



vouliwatch ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



Democracy Is Not Self-evident

The following report relates to the activities of Vouliwatch
for the period of March 2024 to March 2025.
Vouliwatch is an Athens based, registered non for profit organization
with reg. no: 127494401000.

VISION AND APPROACH

Founded in the aftermath of the economic crisis — in a country where politics has long been marred by scandals and corruption — Vouliwatch seeks to foster an open, transparent, and accountable political system in Greece. By harnessing the power of innovative digital technology, it promotes citizen participation and works to restore public trust in parliamentary democracy.

Inspired by the spirit of Ancient Greek democracy, where active civic engagement was at the heart of political life, Vouliwatch aims to revive this fundamental democratic principle in the digital age.

At its core lies a dynamic digital platform that enables Greek citizens to directly engage with their elected representatives. Users can publicly pose questions to Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), and hold them accountable for their actions and decisions. Beyond this, the platform functions as a parliamentary watchdog, providing real-time reporting on legislative developments and systematically monitoring the voting behaviour of MPs and MEPs.

Vouliwatch's mission, however, extends beyond the digital sphere. The organization is a dedicated advocate for parliamentary openness, freedom of information, open government, and political transparency — working through campaigns, legal interventions, and public policy advocacy to strengthen democratic governance in Greece.

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ABOUT VOULIWATCH

Vouliwatch ("Vouli» means Parliament in Greek) is a non-partisan parliamentary monitoring and democracy watchdog organisation that was set up 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 civic technology tools 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 over the years established itself as the leading advocacy and campaigns organisation in Greece in the fields of transparency, open government and the freedom of access to information. Its campaigns, advocacy and strategic litigation work have resulted in legislative change as well as the exposure of political misconduct.

Vouliwatch is a co-founder 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 (LIBE), the European Commission, GRECO and the Open Government Partnership to advance and safeguard the principles of democracy, the Rule of Law and Open Government.

Vouliwatch's innovative approach to promoting transparency and active citizenship extends beyond its primary activities through several noteworthy side projects. These initiatives reflect the organisation's commitment to deepening democratic participation and accountability at multiple levels:

Govwatch: A dedicated platform that tracks and reports on issues of the rule of law in Greece. Govwatch serves as an essential resource for citizens and stakeholders aiming to scrutinize the state of the rule of law in the country and enhance governmental accountability.

Arthro5A: Named after Article 5A of the Greek Constitution, which enshrines the right to access information, this project focuses on promoting the use of Freedom of Information requests as a tool for transparency. Arthro5A empowers citizens by guiding them on how to effectively exercise their constitutional right to information, thereby fostering a culture of openness.

Localwatch: Aimed at monitoring and improving transparency, citizen engagement and accountability at the local government level,

Localwatch enables citizens to engage with and scrutinize municipal authorities. It provides tools and data to promote participation and better governance at the community level.

These projects complement Vouliwatch's core mission by broadening the scope of its work, empowering citizens to engage with their representatives and institutions more effectively at all levels of governance.

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.

All the services and valuable data, information and research that Vouliwatch has been producing since its launch are free and open to the public. Access to information after all is a right, not a privilege!

THE VOULIWATCH TEAM

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.



**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 an appointed member of the Municipality of Athens «OGP Local Working Group,» a founding member of the international Parliamentwatch Network, and has served on the Social Accountability Council of ERT, as well as the National Transparency Authority's committee responsible for drafting the first Lobbyists' Code of Conduct.



**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 Attachee of the Athens International Film Festival and has co-founded "MakeEndsMeet Communications" creative agency. She strongly believes in the power of arts, innovation and everyday politics.



**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.



**CHRISTIANA
STILIANIDOU**

LEGAL ADVICE
/ RESEARCH

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.



**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.



**DIMITRIS
MARLAGKOUTSOS**

TECHNOLOGY ADVISOR

He has studied Classical Literature and Linguistics in Athens and Madrid. He is the programmer of vouliwatch.gr and he has been working in the technology industry as a programmer since 2008, specializing in the fintech and blockchain sectors. With years of experience and a wealth of knowledge in advanced technologies, he has played a central role in developing and advising on high-profile projects, fostering technological innovation and transparency.



OPINIONS, ANALYSES & STUDIESΣ

1.

In response to the European Commission's 2024 Rule of Law Report on Greece, Vouliwatch publicly challenged the overly optimistic narrative presented by the Commission. While the report praised the Greek government's stated intentions and minor legislative improvements, it largely overlooked the chronic systemic deficiencies and ongoing violations in the country's rule of law practices.

Throughout the year, Vouliwatch repeatedly highlighted significant issues including poor legislative processes, inadequate public consultations, misuse of amendments, and superficial implementation of key transparency laws — such as lobbying regulations, whistleblower protections, and the government's incomplete gift registry. Despite these concerns being systematically reported by Vouliwatch and partner civil society organizations, the Commission's assessment remained mild and lenient.

Vouliwatch, together with a broad coalition of Greek civil society actors, continues to urge EU institutions to adopt a stricter oversight approach, grounded in reality rather than political promises. Real

1.1 ↗ VOULIWATCH ON THE 2024 EU RULE OF LAW REPORT: A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

democratic progress demands substantial, enforced changes, not mere declarations or symbolic gestures. We remain committed to advocating for genuine transparency, accountability, and reform in Greece.

1.2 ↗ VOULIWATCH PARLIAMENTARY OVERVIEW 2024: DATA FOR DEMOCRACY!

Welcoming 2025, Vouliwatch published its annual parliamentary overview: #voulidata! Throughout 2024, our dedicated team closely monitored parliamentary activity, analyzing legislative processes, oversight mechanisms, and MPs' individual contributions.

We meticulously gathered, processed, and visualized data on legislative production, parliamentary scrutiny, and MP engagement. Our easy-to-understand infographics highlight legislative outputs, oversight performance by party, and showcase the most active parliamentarians in terms of questions asked and speeches delivered.

For a decade now, Vouliwatch has served as the vigilant eye on Parliament tracking, investigating, and reporting to ensure transparency, accountability, and enhanced democratic health.

1.3 ↗ THE PAST YEAR IN REVIEW: HOW THEY LEGISLATED IN 2024 #VOULIDATA

In 2024, Vouliwatch conducted an extensive analysis of the Greek Parliament's legislative practices, uncovering significant shortcomings in transparency and accountability. Our research examined the legislative journey, from public consultations to plenary voting, and identified consistent breaches of good lawmaking standards.

FINDINGS OF THE THOROUGH STUDY IN 48 NATIONAL LAWS:

7

PUBLISHED THE LEGALLY
REQUIRED SUMMARY REPORT

317

ARTICLES INTRODUCED
WITHOUT PUBLIC
CONSULTATION

43/76

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED
AFTER OFFICIAL DEADLINES

0

OF THE SHORTENED
CONSULTATIONS PROVIDED
SUFFICIENT JUSTIFICATION

25

TIMES THE PARLIAMENTARY
COMMITTEE REPORTS' REVIEW
PERIOD WAS VIOLATED

37

LAWS INCLUDED AMBIGUOUS
PHRASES SUCH AS
«AND OTHER PROVISIONS»

Out of 88 laws passed in 2024 (64 national laws and 24 international treaties), our detailed study focused on 48 national laws, uncovering systematic procedural irregularities.

Key findings include:

- Public Consultations: None of the shortened consultations provided sufficient justification. Only 7 out of 48 consultations

published the legally required summary report.

- Consistency of Draft Laws: Just 4 out of 48 laws presented in Parliament matched entirely their publicly consulted drafts. Overall, 317 articles introduced in plenary were not present during public consultation.
- Last-minute & Irrelevant Amendments: Out of 76 ministerial amendments (325 articles), 43 were submitted after official deadlines, and 73 contained unrelated provisions. Notably, 16 amendments violated explicit timing regulations.
- Rushed Procedures: In 25 cases, parliamentary committee reports were published just one day before plenary debates, violating the mandated 2–3-day review period.
- Vague Law Titles: 37 out of 48 laws included ambiguous phrases such as «and other provisions», undermining transparency.



2. CAMPAIGNS & ADVOCACY

2.1 ↗ POLITICAL GIFTS: VOULIWATCH FILES APPEAL WITH THE NATIONAL TRANSPARENCY AUTHORITY

In March 2024, Vouliwatch submitted a formal appeal to the National Transparency Authority, requesting the release of the official records of gifts received by members of the Government and Deputy Ministers for the years 2022 and 2023. This legal action follows two unanswered requests for access to this information, initially submitted in July 2023 and again in February 2024, in accordance with Law 4829/2021.

Our efforts are part of a wider campaign for transparency and accountability in the management of political gifts – an issue of significant public interest. Notably, three years after the law came into force, only the Office of the President of the Hellenic Republic has complied with the requirement to publish gift registries.

Through this action, Vouliwatch reaffirms its commitment to enforcing transparency standards in public life and to holding government institutions accountable to the law.

2.2 ↗ RULE OF LAW 2024: GREECE IN INSTITUTIONAL DECLINE — A 60-DAY UPDATE

For the second consecutive year, civil society organizations have documented a backslide in the state of the Rule of Law in Greece. In January 2024, independent groups including Vouliwatch, the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), Refugee Support Aegean (RSA), HIAS Greece, the Hellenic League for Human Rights (HLHR), and Reporters United submitted a detailed report to the European Commission as part of the annual Rule of Law review. This report highlighted both long-standing deficiencies and emerging threats to the Rule of Law in the country.

In mid-March, these organizations submitted a supplementary memorandum, identifying ongoing violations and newly uncovered issues. Key concerns include:

A direct confrontation between Greek authorities and EU institutions, exemplified by public challenges from the Supreme Court's Administrative Plenary and senior government officials against the European Parliament's February 2024 resolution on Greece's Rule of Law, as well as repeated disputes over the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

Ineffective judicial investigations, reflected in fresh European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) rulings condemning Greece for inadequate probes into law enforcement abuses, and ongoing delays and interference in investigations into the wiretapping scandal and the Tempi train accident.

The latest reforms to the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, which civil society groups view as another instance of poor legislative practice, undermining constitutional provisions, fundamental rights, and core principles of criminal justice.

In light of these findings, the organizations reiterated their call for the European Commission to issue clear, strict recommendations to Greece, ensuring the country's compliance with the Rule of Law principles and the core values of the EU.

2.3 ↗ POLITICAL GIFTS: VOULIWATCH VINDICATED (?) BY THE NATIONAL TRANSPARENCY AUTHORITY

In April 2024, at the last possible moment, the National Transparency Authority responded to Vouliwatch's appeal and announced that the long-requested gift lists would be published online by the Prime Minister's General Secretariat before the end of the month. Through Decision No. 16460/10.04.2024, the Authority upheld Vouliwatch's position and directed the publication of the lists in accordance with Law 4829/2021.

This outcome represented a milestone in Vouliwatch's transparency campaign. However, it also exposed lingering concerns. Despite its legal obligation and repeated official requests, the General Secretariat had failed for years to release the gift lists received by members of the Government and Deputy Ministers. It only responded after the Authority intervened, and even then, promised delayed rather than immediate publication.

The Secretariat's timing raised further questions. Its supporting document appeared to have been issued on the very day of the Authority's ruling, which also happened to be the legal deadline for replying to Vouliwatch's appeal. This last-minute move highlighted a pattern of disregard rather than a genuine commitment to transparency. Moreover,

the fact that the Secretariat still had not prepared the gift lists for publication, knowing Vouliwatch would pursue all legal avenues, underlined a persistent lack of urgency in fulfilling its transparency obligations.

Nevertheless, Vouliwatch welcomed the Authority's decision and the long-awaited promise to publish the gift lists, albeit under pressure. The case illustrated the systemic reluctance to enforce transparency measures without external intervention, yet it also affirmed that consistent, lawful advocacy could yield tangible results, even if belatedly.

2.4 ↗ GOOD LAW-MAKING UNDER SCRUTINY • VOULIWATCH ENGAGES GRECO ON LEGISLATIVE TRANSPARENCY

In April 2024, Vouliwatch continued its advocacy for transparency and accountability in the legislative process by sending a detailed letter to the Council of Europe's anti-corruption body, GRECO. The letter highlighted once again the stark discrepancies between Vouliwatch's evidence-based research and the information provided by Greek authorities on the issue of "good law-making."

As part of our Rule of Law initiative, Govwatch, we have consistently monitored how legislative procedures measure up to constitutional and regulatory standards. A recurring concern has been the frequent use of late and unrelated amendments, an entrenched and problematic legislative practice.

Our letter was prompted by GRECO's latest compliance report on Greece (Fourth Evaluation Round), in which national authorities claimed that between 3 October 2022 and 17 March 2023, there had been only 67 timely amendments and no last-minute ones. Vouliwatch's independent analysis, based on official parliamentary data, contradicted this claim. Out of the 67 amendments submitted during that period, 39 (or 58.2%) were tabled either on the same day or the day before the bill was discussed in Parliament. This timing directly contravenes the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the Hellenic Parliament, which require amendments to be submitted at least three days in advance.

In our communication to GRECO on 23 April 2024, we presented these findings in detail. Just three days later, on 26 April, the President of GRECO responded positively. He confirmed that our submission would be added to Greece's compliance file and considered during ongoing and future evaluation rounds. He also welcomed further observations and expressed interest in future collaboration with Vouliwatch.

This prompt and constructive response marked a significant moment of recognition for our work and reaffirmed the value of civil society input in international oversight processes. It was an encouraging sign that independent monitoring and persistent engagement can contribute meaningfully to holding institutions accountable.

2.5 ↗ POLITICAL GIFTS • VOULIWATCH SECURES PUBLICATION OF THE LONG-AWAITED GIFT LIST — BUT QUESTIONS REMAIN

In May 2024, following nearly three years of legal delays and institutional resistance, Vouliwatch achieved a major advocacy milestone: the first-ever publication of the government's gift registry for the years 2022 and 2023. The list was released only after two official document

requests, a formal appeal to the National Transparency Authority (NTA), and a ruling in Vouliwatch's favour.

Despite this success, the final result raised serious concerns. The published list, available only through an obscure link buried deep within the Prime Minister's website, was unofficial in format, lacking a date, signature, or any indication of authorship. In stark contrast to the well-documented and accessible gift registries of the Presidency of the Republic, this version appeared hastily assembled.

Even more troubling was the content. Although the last reference number listed was 173, only 25 gifts were actually disclosed, raising questions about the whereabouts and status of the remaining entries. Additionally, the document offered no clear logic in how the gifts were ordered or categorized, and provided no chronological or thematic structure.

Of the 25 gifts published, 17 were addressed to the Prime Minister, with the remaining shared among just three other officials. Given that the Greek Government includes over 60 members, the extraordinarily low number of declared gifts, compared to the 85 declared by the President of the Republic over the same period, raises further doubts about the completeness and accuracy of the registry.

On May 13, Vouliwatch submitted a formal inquiry to the Prime Minister's General Secretariat seeking clarification on these discrepancies.

While the publication itself marks a significant win for transparency, it also underscores the continued lack of institutional commitment to meaningful accountability. The release came only after legal pressure and public scrutiny and its incomplete, unstructured nature suggests a performative rather than substantive compliance with the law. The fight for a functional, transparent, and credible political gift registry continues.

In May 2024, Vouliwatch joined over 300 civil society organisations, Nobel laureates, and global democratic leaders in signing an open letter calling on the incoming leadership of the European Union to place democracy at the heart of its agenda, both internally and globally.

The joint declaration, released ahead of the June 2024 European elections, set out 10 key priorities to safeguard democratic values at a time of growing authoritarianism, social inequality, misinformation, and institutional erosion. It emphasised the EU's historic responsibility to act as a global defender of democracy, particularly as nearly 450 million European citizens prepared to vote for a new Parliament.

The signatories highlighted the increasing threats posed by anti-democratic forces, both within EU member states and beyond. These include the rollback of fundamental rights, interference in elections, rising extremism, and coordinated authoritarian influence. The declaration urged EU institutions to strengthen the rule of law, protect civic space, uphold media pluralism, and regulate emerging technologies like AI in line with human rights and democratic standards.

Externally, the statement called on the EU to embed democratic principles in its trade, security, and development policies, especially

2.6 ↗
DEFENDING
DEMOCRACY •
VOULIWATCH CO-
SIGNS PAN-EUROPEAN
CALL AHEAD OF THE
2024 EU ELECTIONS

through initiatives such as the Global Gateway. It also advocated for renewed efforts in electoral integrity, enlargement based on rule of law benchmarks, and increased funding for pro-democracy efforts globally.

By endorsing this initiative, Vouliwatch reaffirmed its commitment to a vision of Europe where democracy is not only defended, but actively advanced. The campaign serves as both a warning and a roadmap, reminding European institutions that only by living up to their founding values can they maintain global credibility and effectively respond to today's interlinked crises.

2.7 ↗ SELECTIVE POLICE INTERVENTION AT VOULIWATCH EVENT SPARKS CIVIL SOCIETY OUTCRY

On July 8, 2024, Vouliwatch hosted a seminar at Romantso in central Athens, bringing together journalists and civil society actors to discuss the right of access to public information. During the event, a small delegation from the Assembly for Solidarity with the Palestinian Resistance entered the venue, peacefully unfurled a banner, and read a statement highlighting concerns about the coverage of Palestine by Greek and international media.



The intervention was met with interest and respect from attendees, many of whom shared similar concerns about media narratives and freedom of information. However, shortly after the group's departure, the participants were detained by police and taken to the Athens Police Headquarters (GADA), a move that drew immediate criticism.

Together with ten other civil society organisations and

independent media outlets, Vouliwatch co-signed a joint statement condemning the police's actions as not only disproportionate but overtly selective and politically motivated. The statement denounced the intervention as a violation of fundamental freedoms-expression, assembly, and the right to information – pointing to a broader pattern of targeting initiatives that focus specifically on Palestinian issues.

This incident occurred against the backdrop of increasing concerns over the erosion of the Rule of Law in Greece. It serves as a troubling reminder of the shrinking civic space and the growing threat to fundamental rights.

In response, the signatories called on the Hellenic Police to uphold constitutional freedoms and urged civil society to remain vigilant in defending democratic liberties for all.

On 24 July 2024, the European Commission published its annual Rule of Law Report, presenting what Vouliwatch and 13 other civil society and media freedom organisations called a *misleadingly positive* account of the situation in Greece. In a joint statement, the signatories criticised the report for ignoring or downplaying the serious threats facing press freedom and civil society in the country.

Despite widespread international concern, including a European Parliament resolution in February 2024 that warned of “grave threats to democracy, the rule of law, and fundamental rights,” the Commission’s report focused disproportionately on marginal legislative improvements, while failing to reflect the systemic deterioration witnessed on the ground. These include rising censorship, state interference in media, and shrinking civic space – issues previously documented by Vouliwatch and 16 other organisations in a letter to Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

The Commission’s report overlooked the widening gap between the Greek government’s self-reported data and the well-documented findings submitted by independent watchdogs. It also failed to adequately address escalating intimidation of journalists, including through spyware, abusive litigation, and state-sponsored smear campaigns. The climate of impunity was further highlighted by two major developments: the exoneration of state actors involved in the use of Predator spyware, and the acquittal of suspects in the 2021 murder of journalist Giorgos Karaivaz, leaving his killing unsolved.

The joint statement warned that the Commission’s whitewashing of these realities risks legitimising state-led repression. Greece continues to rank last among EU countries in the World Press Freedom Index (RSF, 2024), and civil society groups, especially those working on migration, are facing increasing criminalisation and harassment.

Vouliwatch and its co-signatories called on the incoming European Commission to adopt a firmer stance: publicly denouncing rights violations, defending democratic values, and holding member states accountable. Greek society, they stated, deserves a free press, a vibrant civic space, and a government that respects the rule of law.

2.8 ↗ GREECE: EU COMMISSION DOWNPLAYS RULE OF LAW CRISIS - VOULIWATCH AND CIVIL SOCIETY RESPOND

2.9 ↗ OPEN LETTER: EU LEADERS MUST PROTECT DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC SPACE IN THEIR UPCOMING 5-YEAR TERM

On the occasion of the International Day of Democracy, Vouliwatch joined 415 civil society organisations from across the EU in co-signing an open letter coordinated by Civil Society Europe. Addressed to the incoming leadership of EU institutions and the rotating presidencies of the Council of the EU, the letter urges decisive action to defend democracy and safeguard civic space over the next five years.

The signatories call for a comprehensive European strategy for civil society and a stronger mandate for a dedicated EU Commissioner on democracy and civic engagement. The appeal follows growing concern over shrinking civic freedoms, legal harassment, funding restrictions, and threats against activists and human rights defenders across Europe.

Despite steps taken by the EU in recent years, including the 2022 report on the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, major challenges remain. The letter stresses the need for a more coherent and strategic EU approach that ensures all laws and policies support civic action, protect fundamental rights, and include civil society in policymaking processes.

Key proposals include:

- Establishing a European Democracy Semester
- Strengthening the Fundamental Rights Agency
- Ensuring meaningful civic participation
- Mainstreaming impact assessments on civil space

2.10 ↗ VOULIWATCH PARTICIPATES IN PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION REFORM

In July 2024, Vouliwatch took part in the public consultation on a draft bill introduced by the Ministry of Interior that proposes amendments to Article 5 of the Code of Administrative Procedure, one of Greece's main legal provisions on access to public documents.

While the bill claims to align national legislation with the Council of Europe's Tromsø Convention on Access to Official Documents, Vouliwatch expressed strong concerns over its limited scope and effectiveness. The proposed changes fail to address long-standing legal and practical obstacles to meaningful access to information in Greece.

Vouliwatch highlighted that a piecemeal amendment to Article 5 is insufficient. Instead, it called for a **comprehensive legislative overhaul**, including:

- A unified legal framework consolidating existing laws,
- Clear, Tromsø-compliant definitions of limitations,
- Guaranteed access regardless of applicant identity or purpose,
- The creation of a central oversight authority, and
- Regular publication of access-related statistics.

The organisation also criticised the continued requirement to justify information requests and the presence of «absolute exemptions» to access. These stand in contradiction to the principles of the Tromsø Convention, which affirms that all public documents are presumed accessible, and that limitations must be narrowly defined and proportionate.

Vouliwatch urged the Ministry to initiate a full legal reform

process that upholds transparency, accountability, and democratic rights, promising to submit a detailed position paper in the coming weeks. Without such structural reform, Greece risks maintaining a fragmented and ineffective access to information regime.

2.11 ↗
ACCESS INFO
CAMPAIGN: YOU HAVE
THE RIGHT TO KNOW,
THEY HAVE THE DUTY
TO INFORM YOU

In 2024, Vouliwatch launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of the constitutionally and internationally protected – but severely underutilized – right of access to public information in Greece.

The campaign, titled “You have the right to know, they have the duty to tell you,” aims to empower citizens, highlight systemic shortcomings, and apply pressure on decision-makers to improve the fragmented legal and institutional framework governing transparency.

Access to public documents is a core democratic right enshrined in both the Greek Constitution and European law. Yet in practice, it remains obscure and difficult to exercise. Through this initiative, Vouliwatch calls attention to the need for user-friendly mechanisms, fewer legal hurdles, and stronger political will.

The campaign promotes a deeper understanding of the right among the public and stresses that any restrictions must be strictly defined by law, and only justified under exceptional circumstances, such as national security or the protection of third-party rights.

Through education, advocacy, and accessible digital tools, Vouliwatch continues to fight for meaningful transparency and citizen empowerment. The right to information is not optional, it is fundamental.



2.12 ↗ VOULIWATCH RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON FOI

As part of its long-standing advocacy for the right of access to public information, Vouliwatch joined forces in 2024 with 14 civil society organisations and independent media outlets to launch a coordinated campaign aimed at strengthening Greece's legal and institutional framework on transparency.

Following a successful workshop in July 2024, which brought together experts, journalists, and civil society representatives, the coalition developed and submitted a joint letter with targeted legal and policy recommendations to both the executive and legislative branches of government.

While Greece's current legal provisions on access to information represent a step forward, their fragmented nature and weak implementation leave much room for improvement. The alliance's proposals focus on ensuring alignment with the Tromsø Convention, reinforcing transparency mechanisms, and removing legal and practical barriers to citizens' right to know.

The initiative builds on Vouliwatch's broader public awareness campaign and digital platform arthro5A.gr, offering practical tools for citizens to exercise their rights. The joint recommendations advocate for a clear, unified legal framework, an independent oversight body, and stronger enforcement measures.

2.13 ↗ CIVIL SOCIETY-LED BILL TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISIONS REACHES PARLIAMENT

In 2024, Vouliwatch and 11 other civil society organisations celebrated a major milestone: the submission to the Hellenic Parliament of a bill aimed at strengthening public participation in environmental decision-making. The proposal was introduced by the party Nea Aristera, following a joint initiative and open invitation from the signatory organisations to all parliamentary groups.

This collaborative effort began in May 2024, when the 12 organisations addressed Parliament to highlight the serious lack of meaningful citizen engagement in shaping environmental policy. Their intervention called for cross-party dialogue and consensus on the need to enhance public involvement through a comprehensive legislative proposal.

2.14 ↗ LOBBYING TRANSPARENCY IN GREECE: GAPS BETWEEN LAW AND PRACTICE

Despite the 2021 adoption of Greece's first-ever lobbying regulation, largely shaped through the advocacy of Vouliwatch, the implementation of the law remains deeply flawed. A recent investigation by Vouliwatch into the Transparency Register revealed significant inconsistencies, omissions, and signs of regulatory inaction.

As of late 2024, only 34 interest representatives had registered, with just 11 influence activities declared almost exclusively by two entities. Annual declarations, required by law even if no lobbying took place, remain incomplete or missing. Key fields in several submissions are vague or left blank, and discrepancies appear between records submitted by lobbyists

and those submitted by public officials.

Vouliwatch's in-depth audit of the Register uncovered:

- A lack of clarity and detail in reported lobbying objectives,
- Missing names and roles of participants in lobbying meetings,
- Contradictions between declarations of lobbyists and institutional actors,
- Entire website sections left empty (e.g., awareness campaigns, statistics),
- And no public information on enforcement or sanctions.

These findings, submitted in a formal report to the Hellenic National Transparency Authority (EAD), raise urgent questions about compliance, oversight, and public accountability. Notably, the extremely low number of registered entities points to a systemic underreporting of lobbying, particularly by powerful in-house lobbyists, who are still excluded under the law.

Three years after the law's passage, Vouliwatch stresses that transparency remains "on paper only". To achieve real accountability, the definition of lobbying must be broadened, enforcement strengthened, and data made complete and accessible. Without such reforms, Greece risks maintaining a symbolic framework that fails to regulate influence where it matters most.

- ▶ **LACK OF CLARITY IN THE REPORTED OBJECTIVES**
- ▶ **MISSING NAMES AND ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS**
- ▶ **CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYISTS AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS**
- ▶ **ENTIRE WEBSITE SECTIONS LEFT EMPTY**
- ▶ **NO PUBLIC INFORMATION ON ENFORCEMENT OR SANCTIONS**

Two years after the adoption of Greece's whistleblower protection law (November 2022), Vouliwatch submitted a formal FOI request to the National Transparency Authority (EAD), questioning the degree of compliance by public institutions. Has the state honored its obligations, or is this another case of transparency on paper only?

Vouliwatch played a leading role in advocating for strong whistleblower protections well before the law's enactment: submitting concrete proposals, participating in consultations, exposing misleading government claims before the OECD, and publicly criticizing the final law as timid and restrictive.

According to the legislation, both public and private entities are required to establish internal reporting channels and appoint an Internal Reporting Officer (IRO). These obligations should have been met by 2023. However, a basic check on the Ministry of Interior's website – responsible for introducing the law – did not reveal any public information about its

2.15 ↗ TWO YEARS OF WHISTLEBLOWER LAW: WHERE DO WE STAND ON ITS IMPLEMENTATION?

compliance or appointment of an IRO.

In its 2023 annual report, EAD states that only 72 IRO appointments had been recorded, raising serious concerns about systemic non-compliance.

Vouliwatch's FOI request seeks detailed figures on:

- How many public and private entities have complied with the law?
- How many government ministries met the legal deadline of May 2023?
- What percentage of public bodies remain non-compliant, and which ministries are among them?

As the law's implementation deadline has long passed, these questions are critical to assessing whether whistleblower protection in Greece is being taken seriously, or whether it remains another democratic reform undermined by bureaucratic inertia and lack of political will.

2.16 ↗
TRANSPARENCY
GAP: VOULIWATCH
REQUESTS MISSING
PUBLIC DATA ON
GOVERNMENT STAFF

In line with our mission to promote transparency and democratic accountability, Vouliwatch submitted an FOI request to the Presidency of the Government in 2024, demanding access to official records concerning government personnel. Specifically, we requested the electronic register and annual reports of associates working under Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and General and Special Secretaries for the years 2022–2024, as mandated by Article 47A of Law 4622/2019.

This provision, added to ensure Greece's compliance with GRECO recommendations, requires the Presidency to publish a detailed list including full names, employment entities, and salary grades of these associates, along with an annual report. However, more than two years after its adoption, this data appears neither published nor accessible to the public, contrary to what the government claimed in its own compliance report to GRECO.



Despite these legal obligations and the clear public interest involved, neither the comprehensive digital register nor any annual report could be located on the official government website. The absence of this information raises serious questions about the state's commitment to openness, especially given its own stated intention to meet international anti-corruption standards.

By activating our right of access to information, Vouliwatch continues to press for the disclosure of essential data that sheds light on how public funds are spent and who holds decision-making influence behind the scenes. We await a response from the authorities, and will keep advocating until the law is not just written, but implemented.

On December 9, 2024, Vouliwatch and five Greek civil society and media organisations – HIAS Greece, RSA Greece, the Hellenic League for Human Rights, the Greek Council for Refugees, and Reporters United - addressed a joint letter to the new European Commissioner for Justice, Michael McGrath, highlighting critical flaws in the EU Rule of Law Review Mechanism and proposing concrete reforms.

The coalition stressed issues such as opaque consultation procedures, vague recommendations, and the superficial presentation of state-level shortcomings. They pointed to structurally weak consultation timelines, particularly around holidays, and a lack of transparency in how contributions are processed and reflected. National governments appear to enjoy more leeway in submitting inputs than civil society groups, undermining the process's credibility.

Further concerns include the report's tendency to gloss over serious and persistent rule of law violations – especially in countries like Greece – and its limited public visibility once published. Without specific, measurable, and time-bound recommendations, monitoring and accountability become nearly impossible.

To address these weaknesses, the six organisations proposed reforms, including an extended consultation window, increased transparency regarding all contributors, more concrete and actionable recommendations, robust follow-up mechanisms, and institutional support (including funding) for civil society actors involved in the process.

On February 3, 2025, Commissioner McGrath responded positively, acknowledging the value of their contribution and affirming the Commission's commitment to incorporating these insights moving forward.

This initiative reflects Vouliwatch's ongoing efforts to strengthen EU democratic accountability and ensure civil society plays a meaningful role in defending fundamental rights and the rule of law across the Union.

In response to Vouliwatch's detailed letter highlighting inconsistencies and gaps in the implementation of the lobbying law, the National Transparency Authority (NTA) offered a vague and formalistic reply

2.17 ↗

RULE OF LAW: VOULIWATCH AND 5 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS LETTER TO THE NEW COMMISSIONER FOR JUSTICE

2.18 ↗

LOBBYING LAW: NTA'S RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS GAPS IN OVERSIGHT

that failed to address the substance of the concerns raised.

Despite the law's potential to strengthen transparency and accountability in Greece, its real-world application continues to suffer from limited compliance and insufficient oversight. After mapping serious discrepancies in the Transparency Registry and submitting them to the competent authority, Vouliwatch received a reply that largely sidestepped the specific issues.

Instead of answering questions around missing disclosures, inconsistencies between declarations, and the Registry's dormant information sections, the NTA pointed to general publicity actions, broad legal formulations, and submission deadlines, effectively acknowledging its role as a passive enforcer of form rather than substance.

This approach reinforces the core of Vouliwatch's critique: that the NTA is treating its supervisory role as a procedural formality rather than as a proactive mechanism for safeguarding transparency.

The exchange exposes a systemic issue: while the lobbying law exists on paper, meaningful enforcement remains absent. Without robust institutional will and proper scrutiny of both interest representatives and public officials, the law risks becoming yet another box-ticking exercise, leaving the goals of transparency and public trust unfulfilled.

Vouliwatch will continue to monitor and report on the implementation of this legislation, advocating for a more functional and accountable lobbying framework in Greece.

2.19 ↗ VOULIWATCH MEETS WITH THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

On January 10, 2025, Vouliwatch held a meeting with the Secretary General for Public Administration at the Ministry of Interior, Mr. Ioannis Foustanakis, as part of our ongoing campaign to strengthen the right of access to public information and promote transparency in public administration.

During the meeting, we presented our proposals for improving Article 5 of the Code of Administrative Procedure, emphasizing the need for a unified and functional legal framework, the establishment of a principle of universal access, and the creation of oversight and accountability mechanisms. Key issues were also raised, including the shortcomings of the Transparency Register for lobbying, the inadequate implementation of the whistleblower protection law, and the lack of publication of the legally required list of government collaborators.

Following the meeting, Vouliwatch Director Stefanos Loukopoulos sent a detailed follow-up letter to Mr. Foustanakis, outlining our recommendations and providing a broader overview of our advocacy work on transparency and access to information.

This meeting marks another step in our efforts to uphold democratic principles and enhance transparency and accountability in Greece. Stay tuned for our next actions.

**2.20 ↗
DEMOCRACY
WITHOUT OXYGEN:
THE RULE OF LAW
REPORT SUBMITTED
TO THE EUROPEAN
COMMISSION**

For the third consecutive year, Vouliwatch and independent civil society organisations, the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), the Hellenic League for Human Rights (HLHR), HIAS Greece, Homo Digitalis, Refugee Support Aegean (RSA), Reporters United, Solomon, submitted a joint report to the European Commission detailing the alarming deterioration of the Rule of Law in Greece. The report was presented publicly during a press conference on Tuesday, February 4, 2025, at the Athens Bar Association.

The report paints a stark picture: illegal pushbacks at borders, unchecked police violence, the Pylos shipwreck tragedy, the surveillance (Predator) scandal, the deadly Tempis train crash, systemic failures in accountability and justice, poor lawmaking practices, legislative chaos through omnibus bills and unrelated last-minute amendments, shrinking media freedom, strategic lawsuits and attacks against journalists, media ownership concentration, mass privacy violations by state actors, entrenched corruption, and opacity surrounding gifts to public officials and ministerial staff.

The coalition calls on the European Commission to fundamentally shift its approach, from merely recording the Greek government's stated "commitments" or "intentions" to honestly assessing the *reality on the ground*. Systemic violations of core Rule of Law principles must no longer be treated as isolated incidents.

**2.21 ↗
VOULIWATCH URGES
GREECE TO ACTIVELY
SUPPORT THE UN ANTI-
CORRUPTION REVIEW
MECHANISM**

In view of the upcoming 2025 Conference of the States Parties (CoSP) to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), Vouliwatch has called on the Greek government to play an active and constructive role in strengthening the next phase of the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM).

The current IRM has been criticised by civil society worldwide for serious shortcomings, including a lack of transparency, limited participation, delays, and the absence of a structured follow-up mechanism, weaknesses that hinder UNCAC from reaching its full potential.

However, states now have a unique opportunity to turn the IRM into a truly global tool in the fight against corruption. Discussions are underway regarding the format and scope of the mechanism's next phase, with a final decision expected at the CoSP in Qatar at the end of 2025.

Vouliwatch has sent a letter to the Ministry of Justice, urging the Greek delegation to:

1. Attend the IRG session and deliver a clear statement in support of a stronger IRM;
2. Submit a written statement to the UNCAC Secretariat for publication;
3. Communicate Greece's position informally but proactively to the UNCAC Secretariat.

To support these efforts, Vouliwatch attached a civil society analysis of the "options paper" on the IRM's next phase, highlighting recommendations to ensure meaningful reform and enhanced monitoring.

VOULIWATCH TO AUDIT COMMITTEE: PUBLISH WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES

On 6 March 2025, Vouliwatch submitted a formal request for access to public information to the Committee for the Audit of Party Finances, asking it to fulfil its legal duty to publish key financial data regarding political parties.

Based on Greek law (Presidential Decree 15/2022), the Committee must publish:

- Loan records and contracts disclosed by political parties;
- Annual budgets, balance sheets and audit reports;
- Detailed pre-election income and expenditures per party, not just aggregated totals;
- Justified audit conclusions, including any dissenting opinions.

However, a review of the Committee's website on 5 March 2025 revealed:

- Loan information hasn't been updated since 2017 and only includes a handful of parties;
- The latest published budgets and audit reports are from 2022, although major parties have published their 2023 reports on their own websites;
- No published data on the 2024 European election campaign finances, nine months after the vote;
- No publicly available audit decisions or findings, despite legal obligations.

While the law sets a 90-day deadline from the receipt of these documents for their publication, it appears the Committee fails to meet these obligations.

Following Vouliwatch's request, the Committee quietly updated some basic site content (e.g. legal framework and membership composition), an indication that it does read such requests. But no official reply or full publication of data has been received.

BASED ON GREEK LAW (PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 15/2022), THE COMMITTEE MUST PUBLISH:

- ▶ **LOAN RECORDS AND CONTRACTS DISCLOSED BY POLITICAL PARTIES**
- ▶ **ANNUAL BUDGETS, BALANCE SHEETS AND AUDIT REPORTS**
- ▶ **DETAILED PRE-ELECTION INCOME AND EXPENDITURES PER PARTY, NOT JUST AGGREGATED TOTALS**
- ▶ **JUSTIFIED AUDIT CONCLUSIONS, INCLUDING ANY DISSENTING OPINIONS**

A REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S WEBSITE ON 5 MARCH 2025 REVEALED:

- ▶ **LOAN INFORMATION HASN'T BEEN UPDATED SINCE 2017**
- ▶ **LATEST PUBLISHED BUDGETS AND AUDIT REPORTS ARE FROM 2022**
- ▶ **NO PUBLISHED DATA ON THE 2024 EUROPEAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN FINANCES**
- ▶ **NO PUBLICLY AVAILABLE AUDIT DECISIONS OR FINDINGS**

2.23 ↗ VOULIWATCH AGAIN REQUESTS FULL DISCLOSURE OF GOVERNMENT GIFT LIST FOR 2024

Despite legal obligations, the Greek government has once again failed to publish the annual list of gifts received by members of the Cabinet and Deputy Ministers. On 11 March 2025, Vouliwatch submitted a formal FOI request to the General Secretariat of the Prime Minister, demanding access to the gift registry for the year 2024 -which, by law, should have been published since January.

This follows last year's legal battle, which led, after two FOI requests, an appeal to the National Transparency Authority (NTA), and a favourable decision, to the belated publication of the 2022–2023 gift list.

According to Law 4829/2021, the government must annually disclose:

- All items received as gifts by members of the government and deputy ministers during the previous year, and
- The names of the donors, on the official website of the Presidency of the Government.

However, as of 10 March 2025, Vouliwatch's research revealed:

- Two different government websites host the previous gift list (2022–2023),
- Neither contains the 2024 list, which is legally overdue.

We've asked for:

- Immediate provision of the 2024 gift list,
- Clarification on where such data will be published going forward.

This delay is yet another sign of the government's lackluster compliance with basic transparency obligations.

2.24 ↗ VOULIWATCH CONTRIBUTES TO THE 2024 WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT RULE OF LAW INDEX

In recognition of its ongoing work to promote the rule of law and institutional accountability in Greece, Vouliwatch has been invited to contribute to the 2024 edition of the World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index.

Our legal advisor, Christianna Stylianidou, was formally selected as a qualified respondent for the WJP's expert survey, a prestigious acknowledgment of Vouliwatch and Govwatch's consistent reporting, advocacy, and collaboration with both European and international institutions on issues related to rule of law in Greece.

This invitation follows Christianna's previous participation in the WJP's upcoming subnational study for the European Union, where her input was noted to have "enhanced the depth and accuracy of our findings in Greece," as stated in the WJP's invitation letter.

As part of this collaboration, her name, along with those of Vouliwatch and Govwatch, will be included in the official list of contributors to the 2024 Rule of Law Index, a globally respected benchmark that tracks the real-world application of the rule of law across over 140 countries.

This acknowledgment strengthens our resolve to continue the fight for transparency, accountability, and human rights in Greece.



3. PROJECTS

3.1 COALITION FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE RIGHT TO ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN GREECE THROUGH THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

During 2024, Vouliwatch successfully implemented a 9-month advocacy project aimed at improving the legal framework and practical implementation of the Right to Access Public Information (RTI) in Greece. Recognizing RTI as a cornerstone of democratic accountability, the project focused on addressing the chronic lack of compliance by public authorities and raising public awareness about this fundamental right.

In the first phase, Vouliwatch conducted a comparative legal analysis and identified shortcomings in Greece's fragmented RTI legislation. Two policy papers were produced: one with concrete, actionable recommendations for legislative reform, and another advocating for Greece's ratification of the Tromsø Convention. Best practices from other EU countries were incorporated into these proposals.

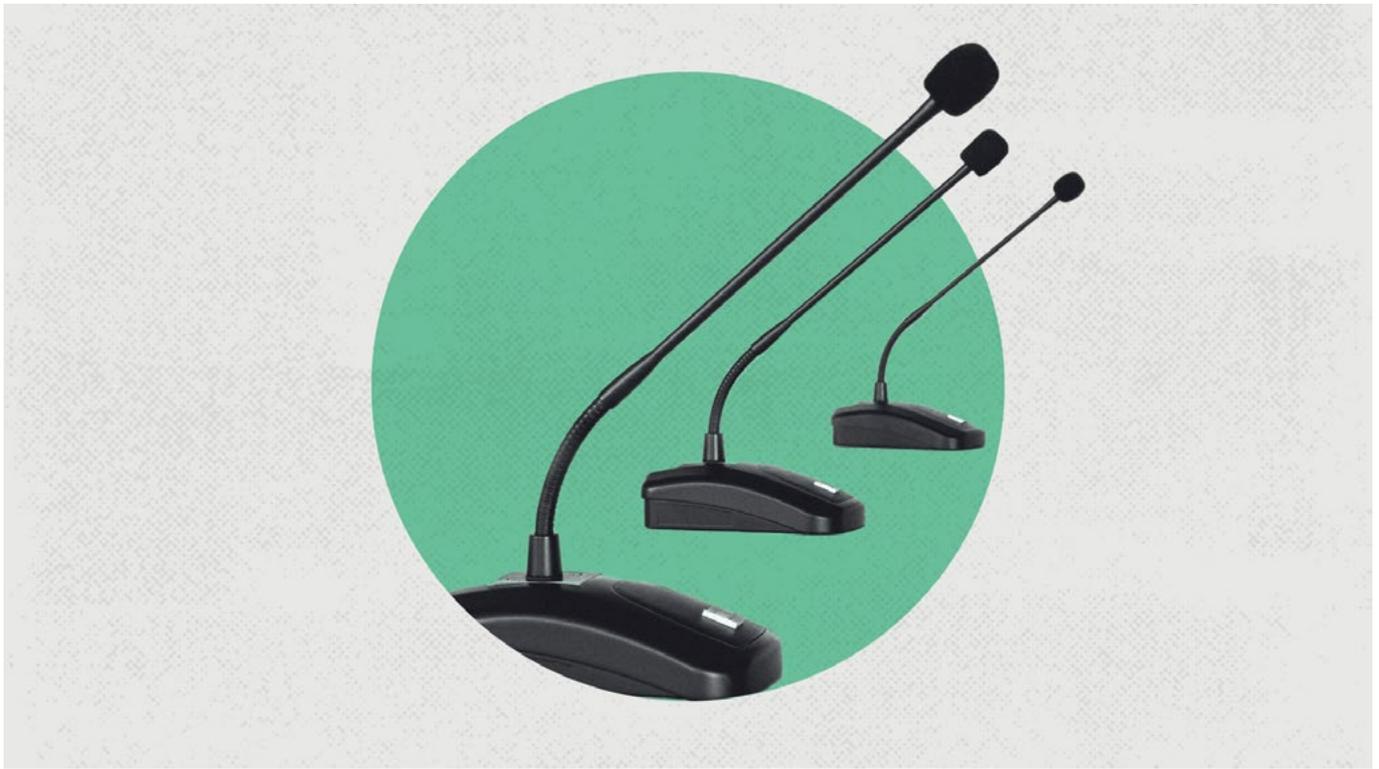
The second phase involved building a national coalition of civil society organizations and investigative journalists, who were brought together through a dedicated two-day training seminar on RTI. This was followed by coordination meetings to align on advocacy messaging and strategies.

Finally, Vouliwatch led a public information campaign and coordinated advocacy actions targeting key decision-makers in

government and parliament. These included the delivery of the policy papers and a joint open letter signed by coalition members. A series of visual and video materials amplified the campaign's reach across media platforms.

The project strengthened the role of civil society and the media in holding power to account, while offering a clear legislative roadmap to enhance transparency and public access to information in Greece.

ΔΙΚΣΟΜΑ ΠΡΟΣΒΛΕΨΗΣ ΣΤΗ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑ ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΑ



4. EVENTS & CONFERENCES

4.1 ↗ LOCALWATCH PLATFORM PRESENTATION & OPEN DISCUSSION IN ATHENS

In 2024, Vouliwatch successfully launched Localwatch, an innovative digital platform enhancing participatory democracy at the local level. Localwatch empowers citizens by facilitating transparency, civic engagement, and direct dialogue with local authorities. Athens was among the four pilot municipalities (alongside Thessaloniki, Patras, and Heraklion) where the platform was introduced to strengthen citizen participation and municipal accountability.

To celebrate the launch of the Athens platform, Vouliwatch hosted a public event titled «Athens, You Are Your Municipality», featuring an open discussion on the visibility and safety of women in urban spaces, held on April 25, 2024, at the Free Thinking Zone bookstore. The event highlighted issues of inclusivity and gender-sensitive urban planning, addressing the unique mobility patterns and safety concerns experienced by women, girls, and marginalized groups in city environments.

Through Localwatch, Vouliwatch continues to promote civic activism, inclusive policymaking, and responsive governance, reinforcing

the right to the city for all residents, especially those traditionally excluded from urban planning processes.

4.2 ↗ WORKSHOP: THE RIGHT OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION, THE FUTURE OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM AND ACTIVISM

In July 2024, Vouliwatch organized a public workshop in Athens on the **Right of Access to Public Information**, aiming to promote this underused yet constitutionally and internationally protected right as a powerful tool for journalism and civic activism in Greece.

The event featured keynote speaker Arne Smerrott, German journalist and Director of FragDenStaat, who shared landmark FOIA victories, including the EU court ruling that forced the European Parliament to disclose expenses related to neo-Nazi MEP Ioannis Lagos. Greek contributions came from Stefanos Loukopoulos (Director, Vouliwatch) and Christianna Stylianidou (Legal Counsel, Vouliwatch), while Rachel Hanna from Access Info Europe presented the asktheEU.org platform.

The workshop, funded by the BUILD project, aimed to encourage journalists and civil society to file FOIA requests en masse to uncover critical public interest information and push for stronger enforcement and reform of Greece's access-to-information framework.

4.3 ↗ PRESS CONFERENCE: DEMOCRACY WITHOUT OXYGEN

On February 4, 2024, Vouliwatch co-organized and actively participated in the joint press conference «**Democracy Without Oxygen**», held at the Athens Bar Association alongside prominent civil society partners including the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), Hellenic League for Human Rights, HIAS Greece, Homo Digitalis, Refugee Support Aegean (RSA), Reporters United, and Solomon.



The event attracted significant public attention, highlighting critical issues undermining the Rule of Law in Greece, as presented in the joint submission to the European Commission's 2024 Rule of Law report. The panelists addressed systemic threats, including the rise in authoritarian practices, persistent human rights violations, unlawful pushbacks, surveillance scandals, limitations on press freedom, lack of accountability in public administration, and ineffective justice mechanisms.

Stefanos Loukopoulos, Vouliwatch's Director, emphasized how the state's consistent undermining of checks and balances and good governance related legislation erode public trust in democratic institutions,

endangering democracy itself. Other speakers underscored Greece's failures in addressing accountability for abuses such as unlawful pushbacks, surveillance abuses, excessive police violence, and media monopolization.

Collectively, the organizations called upon the European Commission to shift from accepting mere governmental promises toward realistic assessments reflecting actual conditions on the ground, stressing the urgency for decisive institutional reform and genuine accountability in Greece.

4.4 ↗ VOULIWATCH PARTICIPATES IN AND SUPPORTS THE OPEN GOVERNANCE FORUM BY WEOPENGOV

In March 2025, Vouliwatch actively supported and participated in the 3rd Open Governance Forum organized by the WeOpenGov initiative and Transparency International Greece, held under the auspices of the Municipality of Athens and digiGOV innoHUB.

The forum aimed at strengthening transparency, accountability, and active citizen participation in public decision-making. Stefanos Loukopoulos, Director of Vouliwatch, was among the distinguished speakers addressing the panel «**Proposals for Open Governance**,» alongside experts from academia, civil society, and local authorities.

Loukopoulos shared Vouliwatch's insights and practical proposals to enhance open governance, emphasizing the importance of effective collaboration between public institutions and civil society to achieve genuine democratic reform and citizen empowerment in Greece.

4.5 ↗ VOULIWATCH MET IN ATHENS WITH THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S COMMISSIONER FOR JUSTICE

In February 2025, Vouliwatch Director Stefanos Loukopoulos held a high-level meeting with the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Michael O'Flaherty, during the Commissioner's official visit to Athens. The invitation marked a significant recognition of Vouliwatch's work in defending democratic principles and transparency in Greece.

The discussion focused on key issues affecting the rule of law in the country, including lack of transparency in decision-making, limited access to public information, poor legislative practices, and delays in the administration of justice. Loukopoulos also presented findings from Vouliwatch's joint 2024 Rule of Law submission to the European Commission, highlighting systemic challenges such as opaque asset declarations and political gift disclosures.

This meeting followed Vouliwatch's participation as the sole Greek civil society representative at the Council of Europe's Human Rights Roundtable in Strasbourg in November 2024, further solidifying its role as a leading voice for democratic accountability in Greece.

4.6 ↗ VOULIWATCH IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AS A GUEST OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR

In November 2024, Vouliwatch was honored to participate in a high-level roundtable hosted by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Michael O'Flaherty, in Strasbourg. Stefanos Loukopoulos,

Director of Vouliwatch, was invited as the sole representative of Greek civil society among 34 human rights defenders from across Europe.

HUMAN RIGHTS



The closed roundtable focused on the shrinking space for civil society across Europe and the growing threats faced by human rights defenders. Discussions centered on safeguarding civic participation, mental and physical well-being of activists, and empowering the next generation of defenders. Loukopoulos shared insights from Vouliwatch's advocacy in Greece, highlighting the erosion of the rule of law, transparency deficits, and systemic barriers to democratic participation.

The visit also included Vouliwatch's participation in the public event marking the **25th anniversary** of the Commissioner's Office, further underlining the organization's recognition as a key actor in the defense of human rights and democracy at the European level.

In October 2024, Vouliwatch represented Greece at the **Inter Pares Public Consultation** on strengthening parliamentary democracy, held as part of the **Global Legislative Openness Week (GLOW 2024)**. Organized by INTER PARES — the EU's global project to build parliamentary capacity — the event brought together experts, civil society actors, and parliamentary representatives to discuss partnerships between Parliaments and Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations (PMOs).

Vouliwatch Director Stefanos Loukopoulos joined a panel of international speakers to share insights from the organization's decade-long experience in promoting transparency and citizen engagement in parliamentary processes. The discussion focused on best practices for improving legislative openness, fostering collaboration between civil society and public institutions, and enhancing citizen participation in democratic governance.

4.7 ↗ VOULIWATCH AT THE INTER PARES PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON STRENGTHENING PARLIAMENTARISM

In June 2024, Vouliwatch participated in a high-level public discussion on the future of democracy and the rule of law in Europe, organized by the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Thessaloniki as part of its international conference "Shipwrecked: Rethinking Migration and Asylum in Europe."

Stefanos Loukopoulos, Director of Vouliwatch, was a featured speaker in the panel "Ways Forward – How to Confront Right-Wing

4.8 ↗ VOULIWATCH AT THE HEINRICH BÖLL FOUNDATION PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON DEMOCRACY

Populism and Safeguard Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Europe," alongside international experts, civil society actors, and academics. The discussion addressed rising authoritarianism, the impact of disinformation, and democratic backsliding across the continent.

Loukopoulos highlighted the crucial role of civil society in countering right-wing populism and defending democratic institutions, stressing the need for civic engagement, transparency, and legal accountability. His contribution reflected Vouliwatch's broader mission to uphold democratic values and institutional integrity in Greece and across Europe.

4.9 ↗

VOULIWATCH AT THE OPEN DISCUSSION OF THE JEAN MONNET MODULE PROGRAMME ON LOBBYING

In June 2024, Vouliwatch participated in the public conference of the Jean Monnet Module 2023–2025 titled «Citizen Lobbying and Policy Change in Europe,» held at the Athens Municipality Cultural Center. Stefanos Loukopoulos, Director of Vouliwatch, was a featured speaker in the closing panel "*Political Supply, Parties, and Economic Interests: Reinventing Politics,*" alongside economist Yanis Varoufakis, and water rights activist Stavros Stefanakos.

The panel explored the intersection of lobbying, political financing, and the influence of economic interests on democratic institutions. Loukopoulos shared Vouliwatch's long-standing efforts to strengthen transparency and accountability in lobbying regulation and party funding, and advocated for stronger safeguards against regulatory capture and opaque decision-making.

Organized as part of a wider EU-funded educational initiative, the conference brought together scholars, civil society actors, and political figures to examine strategies for reclaiming democratic policymaking from special interest dominance.

4.10 ↗

VOULIWATCH IN LONDON FOR THE TICTEC 2024 CONFERENCE

In June 2024, Vouliwatch participated in **TICTeC 2024**, the international **Impacts of Civic Technology Conference**, held in London and organized by mySociety. Stefanos Loukopoulos, Director of Vouliwatch, represented the organization and took part in discussions with over 170 civic tech practitioners, researchers, and civil society actors from around 35 countries.



This year's conference, themed "Climate, AI & Democracy

Under Threat," explored how civic technologies can support democratic resilience, transparency, and climate action amid rising global challenges. Key topics included access to public information, parliamentary monitoring, AI and democracy, citizen participation tools, and the role of civil society in ensuring open governance.

On the sidelines of the event, Loukopoulos held strategic meetings with members of the Access to Information Network, exchanging good practices and planning future collaborations around the right to access public information, an area where Vouliwatch remains actively engaged through both advocacy and litigation.

In June 2024, Vouliwatch participated in the international conference on whistleblower protection and the impact of SLAPPs (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) on journalism, held at Technopolis in Athens. Organized by Liberty of Speech Greece and the Workplace Promise Institute, the event brought together legal experts, journalists, and civil society organizations from across Europe.

Maria Nathanail, Vouliwatch's Head of Communications and Legal Research, was a featured speaker on the panel "Greek Cases: Successes and Failures," where she shared insights from Vouliwatch's advocacy work on transparency, the transposition of the whistleblowers protection directive, and the growing threat of SLAPPs in Greece.

The conference provided a vital forum for exchanging best practices, exposing legal gaps, and advancing international cooperation in defending public interest journalism and those who speak up against corruption and abuse of power.

In 2024, Vouliwatch participated actively in Popaganda's 10th-anniversary celebration, reinforcing its advocacy on press freedom and rule of law. Stefanos Loukopoulos, Vouliwatch's director, was a key speaker at the panel titled «Under Pressure: Press Freedom and the Rule of Law,» held on April 28 at Romantso in Athens.

The event, organized by Popaganda in partnership with the Sphera Network, hosted influential voices promoting social change through public dialogue. Loukopoulos joined journalists and academics in discussing critical challenges faced by media freedom and democratic accountability in Greece today.

4.11 ↗
VOULIWATCH AT
THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON
THE PROTECTION OF
WHISTLEBLOWERS AND
THE IMPACT OF SLAPPS

4.12 ↗
VOULIWATCH AT THE
POPAGANDA 10 YEARS
CELEBRATION

5. VOULIWATCH IN THE MEDIA

During the period covered by this report, Vouliwatch and its activities were featured a total of 21 times by national and international media.

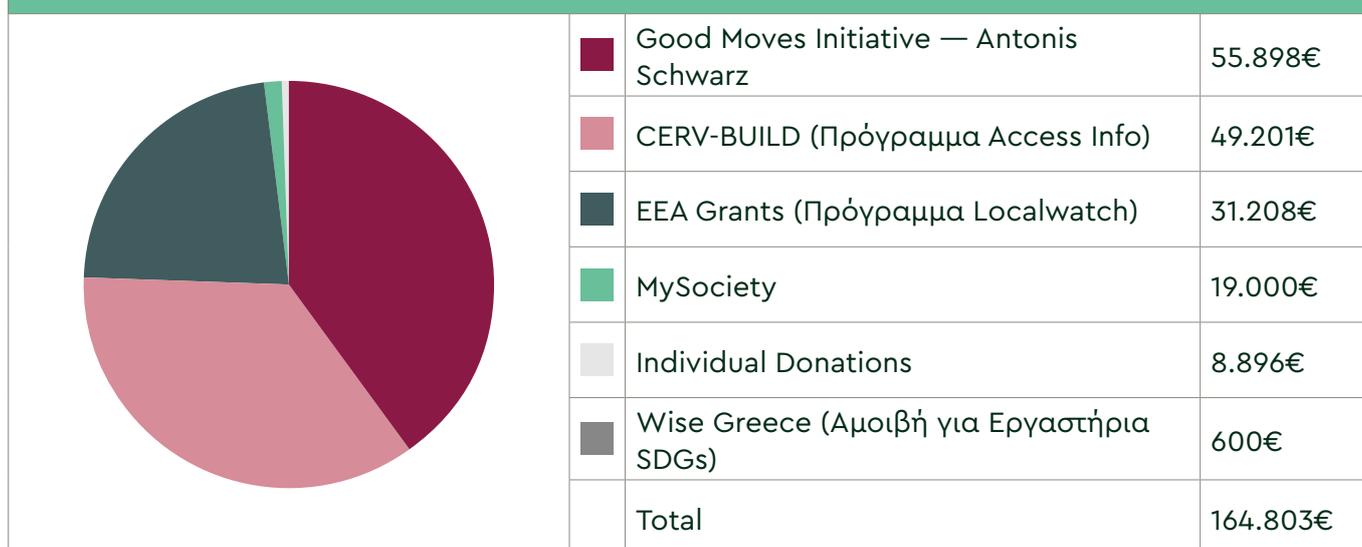
NAME OF MEDIA	TYPE OF MEDIA
EFSYN ↗	Online/Printed Press
Sphera Network / Popaganda ↗	Online
in.gr ↗	Online
Popaganda ↗	Online
Reporters United ↗	Online
Kathimerini ↗	Online/Printed Press
Inside Story ↗	Online
Parapolitika ↗	Online/Printed Press
Inside Story ↗	Online
EFSYN ↗	Online/Printed Press
in.gr ↗	Online
IMEdD ↗	Online
OmniaTV ↗	Online TV
in.gr ↗	Online
Politic.gr ↗	Online
Capital.gr ↗	Online
EFSYN ↗	Online/Printed Press
News24/7 ↗	Online
The Press Project ↗	Online
Eteron ↗	Podcast
ELLE ↗	Online/Printed Press

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

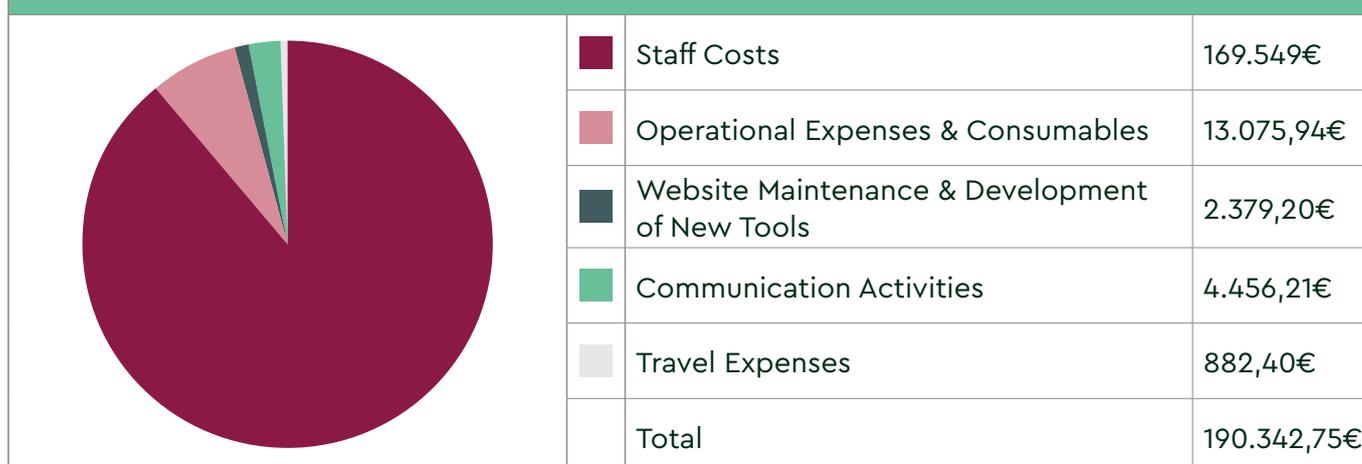
MARCH 2024-MARCH 2025

6.

SOURCES OF FUNDING / REVENUE



EXPENSES BY CATEGORY





Democracy Is Not Self-evident



16 VOULIS, ATHENS – 10563, GREECE



VOULIWATCH.BSKY.SOCIAL



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