



## SPECIAL REPORT

# Recommendations for the improvement-simplification of administrative procedures

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*This report relies on the work of many senior investigators.*

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## SUMMARY

***The Greek Ombudsman, within the framework of its institutional role and relying on its relevant experience, has compiled a special report which includes recommendations on issues which are mostly within the competence of the Ministry of Administrative Reform and e-Governance. More specifically, the recommendations regard issues pertinent to the Code of Administrative Procedure, e-governance, administrative checks, and out-of-court resolution of disputes. They also regard the improvement and the simplification of administrative procedures with a view to serving citizens better.***

The Greek Ombudsman had submitted recommendations on the simplification of administrative procedures in the past as well. More specifically, the recommendations were submitted in March 2004, were addressed to the competent Minister of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization and, in their most part, were incorporated into the legislation, mainly through the provisions of Law 3242/2004.

The Authority, aware of the crucial importance simplification of administrative procedures has in the seamless operation of public services, in improving the service offered to citizens, and in combating bureaucracy and corruption, has recorded in the present special report its findings and recommendations towards that direction. Special issues as to the recommendations regard:

### **I. Administrative Procedure**

It is recommended that: the scope of the Code of Administrative Procedure (Law 2690/1999) widen to encompass entities of the broader Public Sector (Public Power Corporation S.A., Athens Water Supply and Sewerage Company S.A. etc); the provisions governing access to documents and information by public sector agencies be systematized and "codified"; the institutional framework governing further use of public sector information be activated; and the "Code of Access to Public Documents" be issued. It is also necessary for the Administration to streamline, rationalize and clarify the regulatory framework governing the processing times necessary in handling the citizen cases. Additionally, a system of expediting the procedure of the competent

authorities' accepting the opinions issued by the State Legal Council (NSK) should be foreseen.

## **II. e-Governance**

Accomplishing interoperability of information systems of Public Sector agencies/bodies (KEP-TAXIS [one-stop-centres –Tax information system] KEP [one-stop-centres] - digitalized municipal population registers, etc) is recommended as necessary. Additionally, the procedures handled by the KEP should be broadened. Further, it is recommended that standardization of administrative procedures and documents take place, together with the establishment of a list of supporting documents for administrative procedures. What is more, online information available to citizens should be improved. To that purpose, relevant recommendations by the Greek Ombudsman are being stated.

## **III. Service to Citizens**

It is recommended that the issue of serving citizens, who are verifiably unable to submit their identity or passport issuance application in person, be arranged through legislation.

## **IV. Administrative Audits and Out-of-Court Resolution of Disputes**

Administrative audits should be redesigned and the stages of the auditing procedures should be standardized, with the regulatory/auditing role the state plays being redefined. Within that framework, it is necessary to select/designate a sampling procedure under which violators will be treated inflexibly and have the foreseen penalties imposed upon them. Further, the establishment and selection of rationales encouraging out-of-court settlement of disputes between citizens and the Administration is recommended.

The Authority's highlights and recommendations regard the introduction of new legislative provisions and/or the amendment, activation, and proper implementation of the existing regulatory framework as much as they regard the advent of organizational and operating changes linked to the rapid introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into the administrative process.

The majority of the legislative and organizational/operating recommendations made by the Greek Ombudsman are summarized in the annex to the special report and regard mainly matters which are in the competence of the Ministry of Administrative Reform and e-Governance. However, some of the recommendations entail the introduction of legal provisions in collaboration with the jointly competent Ministries, within the framework of the executive competence of the Ministry of Administrative Reform and e-Governance to promote simplifying procedures, combat bureaucracy, reinforce transparency, and improve services addressed to citizens.