



## Law 5108/2024: A New Chapter in the Administration of Justice in Greece

On May 2, 2024, Law 5108/2024 was published in the Government Gazette (Issue A' 65).

### **(a) The Legislator's Objectives**

According to the relevant Explanatory Statement (Impact Assessment Analysis), the main objectives of Law 5108/2024 are the following:

- Immediate Acceleration of Justice Administration in Greece: The legislation aims to address the long-standing issue of increasing delays in the issuance of judicial decisions. It is noted that Greece has some of the highest litigation durations in the European Union, confirmed by its ranking of 146th worldwide in 2020, as reported in the World Bank's annual "DOING BUSINESS" report.
- More Rational Utilization of Human Resources in the Justice Sector: This reform seeks to eliminate phenomena of irrational distribution of human resources, without disrupting the smooth operation of the judiciary.
- Enhancement of Citizen and Investor Confidence in the Justice System: By upgrading the justice

system, the goal is to attract investments and bolster domestic entrepreneurship.

- Promotion of Access to Justice: The reduction of public costs is claimed to be one of the main aims of the legislator in an effort to make justice more accessible to citizens.

### **(b) Major Amendments (Law 5108/2024)**

The most significant amendments regarding the restructuring of first-instance civil and criminal courts:

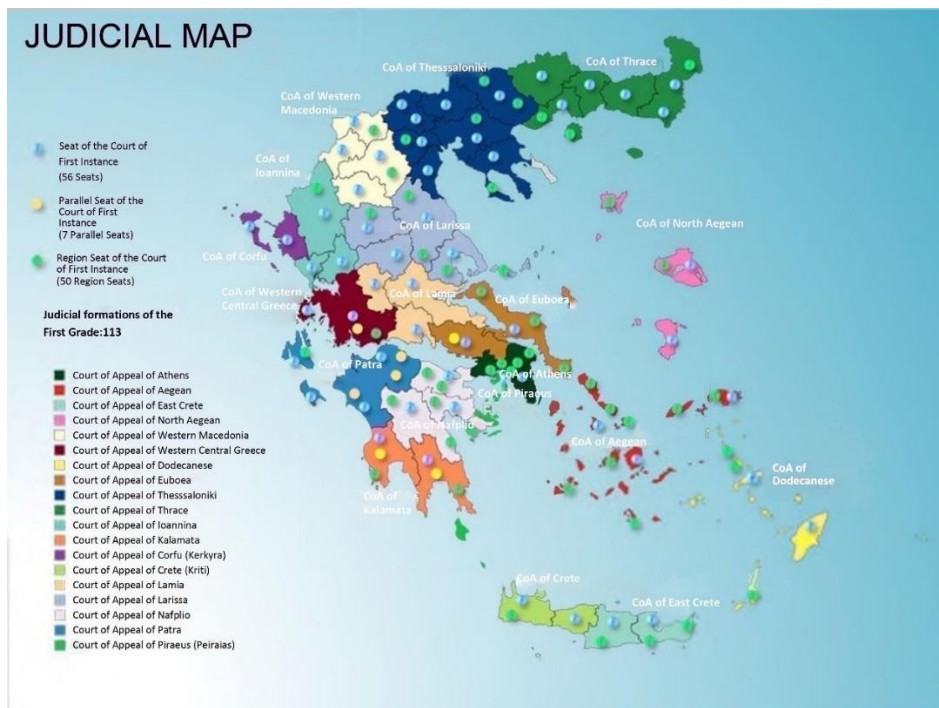
- The Small Claims Courts are abolished (Art. 4 para. 1, 14 para. 8, 76 para. 2 of Law 5108/2024).
- The Single-Member First-Instance Courts are competent for monetary disputes with a value not exceeding two hundred fifty thousand (250,000) euros (Art. 14 of the Civil Procedure Code, Law 5134/2024).
- A distinction is introduced among First-Instance Courts as "central" First-Instance Courts (Art. 3, item a of Law 5108/2024) and

"parallel seats" of the central First-Instance Court (Art. 3, item b of Law 5108/2024).

- Article 6 details all the seats and districts of the first-instance civil and criminal courts. In Attica, there are now two (2) "central" First-Instance Courts: the First-Instance Court of Athens with regional seats in Maroussi, Koropi, and Peristeri, and the First-Instance Court of Piraeus with regional seats in Kallithea, Elefsina, and Poros. It is noted that Elefsina and Kallithea remain regional seats of Athens until September 16, 2026 (Art. 76 of Law 5108/2024).
- The hearing of all criminal cases is being transferred to the former facilities of the Court of First Instance of Athens.
- Certain civil cases remain in the former facilities of the Court of First Instance of Athens (the new regular procedure under the

jurisdiction of the Multi-Member and Single-Member Court of First Instance, the procedure of interim measures and non-contentious jurisdiction under the jurisdiction of the Multi-Member Court of First Instance).

- The courtrooms and the registries of other procedures (special and non-contentious) under the jurisdiction of the Single-Member Court of First Instance are being transferred to the building of the abolished of September 16, 2024, Magistrate Court of Athens.
- In accordance with the provisions of Article 14, paragraph 4 of Law 5108/2024, the update regarding the scheduling of civil cases that have already been scheduled, for their new hearing location will be provided through the online court case platform (Solon System) and not through official notification from the court registry.



## (c) Challenges and Problems Arising from the Implementation of Law 5108/2024

- **Lack of Staff Training:** Employees of the new judicial formations are expected to respond to the challenges of changes without having received appropriate training. The main issue, however, lies in the delay of training for the Peace Court judges, who handle new procedures and adjudicate—often in a single-member composition—cases for which they lack experience and adequate training.
- **Lack of Adaptation of Technological Systems to New Developments:** It has been pointed out that the untimely expansion of the Digital Portal for Civil and Criminal Justice (solon.gov.gr) to the regional courts creates insecurity among lawyers and citizens regarding case determinations, increasing the risk of default judgments.
- **Difficulty in Daily Legal Practice:** The transitional provisions in Article 14 of Law 5108/2024 do not cover all issues arising from the law's enactment. Instead, this provision prolongs uncertainty by imposing regulations with specific temporal

validity, making the work of legal professionals more difficult as they must closely monitor new procedures and their implementation.

- **Lack of Preparedness in Building Infrastructures:** Inadequate courtrooms and insufficient spaces characterize the state of the courts following the legislative changes.

## (d) Initial Evaluation of the New Changes

Given the above problems, it is deemed necessary to inspect the application of the new judicial map over a specified period to identify and rectify its weaknesses. In any case, a holistic approach is urgently needed, with further reform initiatives to strengthen the judicial system, which will include staff training, adequate staffing of services, complete digitization, and a revision of procedures aimed at genuinely improving access to justice. While time will reveal the actual impact of the new law on the country's judicial system, it is clear that it has already laid the groundwork for positive change.

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