

XI. GREECE

Population: 10,539,771

Religious make-up:

“Known” Religions ()*

Corporations under Public Law

Eastern Orthodox Church: about 87 %

Islam: about 120,000 – 130,000

Judaism: about 4,000

Corporations under Private Law

Orthodox Christians of the Old Calendar: about 700,000 to 1 million (7 – 10 %)

Catholicism: about 200,000

Jehovah’s Witnesses: about 27,000 (about 50,000 church-goers)

Seventh Day Adventist Church: about 1,000

Religious Corporations under Private Law

Protestant churches: about 16,000 – 18,000

Buddhism, Mormons, Baha'is, etc.

(*) There is no constitutional, legislative or other definition of the concept of “known” religion. This label is arbitrarily granted or denied by the Ministry of Education and Religion or the Ministry of Justice or the Council of State when one of them is seized for a concrete case. However, this form of recognition is not necessarily endorsed by the other institutions.

Membership OSCE: Original - Helsinki Final Act: Original - Charter of Paris: Original

Membership Council of Europe: 09/08/49 - Membership U.N.: 25/10/45

A. CONSTITUTION

Constitution adopted on: 11 June 1975

Section II Relations between church and state

Article 3 [Relations of Church and State]

(1) The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. The Orthodox Church of Greece acknowledging as its head Our Lord Jesus Christ is indissolubly united in doctrine with the Great Church of Constantinople and every other Church of Christ of the same doctrine. It observes steadfastly, as they do, the holy apostolic and synodical canons and the holy tradition. It is autocephalous, exercising its sovereign rights independently of any other church, and is administered by the Holy Synod of Bishops and the Parliament Holy Synod which emanates from the former and is constituted in accordance with the Constitutional Chart of the Church and the provisions of the Patriarchal Document of 29 June 1850 and the Synodal Deed of 4 September 1928.

(2) The religious status prevailing in certain parts of the State is not contrary to the provisions of the foregoing paragraph.

(1) The text of the Holy Scriptures shall be maintained unaltered. The official translation thereof into any other linguistic form, without the sanction of the Autocephalous Church of Greece and the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople, is prohibited.

Article 5 [Freedom, Integrity]

(2) All persons within the Greek State enjoy full protection of their life, honor, and freedom, irrespective of nationality, race, creed, or political allegiance. Exceptions shall be permitted in such cases as are provided for by international law. Aliens persecuted for acts carried out in defence of their freedom shall not be extradited.

Article 13 [Religion]

(1) The freedom of religious conscience is inviolable. The enjoyment of civil and individual rights does not depend on the religious conviction of each individual.

(2) Every known religion is free and the forms of worship thereof shall be practiced without any hindrance by the State and under protection of the law. The exercise of worship shall not contravene public order or offend morals. Proselytizing is prohibited.

(3) The ministers of all religions are subject to the same obligations towards the State and to the same state supervision as the ministers of the established religion.

(4) No person shall, by reason of his religious convictions, be exempt from discharging his obligations to the State, or refuse to comply with the laws.

(5) No oath shall be imposed without a law specifying the form thereof.

Article 14 [Freedom of Expression and Press]

(1) Any person may express and propagate his opinion orally, in writing, or in print, with due adherence to the laws of the State.

(3) The seizure of newspapers and other printed matter, either before or after circulation, is prohibited. By exception, seizure after publication is permitted upon instruction by the Public Prosecutor because of:

a) insult to the Christian and all other known religions,

Article 16 [Education]

(2) Education constitutes a fundamental state objective and aims at the moral, intellectual, professional, and physical instruction of the Greeks, the development of national and religious consciousness, and the formation of free and responsible citizens.

Article 44 Religion

(1) The State acknowledges that the homage of public worship is due to Almighty God. It shall hold His Name in reverence, and shall respect and honor religion.

(2.1) Freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion are, subject to public order and morality, guaranteed to every citizen.

(2.2) The State guarantees not to endow any religion.

(2.3) The State shall not impose any disabilities or make any discrimination on the ground of religious profession, belief or status.

(2.4) Legislation providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction at that school.

(2.5) Every religious denomination shall have the right to manage its own affairs, own, acquire and administer property, movable and immovable, and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes.

(2.6) The property of any religious denomination or any educational institution shall not be diverted save for necessary works of public utility and on payment of compensation.

B. LEGISLATION

Civil Code

Law No. 1363/1938 as amended by Law No. 1672/ 1939

Royal Decree of May 20/June 2/1939

C. CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

Law No 2510/97 (Official Gazette No 136A /27 June 1997, in force 1st January 1998) regulate Unarmed Military Service or Alternative Civilian-Social Service for Conscientious Objectors

Decision of the Minister of Defence No F. 420/202 /57.842 S.868, dated 12 December 1997 (Official Gazette No 1117B /16 December 1997)

Joint Decision of the Ministers of Defence, Education/ Religion and Justice No F. 420/202/57.845 S.875, dated 12 December 1997 (Official Gazette No 1117B /16 December 1997)