



Nonprofit organisation
(reg.no: 12794401000/24.12.2014)
Voulis 16, Athens - 10563
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Dear Esteemed President,

We are writing to you from Vouliwatch, a non-profit civil society organisation whose statutory purpose is, among other things, to *"promote fundamental democratic principles such as accountability, transparency and dialogue between elected representatives and citizens" as well as to "inform citizens, through the use of the internet, about decision-making processes, ongoing debates, and the functioning and general activity of the legislative and executive branches of government"*. In the context of our activities, we have, among other things, actively addressed issues related to good lawmaking by conducting regular surveys on the degree to which the principles and rules of good lawmaking are being respected in the legislative process. One of the issues that has been of considerable concern to us is the submission of last minute and irrelevant amendments, a practice that is unfortunately both long-standing and apparently systematic.

Reading the recently published [report on Greece](#) [Fourth Evaluation Round - Corruption Prevention in respect of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors - Second Addendum to the Second Compliance Report - GrecoRC4(2023)19], we were surprised to find that the Greek authorities, in the context of providing information on the introduction of "last minute amendments", stated that *"from 3 October 2022 to 17 March 2023, there were only 67 timely amendments and no last minute amendment"* (para. 8).

As we believe that the provided information do not in fact reflect reality, we take the liberty of addressing this letter to you in order to report the following:

A. General information on the submission of amendments during the period under consideration

In the period from 5-10-2022 to 16-3-2023, 59 laws were adopted (18 of them were international conventions and 3 concerned the ratification of the budget, the balance sheet and the accounts). As correctly stated by the Greek authorities, 67 amendments were submitted in the context of these laws. However, as our research (which is based on data published by the Parliament itself and posted on its website) shows, 39 of these amendments (58.2%) were submitted on the same or the previous day as: (a) the passing of the law (in cases where the debate and passing of the law took place during one parliamentary plenary session) or (b) the beginning of the parliamentary debate (in cases where there were more than one plenary sessions considering the same law).

These amendments, since they were submitted either on the same day or the day before the law was debated in Parliament, can clearly only be described (both logically and legally) as 'last minute amendments'. Individual data on the laws passed during the



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period in question, whether and how many amendments were submitted under each law, the number of articles included in those amendments and which of the amendments were submitted on the day itself or the day before the law was passed or debated can be found [here](#).

Among other things, we note that:

- the 67 amendments mentioned above were tabled in the context of 35 laws and consisted of a total of 382 articles,
- an average of 2.08 days (min:0, max:6) elapsed between the submission of the amendments and the beginning of the debate in the Plenary Assembly,

B. The example of Law 5024/2023

In the context of Law 5024/2023 (*Regulations for the acquisition of occupied properties of the private property of the State, properties of the National Defence Fund, other provisions for the private property of the State and other provisions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance*), amendment No. [1615/237 22.2.2023](#) was submitted. As shown on page 19 of the file, the amendment was submitted on 22-2-2023 at 12:10.

This law [was debated and passed on 22-2-2023](#). It should be noted, at this point, that (apparently by mistake), the "Date of Voting" field on the Parliament's web page for the law in question indicates a different date (that of 24-2-2023 - the date coinciding with the date of the issue of the Gazette) and not the date on which the law actually appears to have been passed (i.e. 22-2-2022, as this is the date indicated in the records posted in the "Relevant Plenary Sessions", "Bill after the articles were passed" and "Passed Bill" fields). This data can be found on the page corresponding to the law in question on [the Hellenic Parliament's website](#).

It becomes clear, therefore, that since the amendment was submitted on the same day as the debate and passage of the law, it can only be considered as a 'last minute' amendment.

C. On the legislative framework:

Pursuant to **Article 74, paragraph 5 of the [Constitution](#)** "*...Additions or amendments by Ministers are debated only if they have been submitted at least three days prior to the commencement of the debate in the Plenum, to the Section specified in article 71 or to the competent standing parliamentary committee, as specified by the Standing Orders.*" Whereas under **Article 87 of the [Standing Orders of the Hellenic Parliament](#)**: "*1. Additions or amendments are signed by the MPs or Ministers who submit them to the relevant office of Parliament. Additions and law proposals enter a special book of continuous numbering according to the dates of their submission. On*



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Fridays additions and amendments are submitted at 13.00 the latest. ... 2. amendments ... are introduced ... at least three days before the commencement of the relevant debate ..".

Finally, it is mentioned, in passing, that according to **Article 74 paragraph 2 of the Constitution** "*Bills or law proposals tabled in Parliament shall be referred to the appropriate parliamentary committee. When the report has been submitted or when the time-limit for its submittal has elapsed inactively, the Bill shall be introduced for debate to Parliament after three days, unless it has been designated as urgent by the competent Minister...*". Whereas according to **Article 93 paragraph 2 of the Standing Orders of the Parliament**: "*2. Bills and law proposals enter the order of the day at an appropriate time, in order for the commencement of the debate in principle to be at least three days from the day of the submission of the report or the expiration of the deadline for the submission of the report of the competent committee...."* and **Article 91 paragraph 7**: "*7. The report of the standing committee is distributed to MPs at least two days before the first sitting which has been designated for the discussion of the bill or law proposal...*".

D. Conclusion

From what has been mentioned above, as well as from the data found in our research, it is clear that the problem of submitting and voting on last minute amendments persists, despite the Greek authorities' claims to the contrary. The deadlines set by the Constitution and the Standing Orders of the Parliament with regard to the submission of amendments are still not being met, violating the rules and principles of good lawmaking.

Yours Sincerely,

Stefanos Loukopoulos
Director & Co-founder