



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

Greece

Greece – GRC40214 – Violence Against Women – GSGE – State Protection – Greek Austerity Measures – Syrian Residency & Citizenship – Greece Dual Citizenship

1 May 2012

- 1. Please provide information on the type and level of state protection available to women against domestic violence in Greece. What branches of government, specific government departments, institutions and organisations provide assistance to female victims of family violence?**

The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE), an independent statutory body, is Greece's primary state agency responsible for matters relating to domestic violence. According to the US Department of State (USDOS), the GSGE, "in cooperation with the Ministry of Citizen Protection, trained police on working with domestic violence victims". The GSGE also provides counselling and assistance to victims of domestic violence, including shelter, legal assistance, and "psychological help".¹ Freedom House provides similar information in relation to the GSGE.²

With regards to the effectiveness of state protection, USDOS makes the comment that Greek government statistics regarding the incidence of domestic violence/spousal abuse "were either unavailable or outdated". Furthermore, "[d]ata on prosecutions, convictions, and prison sentences for rape and domestic violence crimes were unavailable". In 2010, the GSGE estimated that "only 6 to 10 percent of domestic violence victims contacted the police and only a small fraction of those cases reached trial".³ Freedom House makes the comment that while the Greek state "generally protects the civil and political rights of women equally well with those of men... it has proven unable to address the problem of domestic violence effectively".⁴

Greece's national police force is the primary state authority responsible for the enforcement of Greek law in relation to domestic violence. However, according to USDOS, the "GSGE reported that police tended to discourage women from pursuing domestic violence charges, encouraging them instead to undertake reconciliation". In cases that made it to trial, USDOS cites unspecified NGO complaints that "courts were lenient on male offenders in domestic violence cases".⁵

¹ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Greece*, 8 April, Section 5

² Freedom House 2011, *Countries at the Crossroads 2011 – Greece*, 10 November
<<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ecba64dc.html>> Accessed 24 April 2012

³ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Greece*, 8 April, Section 5

⁴ Freedom House 2011, *Countries at the Crossroads 2011 – Greece*, 10 November
<<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ecba64dc.html>> Accessed 24 April 2012

⁵ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Greece*, 8 April, Section 5

In relation to services/assistance provided to victims of domestic violence, a 2005 Ministry of the Interior (MoI) report states that the GSGE operates two “Consultation Centres for Violence against Women” in Athens and Piraeus. Furthermore, the GSGE supervises branches of the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) in Athens, Thessaloniki, Patra, Herakleion (Iraklion), and Volos.⁶ Information provided by KETHI indicates that it primarily conducts research and offers advice rather than provides shelter/protection.⁷

The MoI report also lists other centres that provide shelter and other forms of assistance to victims of domestic violence in various locations throughout Greece, including:

- In the Prefecture of Thessaloniki: the Centre for the Support of Women, of the Macedonia Institute
- In the Prefecture of Aetoloakarnania: the “Centre for the Education and Care for the Family and Child” (KESTT –KEMOP “PLATO”)
- In the Prefecture of Ioannina: the Centre for Research and Support of Victims of Abuse and Social Exclusion
- In the Prefecture of Preveza: the Centre for Research and Support of Victims of Abuse, Sensitive Social Groups and Protection of Single-parent Families (KESTHYKEKO)
- In the Prefecture of Serres: the “Women’s Shelter”- Social Care
- In the Prefecture of Komotini: the Social Services of the Municipality of Komitini
- In the Prefecture of Karditsa: the Centre of the Support of Women of the Municipality of Karditsa
- In the Prefecture of Chios: the Office of Women’s Issues of the Municipality of Chios.

The MoI adds that these centres “provide psychological, social, and legal support to women victims of violence and other sensitive women’s groups”. The MoI reports that a statutory body separate to the GSGE, The National Centre of Emergency Social Care (EKAKV), operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Health.⁸

USDOS reports that the municipal government of Athens, the Greek Orthodox Church, and a number of unspecified NGOs operate shelters and centres for victims of domestic violence.⁹

2. What specific laws and policies are in place to protect women against family violence?

Until the introduction of the *Law on Combating Domestic Violence 2006* (3500/2006), Greece did not have a law specifically relating to domestic violence/intimate partner violence. While welcoming the law, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has expressed concern regarding the provision within the law of encouraging mediation as a first step between the victim and the abuser:

⁶ Ministry of the Interior 2005, *Information and Data on the issue of Violence Against women in Greece*, UN website, April, pp.8-9 <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/responses/GREECEweb.pdf>> Accessed 24 April 2012

⁷ Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research 2007, *Research Centre For Gender Equality*, website <http://www.iobe.gr/index.asp?a_id=434> Accessed 26 April 2012

⁸ Ministry of the Interior 2005, *Information and Data on the issue of Violence Against women in Greece*, UN website, April, pp.8-9 <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/responses/GREECEweb.pdf>> Accessed 24 April 2012

⁹ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Greece*, 8 April, Section 5

19. While welcoming the adoption of the Law on Combating Domestic Violence in 2006, in particular the inclusion of marital rape as a criminal offence and the prohibition of physical violence against minors, the Committee is concerned that the availability of the mediation procedure in criminal cases for certain types of domestic violence at the instance of the prosecutor may lead to the re-victimization of women who have suffered violence.

20. The Committee recommends that the State party carry out studies and monitor closely the Law on Combating Domestic Violence, particularly its mediation procedure, in order to ensure that the legislation is implemented in a way that respects and promotes women's human rights and does not lead to perpetrators escaping punishment. The Committee calls on the State party to put in place training measures for judges who conduct mediation in criminal proceedings for domestic violence cases so as to enhance their capacity to deal with violence against women in a gender-sensitive manner.¹⁰

According to the US Department of State, the 2006 law “provides for prosecution by force of law, without the need for a victim to press charges, for all domestic violence crimes. Penalties range from two to 10 years’ imprisonment, depending on the gravity of the crime.” Despite this provision, “only a small fraction” of those cases registered with police “reached trial”.¹¹

Commenting on *Law 3500/2006*, the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) states that judicial mediation is for “minor crimes of domestic violence”; however the MIGS does not specify what constitutes a minor crime in the context of domestic violence. MIGS states that “brutal behaviour” is defined as acts that “result in severe physical and mental injuries and/or damage to the victim’s health, as well as cases involving severe threats and coercion”. Such cases are required by the 2006 law to be “punished much more harshly”. MIGS reported that in cases of judicial mediation, a perpetrator is “instructed to make amends for his behaviour and to follow a special advisory and therapeutic programme”. Should this programme fail, “the perpetrator will be prosecuted for flagrant violation of the law”.¹²

A 2008 report by the Daphne Programme of the European Commission states that despite the introduction of the 2006 law, “the term ‘violence against women’ is not used in the Greek Penal Code”.¹³ In 2011, the World Organisation Against Torture recommended that the 2006 Law “be changed in order to address violence against women”.¹⁴

In May 2011, Greece signed the Council of Europe’s *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence*.¹⁵ Article 4.1 of the convention states that:

¹⁰ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 2007, *UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Concluding Comments, Greece*, CEDAW/C/GRC/CO/6, 2 February, pp.3-4 <<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/45f6cfc52.html>> Accessed 24 April 2012

¹¹ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Greece*, 8 April, Section 5

¹² Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies 2008, *Intercultural Dialogue on Violence against Women*, Dipartimento Per Le Parti Opportunita website p.35 <http://www.retepariopportunita.it/Rete_Pari_Opportunita/UserFiles/news/intercultural_dialogue_on_violence_against_women_resource_book_11_6_2008_all.pdf> Accessed 24 April 2012

¹³ Kane, J. 2008, *Daphne Booklet: Family Violence*, European Commission website, July, p.13

<http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/daphnetoolkit/files/others/booklets/05_daphne_booklet_5_en.pdf> Accessed 24 April 2012

¹⁴ World Organisation Against Torture 2011, *State Violence in Greece: An Alternative Report to the United Nations Committee Against Torture*, 20 October <<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ec656bc2.html>> Accessed 24 April 2012

¹⁵ An interactive map of the Council of Europe website indicates that Greece is a signatory. A screen grab has been saved as Council of Europe n.d., *Interactive Map: Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against*

Parties shall take the necessary legislative and other measures to promote and protect the right for everyone, particularly women, to live free from violence in both the public and the private sphere.¹⁶

Article 18.1 states:

Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to protect all victims from any further acts of violence.¹⁷

No sources were located indicating that *Law 3500/2006* has been amended to comply with the principles set out in the *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence*.

In relation to government policy, since 2001, successive Greek governments have pursued a „National Action Plan for Equality’/‘Action Plan for Gender Equality’. A 2007 report for the European Commission’s Quality in Gender + Equality Policies programme provides useful information on Greek government policy towards gender equality (and domestic violence):

...the National Action Plan for Equality 2001-2006 was implemented during the 2001-2004 period (until March 2004, when there was a change in Government sanctioning the return of the Right). The main aim of the Plan was “the modernization of social standards, aiming at full utilization of human resources regardless of sex and the elimination of any form of discrimination against women”. The principal instrument for the implementation of the principle of gender equality was stipulated to be gender mainstreaming. The main axes of this Plan have been the following:

- Gender equality in economic life.
- Equal participation and representation in the political, social and economic sectors.
- Equal access to the implementation of social rights for men and women.
- Change of the roles and stereotypes of the sexes.

...

According to the findings of the project “Implementing Gender Mainstreaming at Governmental level in the EU Member States”, Greece seems to have given the impression to the authors of the report that: “Greece has focused on gender mainstreaming throughout the guidelines, policies and actions to be supported by the 4th Community Support framework (2007-2013). Gender mainstreaming as a tool to achieve gender equality is in the process of elaboration.” While it is stated that “Greece does not have a plan for implementing gender mainstreaming”, it does have an Action Plan for Gender Equality 2004-2008, since after the government change a new Action Plan was formulated.¹⁸

Women and Domestic Violence Signatories <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/source/flash/map/map_en.htm> Accessed 26 April 2012

¹⁶ Council of Europe 2011, *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, 12 April, article 4.1 <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/texts/Convention_en.pdf> Accessed 24 April 2012

¹⁷ Council of Europe 2011, *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, 12 April, article 18.1 <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/texts/Convention_en.pdf> Accessed 24 April 2012

¹⁸ Pantelidou Maloutas, M. et al 2007, *Issue Histories Greece: Series of Timelines of Policy Debates*, Quality in Gender + Equality Policies/Institute for Human Sciences Vienna, European Commission website, p.5 <http://www.quing.eu/files/results/ih_greece.pdf> Accessed 27 April 2012

According to the authors of the report, the *Law on Combating Domestic Violence 2006* (3500/2006) was a direct result of the Action Plan for Gender Equality.¹⁹ It also indicates that policy vis-à-vis gender equality and domestic violence in Greece is largely bipartisan.

Since the report, Greece has changed governments a number of times. It is not clear as to what priority gender equality and issues relating to domestic violence have with the current Greek administration.

3. Is police protection withheld from women because of their gender?

While no sources were located that argue that police in Greece deliberately withhold state protection from female victims of domestic violence due to their gender, sources do suggest that police commonly view domestic violence/intimate partner violence as a private or family matter.²⁰

A joint Greek Helsinki Monitor/Minority Rights Group – Greece (GHM/MRG-G) report, published in 2006, states that it is important to „stress’ Greece’s patriarchal attitudes towards women, reinforcing a culture that tolerates discrimination and violence towards women:

Greece remains a state with strong patriarchal attitudes that impregnate society at all levels and produce a remarkable tolerance towards stereotypes and discrimination against women. The continuing high levels of violence and sexual harassment against women, both in the family and in society (see particularly Greek society’s tolerance to sexual exploitation of trafficked women), implied also in the state’s report, proves the failure of actions directed towards effectively impregnating society with a culture of women’s rights and gender equality. Certainly, re-educating society is a long-term process. Indeed, some efforts may be made in the schools, although they apparently remain significantly limited. Nevertheless, all other levels of society – media, the state’s Orthodox Church, political parties – continue to reproduce directly or indirectly through actions and words a culture of tolerance of discrimination, stereotyping and even violence against women contrary to the standards of a democratic European society.²¹

On the subject of police protection, the authors of the GHM/MRG-G report state that the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) has expressed concern that police and prosecutors retain sole responsibility for the prosecution of perpetrators of domestic violence against women:

...it is concerned the exclusive burden to deal with such cases continues to fall upon prosecutors and police officers, without the addition of an institution of family social workers to empower them; yet the NCHR recalls that these law enforcement officials have shown to be rather inefficient or inappropriate to deal with cases of domestic violence to date. On this issue, NCHR praises the April 2005 police manual on how officers should deal with cases of domestic violence:

¹⁹ Pantelidou Maloutas, M et al 2007, *Issue Histories Greece: Series of Timelines of Policy Debates*, Quality in Gender + Equality Policies/Institute for Human Sciences Vienna, European Commission website, p.6 <http://www.quing.eu/files/results/ih_greece.pdf> Accessed 27 April 2012

²⁰ Leroy, L. 2011, *Domestic violence: the intruder in the workplace and vocational integration*, COFACE website, p.28 <http://coface-eu.org/en/upload/08_EUProjects/Domestic%20violence-etude-coface-daphne-en.pdf> Accessed 24 April 2012

²¹ Greek Helsinki Monitor/ Minority Rights Group – Greece 2006, *Parallel Report on Greece’s Compliance with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, IRAW website, July, pp.5-6 <[http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/Greece\(1\).pdf](http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/Greece(1).pdf)> Accessed 24 April 2012

GHM and MRG-G would second this praise. Yet, NCHR notes that police stations do not have personnel trained... with expertise on these issues, so as to implement the manual.²²

The GHM/MRG-G report provides two examples of the police (and NGOs) failing to appropriately advise/assist women from their husbands/estranged husbands, as per GSGE guidelines. In the first example, an immigrant woman married to a Greek national was advised by a Greek NGO that she should only go to a shelter in Athens once she received her residency card from authorities, exposing her to a further period of potential harm. Once the woman received her identity document, the woman was referred to a shelter and police by a separate agency. However, the NGO, state agency and the police failed to assist the woman in drafting her complaint. Rather, the police only took an oral statement from her (in English). Furthermore, the police failed to respond to her complaint of violence perpetrated by her husband against their children.²³

In the second example, a woman reported to the police that she had been “beaten up by her estranged husband”; however the police “demonstrated indifference until the victim persisted”:

The victim reported to the police that he tried to break up the door of her apartment by kicking it and insulted and threatened her. The children woke up terrified while some neighbors ran to see what was going on. She called the police and by the time the patrol car arrived the husband had left. The police officer saw the damage done to the door, spoke with her, and asked her if she wished to file charges against him while he told her that he will find her husband and will try to admonish him. After a few days she went to the Direction of Direct Action of the Greater Athens Police (GADA) to seek the registration of the event, so as to use it in her further actions. What was given to her was a note of the fact that a police officer arrived at her place, but that “no one was present and nothing was ascertained.” The woman eventually went back to the police with a formal contest of that note, describing all the details of what took place that evening, providing names of witnesses and the name of the police officer who had dealt with the case. Because of her persistence and patience, she eventually received an acknowledgment of an error in the initial note and a complete report of the incident by the police, with all necessary information for her to use in court. Had she not had the resources to pursue the issue and so many witnesses, the police evidence of the event would have been lost. No action was ever taken to reprimand the police officers involved in formally misreporting the event.²⁴

According to the US Department of State, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) has reported that “police tended to discourage women from pursuing domestic violence charges, encouraging them instead to undertake reconciliation”. The department adds that some NGOs make the charge that the “courts were lenient on male offenders in domestic violence cases”.²⁵

4. Has the level of protection available to women been affected by Greek’s economic downturn?

²² Greek Helsinki Monitor/ Minority Rights Group – Greece 2006, *Parallel Report on Greece’s Compliance with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, IRAW website, July, p.11

<[http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/Greece\(1\).pdf](http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/Greece(1).pdf)> Accessed 24 April 2012

²³ Greek Helsinki Monitor/ Minority Rights Group – Greece 2006, *Parallel Report on Greece’s Compliance with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, IRAW website, July, pp.13-14

<[http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/Greece\(1\).pdf](http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/Greece(1).pdf)> Accessed 24 April 2012

²⁴ Greek Helsinki Monitor/ Minority Rights Group – Greece 2006, *Parallel Report on Greece’s Compliance with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, IRAW website, July, pp.14-15

<[http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/Greece\(1\).pdf](http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/Greece(1).pdf)> Accessed 24 April 2012

²⁵ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – Greece*, 8 April, Section 5

No reports were located arguing that the level of adequate police protection available to women in Greece has declined since the beginning of the country's economic crisis.

Since the crisis began in 2009, Greece has adopted severe austerity measures designed to dramatically cut government spending. While some sections of the budget have largely been quarantined (such as defence spending), public sector salaries and spending of social services have been cut.²⁶ It is not clear whether police salaries and budget or the GSGE budget have been affected by the austerity measures.

One 2011 report was located that argues that Greece's financial crisis has led to increased levels of domestic violence; "[m]en who feel that their masculinity is threatened by unemployment have become increasingly abusive towards women with whom they live and children are experiencing some of the aftermath of their parents' anxiety".²⁷

5. Does the child of a Syrian national have a legally enforceable right to enter and reside in Syria? Does a child of a female Syrian citizen have the right to Syrian citizenship or permanent residency under Syrian law?

Human Rights Watch reported in January 2012 that under Syria's *Nationality Law of 1969*, a Syrian woman cannot pass on her nationality to her children, even if her children were born in Syria.²⁸ According to the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Syrian men can automatically pass on their citizenship even if they were not born there or have never visited the country... Yet Syrian-born residents whose fathers happen to be foreign miss out on the benefits enjoyed by fully-fledged citizens". According to the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "the Syrian parliament voted against a move to give women the right to pass on their nationality to their children, despite a major campaign led by human rights groups to amend the citizenship law" in October 2008.²⁹

A 2008 report by the Syrian Women's League highlights a number of discriminatory factors affecting children born to Syrian mothers and foreign fathers who are currently resident in Syria. Discrimination includes: no access to state subsidised education; subject to professional dues not imposed on citizens; higher education fees; limited or no access to pensions; difficulty obtaining official documents; and difficulty renewing residency permits. Of particular note is the League's comment that in cases where the father's Syrian residency permit is cancelled, the children "would be forced to travel to their father's country of origin once he got divorced or separated, even if children were already staying with their mother". In special circumstances, the relevant minister can grant nationality to "underage children unless their permanent residence was outside the country and they kept their father's original nationality".³⁰

²⁶ Haydon, P. 2012, 'Greece's austerity doesn't extend to its arms budget', *The Guardian*, 21 March <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/mar/21/greece-austerity-measures-military-spending>> Accessed 27 April 2012

²⁷ Woestman, L. & Kinoti, K. 2011, *The Effects Of The Global Economic Crisis And Structural Adjustment On Women And Gender Relations In Greece: First Wave*, AWID website, 15 April <<http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Friday-Files/The-Effects-of-the-Global-Economic-Crisis-and-Structural-Adjustment-on-Women-and-Gender-Relations-in-Greece-First-Wave>> Accessed 24 April 2012

²⁸ Human Rights Watch 2012, *World Report 2012 – Syria*, 22 January, p.5

²⁹ Institute for War and Peace Reporting 2008, *Campaign to Change Unfair Citizenship Law Continues*, UNHCR Refworld, 19 December <<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4959de2a1e.html>> Accessed 24 April 2012

³⁰ Syrian Women's League 2008, *The Right of Syrian Women To Grant Their Nationality to Their Children*, Al-Thara website <<http://www.thara-sy.com/TharaEnglish/modules/news/article.php?storyid=42>> Accessed 24 April 2012

6. Does Greek law allow for dual citizenship?

Greek law does allow dual citizenship. However, there is a provision for the loss of Greek citizenship following the acquisition of foreign citizenship in the *Citizenship Law of Greece*:

Loss of the Greek citizenship

1. Because of acquisition of foreign citizenship Art. 14

1. Every Greek citizen, who after permission acquired a foreign citizenship by his own will or accepted a public service in another country, of this acceptance has an effect the acquisition of the citizenship of this country, he will lose his Greek citizenship.

When the permission is granted for exceptional reasons after the acquisition of the foreign citizenship, the loss of the Greek citizenship is subsisting from the date that the permission is granted.

...

3. Because of forfeiture Art. 20

1. A Greek citizen may be declared forfeited of the Greek citizenship:

a) if by infringing Art. 14 he acquired by his own will a foreign citizenship;

b) if he accepted a public service in another country and he remains there even after the order by the Minister of the Interiors to him to abstain from his service within defined time limit;

c) if while he was residing in another country he acted for the benefit of this country and against the interest of Greece.

2. The forfeiture is decided by the Minister of the Interiors in accordance with the consent opinion of the council for citizenship. The loss of the Greek citizenship exists from the date of the publication of the decision in the Government's newspaper.³¹

Article 14 of the *Code of Greek Nationality 1955* (amended 1993) pertains to the loss of nationality "Due to Acquisition of a Foreign Nationality":

The person, who, after a permission, a) has acquired voluntarily a foreign nationality or, b) has accepted a position in the public service of a foreign state, provided such acceptance entails the acquisition of the nationality of that state, loses the Greek nationality. The permission may be granted for extraordinary reasons after the acquisition of the foreign nationality, in which case the loss of the Greek nationality occurs as from the time the permission was granted. The person who has a foreign nationality may also lose the Greek one, if his/her application for loss of the Greek nationality is granted. In such a case the loss of the Greek nationality occurs as from the time of the granting of the application. The permission of s1 is given and the granting of the application of S 2 takes place by a decision of the Minister of the Interior following consultation of the Nationality Council. The permission can never be given or the application granted if the applicant is subject to or delays a military obligation or is prosecuted for a felony or misdemeanour.³²

The key term in both the *Citizenship Law of Greece* and *Code of Greek Nationality 1955* appears to be „permission”; loss of Greek citizenship only occurs in circumstances where a Greek national has sought permission from the Minister of the Interior to acquire foreign citizenship. However, it is not clear under what circumstances such permission would be sought. An Athens-based

³¹ *Citizenship Law of Greece 1982*, Legislation Online

<<http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/5395>> Accessed 24 April 2012

³² *Code of Greek Nationality 1955*, Amended 1993, Legislation Online

<<http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/5394>> Accessed 24 April 2012

attorney at law, Christos Iliopoulos, argues that most Greeks who have emigrated abroad have obtained the citizenship of their adopted country without losing their Greek citizenship:

Many Greeks, who were born in Greece have emigrated to other countries, where they have established their families for many years. Most of them have obtained the citizenship of their adopted country (America, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Germany etc.). These people have never lost their Greek citizenship, even if they have never again visited their birthplace, even if they have lost their Greek identification card or other Greek documents. Provided of course that they have not officially renounced the Greek citizenship.

The Supreme Court of Greece (Arios Pagos) has ruled that a person who was born in Greece by Greek parents does not lose his Greek citizenship even if he voluntarily obtains the citizenship of another country. As a result, his inheritance assets, which are located in Greece, will be settled according to the rules of Greek law. This may be very important, when the law of the other country applies different rules on inheritance matters.

A Greek will lose his Greek citizenship only if he/she officially renounces the Greek citizenship and this is accepted by the Greek state, or if he/she obtains the citizenship of another country after a permit granted by the Hellenic Republic.

The conclusion is that a Greek who obtains the American, Australian, Canadian etc. citizenship, does not lose his Greek citizenship, unless he has received a specific permit by the Greek state, which happens very rarely, if at all.³³

³³ Iliopoulos, C. n.d., *The Greek Who Obtains Foreign Citizenship Does Not Lose his Greek One*, Hellenic Comserve website <<http://www.helleniccomserve.com/foreigncitizenship.html>> Accessed 24 April 2012

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<http://www.retepariopportunita.it/Rete_Pari_Opportunita/UserFiles/news/intercultural_dialogue_on_violence_against_women_resource_book_11_6_2008_all.pdf> Accessed 24 April 2012.

Ministry of the Interior 2005, *Information and Data on the issue of Violence Against women in Greece*, UN website, April

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