

14th session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

Guiding questions for the focus area on participation in public life and decision-making process.

Regarding the national and local legal and policy framework, the right to vote and the right to be elected are both guaranteed for all Greek citizens, without discrimination or restriction for the elderly. It is worth mentioning the following measures/initiatives related to the electoral process that constitute motives for older persons to participate in public life and decision-making processes:

a) Greek Voters Abroad have the ability to vote without having to travel to Greece.

For the first time in 2023, Greek voters were able to vote abroad during the two successive general elections on May 21st and June 25th 2023. In both cases, concrete written instructions were sent by the Government to be implemented at the respective Electoral Centers/polling stations abroad. These instructions included facilitations for voters and more precisely:

a) Voters unable to undertake waiting for long periods, such as pregnant women, older persons, persons with disabilities etc., vote with absolute priority.

b) Voters who, due to physical weakness, are unable to carry out on their own the actions necessary during voting procedure, are entitled to request and receive the assistance of the Court representative or of another member of the electoral committee.

c) Facilitation of access to public buildings for persons with mobility limitations, in need of a companion dog, etc. was foreseen. In any case, the Court Representative or a member of the Electoral Committee can assist these persons, if necessary by leaving the Electoral Station (e.g. to go to a car which is parked nearby), in order to properly complete on the spot the procedure, and to carry back a closed envelope with the citizen's ballot and drop it into the ballot box. The ballot box is not moved out of the Election Station.

b) Postal voting

Postal voting has entered into force by the Law no. 5083/2024. All voters, whether they reside inside or outside of the Country, can exercise their electoral right by postal voting in the European Elections and National Referendums. This alternative way of voting facilitates the exercise by older persons of their right to vote.

c.) Register of accessible premises used as polling stations

Article 31 of the Law 5083/2024 provides for the creation of a register of the premises used as polling stations with special reference to their accessibility, to record all the possible premises accessible for persons with mobility limitations that can be used as polling stations.

d.) Special electoral rolls:

Registration to the general electoral rolls is automatic when individuals reach voting age. However, voters that wish to vote at their place of residence the candidates of their electoral prefecture, or voters that wish to vote abroad, or voters wishing to vote via postal voting, should

register to the special electoral rolls through the online platforms provided by the Ministry of the Interior.

e.) Motive for Elderly People to participate actively in political processes

The new rules of procedure for the collective administrative bodies of both municipal and regional authorities facilitate the older persons' active participation in decision-making for local affairs, since the holding of their meetings may take place in-person or via videoconference meetings or in-person and through teleconference simultaneously.

Regarding the right of peaceful assembly, it is guaranteed by Article 11 of the Constitution of Greece, regardless of the age of citizens. In addition, Law no. 4703/2020 and Presidential Decree no. 73/2020 established, respectively, the basic rules and details for the exercise of the to assemble.

According to the data available concerning the electoral body, in the last general elections of 25 June 2023, elderly people (years >65) constituted 30.83% of the electoral body. However, data concerning their participation in the elections (exercise of the right to vote by age) are not collected by the Ministry of the Interior.

Concerning accountability, since 2016, the Greek Ombudsperson is the only competent equality body for all the grounds protected under relevant EU Directives in the private, public and wider public sector. In 2016 a separate department for equal treatment on all grounds of discrimination was created, headed by a Deputy Ombudsperson.

The Greek Ombudsperson is competent, inter alia, to promote and achieve equality, prevent and eliminate discrimination and intolerance, promote diversity and good relations between the different groups in society, conduct investigations on individual complaints or ex officio investigations. The Greek Ombudsperson also performs a mediating function. The Greek Ombudsperson's mediation is administrative/non-judicial/extra-judicial and shall be accomplished till the first hearing of a case before the court or criminal prosecution. The Greek Ombudsperson can refer a case to the competent prosecutor or administrative authority and can also ask for administrative sanctions in the area of work and employment.