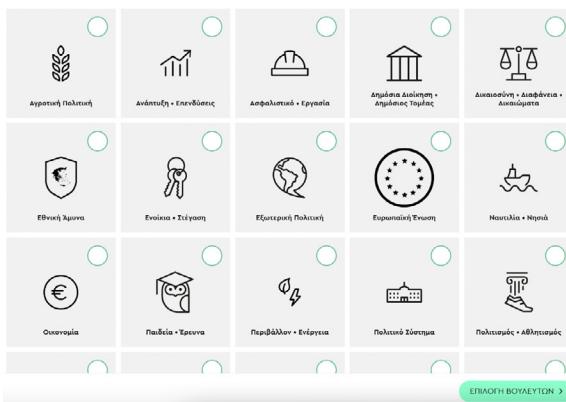
3



CIVIC TECH

Επιλέξτε μία ή περισσότερες θεματικές

Αυτό θα μας βοηθήσει να σου παρουσιάζουμε πρώτα τα νέα που σε ενδιαφέρουν περισσότερο.



3.1 New personalized experience on Vouliwatch platform

Vouliwatch launched a new personalized experience on its platform, enhancing how users interact with parliamentary data and political information. This new feature allows citizens to create their own profiles, enabling them to customize the content they receive according to their interests, such as following specific MPs, monitoring legislative topics, or tracking parliamentary activities that matter most to them. The update aims to make the platform more user-friendly and engaging, empowering citizens to stay informed and actively participate in the democratic process.

The new personalized experience is part of Vouliwatch's ongoing commitment to leveraging civic tech to promote transparency and public engagement. By tailoring information to individual users' needs, Vouliwatch aims to deepen citizens' connection with political developments and encourage more direct interaction with their elected representatives.



NEW VOULIWATCH

NEW VOULIWATCH

NEW VOULIWATCH

NEW VOULIWATCH

3.2 New features on Vouliwatch platform

In 2023, Vouliwatch proceeded to update and upgrade certain digital tools on its platform. Namely, Votewatch, which monitors and presents the legislative process, now offers the opportunity to single out and detect either irrelevant or last-minute amendments. Moreover, Votewatch is now equipped with an enhanced filtering feature, while a new function allowing users to detect rebel voters has been added. As for monitoring the activities of individual MPs, Vouliwatch included in the platform's MPs profiles a comparative feature showcasing the number of speeches given by each of them in parliament. Finally, the donation page was re-vamped including a crowd funding feature dedicated to supporting specific campaigns run by Vouliwatch.

4



PROJECTS

4.1 Localwatch: New tools and dissemination activities

The Localwatch project, funded by the EEA Grants Active Citizens Fund, was granted an additional 7 months to further enhance the digital platform with new civic tech tools as well as to communicate the project more effectively. The digital tools added on the platform include graphs analyzing and presenting the asset declarations of Mayors, a dedicated section for Municipalities to conduct public consultations and a user-friendly repository of minutes of meetings, agendas and decisions.

As for the communication of the project, Vouliwatch hired a digital marketing agency to conduct an online campaign targeting citizens in the project's pilot cities (Athens, Thessaloniki, Patra, Heraklion). At the same time, Vouliwatch staff had the chance to travel across Greece to present the Localwatch platform to interested Municipalities.



Είσαι ο Δήμος σου

Κάνε ερωτήσεις  και προτάσεις  στο Δημοτικό Συμβούλιο, οργάνωσε εθελοντικές δράσεις , συνδιαμόρφωσε τον προϋπολογισμό  του Δήμου και πάρε μέρος στις διαβούλεύσεις  και στην αξιολόγησή  του.

4.2 Access to information advocacy project

In March 2023 Vouliwatch launched its latest advocacy project funded by the BUILD – CERV program. Through this project Vouliwatch aims to create an alliance of civil society organisations and journalists to lobby the government and raise awareness among the public in order to improve the existing RTI legislative framework.

Specifically, in the first phase of the project, Vouliwatch will conduct a comparative study of relevant legislation in order to identify problems within Greek right to information legislation, and to formulate specific and implementable recommendations for improvement. At the same time, a second policy paper will be drafted urging the government to ratify the [Council of Europe's Tromso Treaty](#). In the second phase of the project, Vouliwatch will undertake coalition building activities, organising a training seminar for CSO actors and journalists as well as coordination meetings for the advocacy and communication activities to follow. During the last phase of the project an information campaign as well as advocacy actions will take place, while meetings will be held with relevant government officials and MPs to present the policy papers produced.



5



EVENTS & CONFERENCES

5.1 Beyond EXPO: Presentation of Localwatch in Thessaloniki

In coordination with the organizers of Beyond Expo, the Localwatch Thessaloniki platform launch was included in the parallel events of the expo program and took place on the morning of Thursday, May 25, at the International Exhibition & Conference Center of HELEXPO in Thessaloniki.

As part of the implementation of the project "Digital Platform for Participatory Democracy – Localwatch," an innovative participatory democracy tool for local government, an Open Discussion and presentation of the platform were organized.

The event featured:

- the Deputy Mayor of Thessaloniki for Technical Works & Sustainable Mobility, **Makis Kyrizidis**
- the Deputy Mayor of Digital Transformation of Heraklion, **Giorgos Sisamakis**
- the Director of Vouliwatch, **Stefanos Loukopoulos**.



5.2 Presentation of Localwatch in Heraklion – Crete

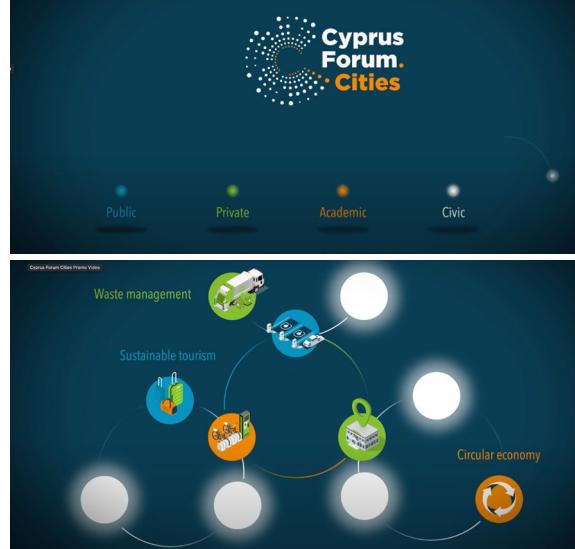
As part of the implementation of the project "Digital Platform for Participatory Democracy – Localwatch," funded by the "Active Citizens Fund in Greece," Vouliwatch, with the support of the Municipality of Heraklion and AOTA Heraklion S.A., organized the launch event of the Heraklion Localwatch platform

on Thursday, June 29, 2023, at the Cultural Centre in Heraklion, Crete.

Speakers at the event included:

- the Director of Vouliwatch, **Stefanos Loukopoulos**
- the Deputy Mayor of Development Planning – Digital Transformation, Integrated Rural Development and Tourism of the Municipality of Heraklion, **Giorgos Sisamakis**
- the General Director of AOTA Heraklion S.A., **Kostas Mochianakis**.

The event began with a warm welcome from Mr. Mochianakis, who discussed the prospects and challenges that technology brings to local government. He was followed by Mr. Sisamakis, who spoke enthusiastically about the Localwatch platform, the tools developed within the project, and suggested ways to expand their application in the future. Finally, the Director of Vouliwatch, Stefanos Loukopoulos, delivered a comprehensive presentation of the Localwatch platform and its tools and answered questions from the audience.



5.3 Presentation of Localwatch in Cyprus Forum Cities

The Director of Vouliwatch travelled to Cyprus on the occasion of the Cyprus Forum Cities, to present the Localwatch platform and talk about citizen engagement and participatory democracy. The event attended by numerous Cypriot Municipalities, academics and business leaders provided an excellent opportunity to disseminate the project beyond Greece.

5.4 10th Regional Meeting for Europe – Spotlight on Lobbying: How can we mitigate corruption risks & policy capture

At the 10th Regional Meeting for Europe organized by the UNCAC Coalition, Vouliwatch's Director, Stefanos Loukopoulos, presented the organization's efforts to regulate lobbying in Greece, highlighting the challenges and achievements in advocating for transparency and accountability in public decision-making. The meeting focused on the risks associated with lobbying, including policy capture and undue influence, and examined the status of lobbying regulations across Europe. Participants discussed ways to enhance integrity and fairness in decision-making, emphasizing the need for stronger regulations to mitigate risks of corruption.



5.5 Vouliwatch represents Greece at the EESC's annual conference on fundamental rights and the rule of law

On November 7, Vouliwatch's Director, Stefanos Loukopoulos, participated as a keynote speaker and the civil society representative from Greece at the Annual Conference on Fundamental Rights and the Rule of Law, organized by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels. The conference, titled "The Civil Society Perspective on the 2023 Rule of Law Report Recommendations," brought together EESC members, civil society representatives, EU institutions, Member States, and other stakeholders to discuss key developments in the EU regarding fundamental rights and the rule of law over the past year. The conference also served as a platform for presenting the third summary report of the FRRL group, which covered site visits conducted in 2022, providing insights into the state of rule of law across Europe.



5.6 Vouliwatch at the 1st Open Government and Co-Creation Forum

On November 1st 2023 Vouliwatch's Director, Stefanos Loukopoulos, participated as a speaker at the 1st Open Governance and Co-Creation Forum, held at the War Museum of Athens. The event was organized as part of the WeOpenGov project, which aims to strengthen collaboration between civil society and public institutions for open governance. The project is implemented by Transparency International Greece and funded by the Active Citizens Fund, managed by the Bodossaki Foundation and SolidarityNow.

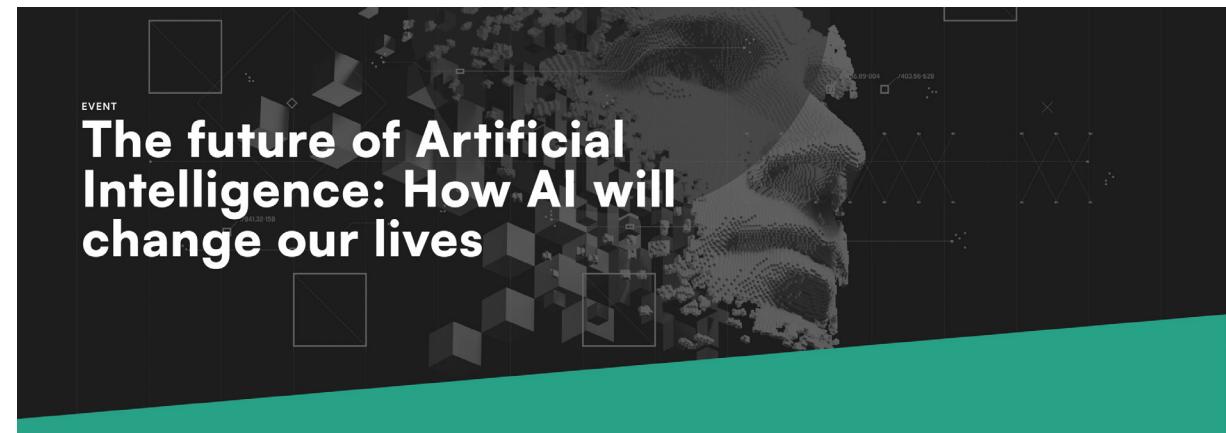
In the session titled "Civil Society Organizations and Open Governance," Vouliwatch's Director highlighted the importance of collaboration between government bodies and civil society for the effective promotion of the open governance agenda.

5.7 The future of AI: How AI will Change our Lives



Stefanos Loukopoulos, Co-founder and Director of Vouliwatch, addressed the issue of power concentration among tech giants and the lack of a regulatory framework for transparency during his speech at the European Parliament in Brussels on the 27th of September 2023. Speaking at the event "Artificial Intelligence: What Changes in Our Lives?", organized by the European Left and hosted by MEP Stelios Kouloglou, Loukopoulos emphasized the critical need for regulation, not only due to the exploitation of personal data for profit but also because of the broader implications for democratic values, especially as political engagement increasingly moves online and governments rely more on automated systems.

The Director of Vouliwatch highlighted that while AI applications promise greater control over power, public institutions are often unprepared to tackle challenges related to equality, transparency, and privacy. He called for accountability and openness from companies developing these technologies to ensure that AI is used by governments to genuinely benefit the public. His remarks underscored the importance of establishing clear frameworks to protect fundamental rights in the digital age.



5.8 Joint press conference on the decline of the rule of law in Greece

On Wednesday, January 24, Vouliwatch, along with other independent organizations, including the Greek Council for Refugees, Refugee Support Aegean (RSA), HIAS Greece, the Hellenic League for Human Rights, and Reporters United, hosted a joint press conference at the Athens Bar Association. The event highlighted the ongoing decline of the rule of law in Greece and presented a joint report submitted to the European Commission as part of the annual Rule of Law Review. The report identifies chronic shortcomings and emerging threats to the rule of law in Greece.

The joint report highlights **five** critical issues:

- surveillance by the National Intelligence Service (EYP) and the use of spyware against high-ranking officials and journalists;
- government interference in the work of constitutionally independent authorities;
- forced disappearances of asylum seekers;
- declining press freedom with Greece ranked last in the EU for the second consecutive year;
- and police violence and impunity, especially against minorities.

The speakers at the press conference included:

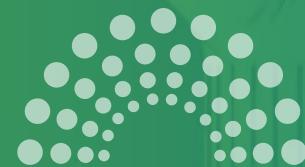
-**Stefanos Loukopoulos**, Director of Vouliwatch, who spoke on transparency and good legislation;

-**Theodoros Chondroyiannos** from Reporters United, who addressed press freedom and surveillance

-and **Elli Kriona-Saranti** from HIAS Greece, who discussed the effectiveness of justice concerning police violence and pushbacks.



6



VOULIWATCH IN SOCIAL MEDIA

NAME OF MEDIA OUTLET

TYPE

Al Jazeera	TV/Online media
in.gr	Online Media
in.gr	Online Media
News24/7	Online Media/Podcast
902.gr	Online media
Kathimerini	Online/Printed Press
in.gr	Online media
News24/7	Online/TV
Creta TV	TV
Press Office Online	Online Media/TV
Ta Nea	Printed Press/ Online Media
Kathimerini	Online Media /Printed Press
Efsyn	Online Media / Printed Press
The New York Times	Online Media/Printed Press
Efsyn	Online Media/Printed Press
TVXS	Online Media
Popaganda	Online Media
Ta Nea	Online Media/Printed Press
in.gr	Online
Efsyn	Online Media/ Printed Press
e-Thermaikos	Online Media
euronews	TV/Online Media

During the past year **Vouliwatch** was featured in the media a total of

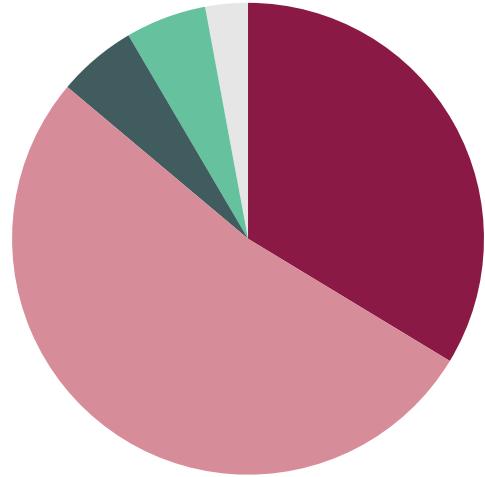
22 times.

7



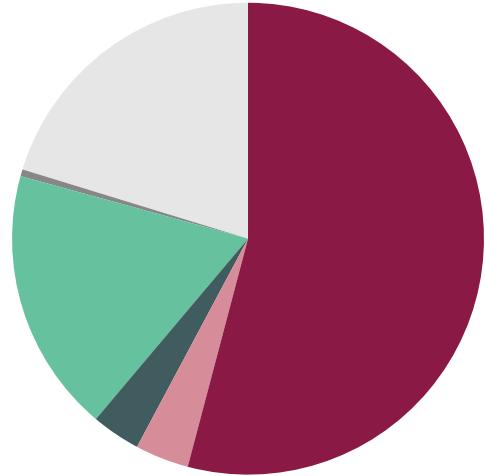
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

MARCH '23 – MARCH '24



SOURCES OF FUNDING /REVENUE

- EEA Grants (Localwatch 1 & 2): **121.442,31 €**
- Open Society Foundation: **189.188,67 €**
- Erasmus+ (Mix the Bubbles project): 1,5 εκατ: **19.557,52 €**
- Good Move Initiatives: **20.000 €**
- Individual donations: **10.517,21 €**

Total: 360.705,71 €

EXPENSES BY CATEGORY

- Staff costs: **143.535,95 €**
- Operational Expenses & Consumables: **9.771,60 €**
- Website maintenance & Development of new tools: **8.896,40 €**
- Communication Activities: **48.071,24 €**
- Travel expenses: **1.236,90 €**
- GoVote Campaign: **53.738,21 €**

Total: 265.250,30 €



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