



An ongoing process? Greek Legislation and Regulatory Framework in Civil Protection: A comparative analysis of pre and post the 4662/2020 Law

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Received: 30/10/2020

Accepted for Publication: 05/11/2020

Published: 07/11/2020

Abstract

The aim of this article is to examine and analyze modifications and changes in the regulatory framework (Law Changes) regarding Civil Protection in Greece, the way these changes are triggered and the time gap between each of those changes. Greece, over the years, has seen many changes in its Civil Protection legislation, each of them being triggered in different time periods and for different reasons. It is important to compare these changes with the previous Laws that were implemented, to check the responsiveness to emerging needs, as well as to focus on points that are important to be clearly outlined or are maybe in need of revision. The reasons that trigger a change in the regulatory framework can vary and are usually a result of the political situation of the country, the scientific and technological advancements, the responses of country mechanisms as well as the consequences of large scale disasters, the green policies initiatives and the European Guidelines.

Keywords: Civil Protection, Greece, Legislation, Regulatory Framework, Law Changes

1. Introduction

Floods are one of the main issues Mediterranean countries are called to tackle, since they are responsible for extended damages and a high number of victims when they take place. Urbanization and overpopulation are two of the main reasons related to an increased flood risk in those countries. It is therefore very important for a regulatory framework to clearly dictate the actions and measures that need to be taken, in order to minimize the damages and casualties in case of such an event, as well as, all the necessary actions that need to be taken before the event occurs, the infrastructure and guidelines that need to be followed by the State representatives, the policy makers, the stakeholders and the citizens.

Greece, being part of the Mediterranean countries, and prone to natural disasters and especially floods, has always been in dire need of a legislative framework capable of meeting its needs. 1968 marked the beginning of Greece's civil protection legislation history. Since then, there have been many new laws, revisions, while the legal framework has also been enriched with new legal binding instruments (e.g. European Commission Directive 2007/60).

In Greece, regular recording of flood events by civil protection agencies started relatively recently, limiting the systematic official records and the relevant data policy to the last two decades. On the other hand, regional authorities, damage compensation organizations and the press documented disasters in official reports or in anecdotal form, maintaining archives with an extensive amount of data that were not systematically evaluated as a whole until now. (Diakakis, Mavroulis, & Deligiannakis, 2012)

Until recently, a general Civil Protection plan called "Xenokrates" (published in 2003) was in place to set up a framework for developing a system of civil protection structures in Greece that would serve the overall purpose of effectively protecting the life, health and property of people, as well as the natural and man-made environment. That is up until February 4, 2020, when the new Law regarding the reform of the Civil Protection system was passed.

The goal of this paper is to review the laws on civil protection in Greece over the years, to analyze and evaluate the new 2020 law, compare it with the previous law implemented, check responsiveness to emerging needs, as well as to focus on points that are important to be clearly outlined or are maybe in need of revision. It is also important to examine, if those laws are on par and follow the European framework under which they are operating.

2. On the Greek Constitution

According to the Greek Constitution (Article 24), the protection of the natural and cultural environment is an obligation of the State and a right of everyone. For its preservation, the State has an obligation to take special precautionary or repressive measures within the framework of the principle of sustainability. The law stipulates the matters related to the protection of forests and forest areas. The drawing up of a tariff is an obligation of the State. Any change in the destination of forests and forest areas is prohibited, unless the rural economy is paramount for the National Economy exploitation or other use imposed by the public interest. (IXth Revisionary Parliament, 2019)

The spatial restructuring of the country, the configuration, the development, the urban planning and the expansion of cities and residential areas in general fall under the regulatory competence and control of the State, in order to serve the functionality and the development of settlements and to ensure the best possible living conditions. The relevant technical choices and weightings are made according to the rules of science. The compilation of the national cadastre is an obligation of the State as well. (IXth Revisionary Parliament, 2019)

For an area to be identified as residential and to be included in the urban planning, the properties that are included in it must participate, without compensation from the institution concerned, at the disposal of the land which is necessary to create roads, squares and spaces for general public uses and purposes, as well as in the expenditure for the execution of the basic communal urban planning projects as required by law. (IXth Revisionary Parliament, 2019)

A law may provide for the participation of the owners of an area that is characterized as residential in utilization and general layout according to an approved plan, in exchange for real estate of equal value or parts of property by floor, from the premises ultimately defined as buildable or for existing buildings of this area. Monuments, traditional sites and traditional elements are protected by the state. A law will determine the necessary restrictive property protection measures for its realization as well as the manner and type of compensation for the owners.

3 Laws before the 2020 law

As mentioned above, in Greece, the first organized system for the protection of the population in a state of emergency was introduced in 1968, through the provisions of the Civil Defense Ministry, which were also used to deal with natural disasters. It should be mentioned that in the period 1967-1974 a military junta had taken over power in Greece. The Minister of Defense was appointed in charge of guiding and coordinating the Services involved. This system was originally provided by Law 398/1968 on "Emergency Planning Policy", which was abolished by the newer Law 17/1974. (Government Gazette 125/A/4-6-1968, 1968) (Government Gazette A-236/2-9-1974, Legislative Decree 17/1974, 1974) Law 2344/1995 (Government Gazette 212A), entitled "Organization of Civil Protection and other provisions" introduced the term "Civil Protection" into the Greek regulatory

framework- legislation for the first time, with the purpose of "dealing with natural, technological and other disasters during a peaceful period». With the provisions of this Law, Civil Protection was separated from Civil Defense in the country and the relevant responsibilities for dealing with a disaster were transferred from the military to the political forces, as was the case internationally. (Government Gazette 184/A/6-9-1995, 1995)

The organization of the Civil Protection system, through which actions are taken for all stages of disaster management, with the aim of "protecting the life, health and property of citizens" in recent years was regulated by Law 3013/2002 (Government Gazette 102A) on "Upgrading of Civil Protection", as supplemented and amended by the relevant provisions of Law 3536/2007 (Government Gazette 42A), entitled "Special regulations on immigration policy issues and other issues within the Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization" and Law 3613 / 2007, (Government Gazette 263A), entitled "Regulations of issues of Independent Authorities, Body of Inspectors of Public Administration and other issues within the competence of the Ministry of Interior". (Government Gazette 263/A/23-11-2007, 2007)

Law 2344/1995, in addition, repeals legislative decree 17/1974 against the measure that as a newer law regulates issues related to emergencies, resulting from sudden changes due to natural phenomena, technological accidents and disasters. Legislative decree 17/1974 remained in force on issues regulated specifically by it, especially in regard to emergencies in time of war. (Karamanou, 2012)

The Law included provisions of a new policy, aimed at upgrading the operation, structure and organization of civil protection, which were as follows:

- Delimitation of the object and the level of intervention in order to make the responsibilities distinct and to make the actions more effective and more coordinated.
- Clarification of the escalation of the executive single-person bodies and separation from the respective coordinators, with a detailed indication of their responsibilities.
- Institutionalization of the distinct phases of the preparation of the forces of civil protection, mobilization and the evolution of dealing with the phenomenon.
- Ensuring the research and scientific support of the design through the establishment of the "Scientific and Research Center for Civil Protection", which aimed at elaborating programs, training executives, setting up scientific councils and thematic committees.
- Development of warning, information and preparedness mechanisms with the organization of forecasting services and the development of business necessary communication planning.
- Institutionalization of the operational integration of the Civil Protection Volunteer, which provided for the maintenance of special registers, undertaking special actions and determination of logistical support.
- Institutionalization of the operation of the Civil Protection Operations Center for dealing with natural disasters of great intensity with the constant presence of the Central Coordinating Body (by competent Ministers, Undersecretaries or General Secretaries).
- Strengthening the coordinating role of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection (G.S.C.P), expansion of the Coordinating Prefectural Organization and institutionalization of the Coordinating Local Body at the municipal level and delimitation of their objects of action.

Civil protection was defined as all those actions that the country is called upon to face during a period of peace and was in contrast to civil defense (respectively during a period of war). In civil protection planning, the citizen was considered an active citizen who participates in dealing with disasters by taking self-protection measures and helping other citizens in need on a case-by-case basis, starting from the family, neighborhood and work environment. (Government Gazette 184/A/6-9-1995, 1995)

The law also states that risk and disaster management requires specialized civil protection staff, who must, having a certain level of knowledge at the university level, with emphasis on sciences that provide knowledge of space and natural disasters (geologists, foresters, topographers, engineers and civil engineers), obtain additional special training in civil protection issues with further specialization in the various risk categories but also in the various plans, programs and measures for prevention, response and rehabilitation. These executives, starting from the General Secretariat of Civil Protection, constitute a decentralized network in the regions and prefectures with the possibility of development and at a local government level as well. The importance of this had already been made clear in previous researches, which stated that although disaster plans can be constructed for private companies, transportation and communications networks, airports, hospitals, schools, hazardous industries, and many more entities, the bedrock level of emergency planning is the local authority (Daines, 1991)

Civil protection staff also included voluntary organizations as well as qualified volunteers at central, regional and local levels. They joined the planning of the General Secretariat of Civil Protection and undertook the support of plans and actions of prevention and rehabilitation as well as actions of preparedness and response to disasters.

3.1 Civil Protection Structure

As part of the law of 2002, an Interministerial Committee for National Civil Protection Planning was set up, in which the co-responsible Ministers participated. The responsibilities of the Committee were as follows: (Government Gazette-102/A/1-5-2002, 2002)

- The approval of the annual national plan of the Civil Protection of the country. (The plan included the Civil Protection budget for each Ministry as well as for the G.S.C.P)
- The report of the implementation of the government restoration measures after disasters of great intensity

A Central Coordinating Body for Civil Protection to strengthen the work of the G.S.C.P, in dealing with general regional or local high-intensity disasters was also established. The body consisted of the General Secretaries of the competent Ministries and the Deputy Chief of the General Staff of National Defense. This body could meet at the level of Ministers or Undersecretaries at the invitation of the Minister of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization. Researches have highlighted the importance of this as in one sense, in a very large and serious disaster the national government is a sort of local emergency management agency on a larger scale, in another sense even the largest catastrophes have to be managed by marshalling resources in local units (Alexander, 2005)

The mission of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection was to study, plan, organize and coordinate the country's policy on prevention, information and response to natural and technological disasters or emergencies.

The General Secretary of Civil Protection was responsible for coordinating and overseeing the work of civil protection throughout the country as well as a variety of responsibilities, including: (Government Gazette-102/A/1-5-2002, 2002)

- i. Coordinating the work of civil protection for prevention, preparedness, response and rehabilitation.
- ii. The suggestion to the Minister of Interior of the characterization of the disaster as general and the issuance of a corresponding decision, for the declaration of a state of emergency.
- iii. The characterization of the disaster according to its size and level of danger.

- iv. The issuance of decisions to declare a state of civil protection readiness and a state of civil protection need.
- v. The suggestion to the Minister of Interior for the allocation and distribution of the credits, which were registered in the budget of the G.S.C.P as well as of the emergency aids

Decentralized bodies for the planning and implementation of civil protection measures were the General Secretaries of the Regions, the Prefects and the Mayors and the Presidents of the communities.

Finally, according to the law, a Civil Protection voluntary system was created to prevent and deal with disasters. A Register of Voluntary Organizations and Specialized Volunteers was kept at the General Secretariat. The Voluntary Organizations that could be included in the above Register were legal entities. The purpose of these legal entities was to focus on their activities in the field of Civil Protection and in particular on the prevention, response and rehabilitation of natural and technological disasters. According to Drabek (1986), in order for voluntary organizations to be able to play an important role in dealing with the immediate consequences of disasters, their integration and legalization should be preceded.

Providing for the definition of more specific criteria and qualifications for the registration process, both of the voluntary organizations and of the specialized volunteers in the registers, as well as the issues related to their supply with the necessary equipment and their integration in the operational activity of the Coordinators Prefectural and Local Bodies, was reserved for the regulatory legislator.

3.2 2004 Presidential Decree

The 2004 Presidential Decree concerned the organization of the General Secretariat and its detailed structure. It served as a follow up to the previous law and a way to clearly outline the mission of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection. The key points of the mission of the GSCP were as follows: (Presidential Decree 151/2004, 2004)

- The study, planning, organization and coordination of all the actions aimed at the prevention and response to natural, technological and other disasters or emergencies, as well as informing the public about these issues
- The preparation, mobilization and coordination of all the actions and the means of the Civil Protection of the country for the confrontation of all kinds of disasters within the framework of the existing relevant planning per risk category
- The utilization of the available scientific data and information for the mobilization of the human resources and the means of civil protection of the country
- The coordination of the project and the actions for dealing with the disasters during the occurrence of the phenomena, as well as the restoration plans for the caused damages.

3.3 Law 4249/2014

The Government Reform Council at its meeting of April 23, 2013 approved in terms of key points a reorganization that would serve the need to modernize the critical structures and Services under the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (Hellenic Police, Fire Brigade, G.S.C.P) In order to stimulate their effectiveness and, consequently, to strengthen internal security, the protection of the citizen, the shielding of individual rights and the strengthening of social cohesion. (Government Gazette 73/A/24-3-2014, 2014)

The Reorganization of the Services of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection and its transformation into a modern and flexible structure was intended to take place with the completion of the assembly of the Fire Brigade, which was its operational arm, both at central and regional level. The Law was structured in seven Parts and 127 articles.

The most important key points of these Parts were:

Part A General Directorate of Finance and Staff Planning

Part A regulated issues related to the establishment of the General Directorate of Finance and Staff Planning, as well as the structure, organization, staffing and operation of the services under it.

The Staff Unit of P.D. 79/2011 was upgraded to the level of General Management and renamed to General Directorate of Finance and Staff Planning. In this way, an attempt was made to fill a significant gap in the organization chart of the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection, which operated "without an administrative body". This lack of a connecting, coordinating of its Services, an attempt was made to cover, many times unsuccessfully, by the services of the Greek Police and the Fire Brigade

With the creation of the above General Directorate, an effort was made to achieve the necessary coordination of the Services of the Ministry.

Part B Reorganization of the Greek Police and other provisions

Particular emphasis was placed on the areas of Security and Order, where new, vertical management structures of the Services were established, reducing the hierarchical levels in order to facilitate the process of receiving, transmitting and implementing orders and to improve the response of the Greek Police.

Also, the Staff of the Corps and the Independent Central Services were reorganized, the basic framework of responsibilities of the Branches and all Central and Regional Services at management level and above was defined and the general structure, headquarters and mission of the Regional Services were determined.

Part C Reorganization and modernization of services of the Fire Brigade

The Fire Brigade with the introduction law 4249 was promoted to the operational arm of the Civil Protection of the country and aimed to acquire the conditions, so that it could meet with immediate and operational adequacy to the modern social requirements, to have the appropriate mechanisms for its development and continuous updating of its operation on the basis of a human-centered system that would utilize its staff with a plan, strategy, measurable efficiency and determined availability of financial resources and means with the appropriate efficiency.

In this context, the Unified Coordination Center of Operations (UCCO) was established, after the merger of three structures: The Coordinating - Operational Service Center of the Fire Brigade, the Civil Protection Operations Center and the Forest Fire Coordination Center.

The upgrade of the Fire Brigade was intended to be achieved through an institutional reconstruction that would enhance its operation and mission. In this context, its existing structures were reorganized and expanded, new ones were established, with a view to consolidate greater transparency and support the fight against corruption, such as the Inspection and Control Directorate, and redefined the entire firefighting mechanism of the country and the organizational model. (Government Gazette 73/A/24-3-2014, 2014)

4. Law 4662/2020 on Civil Protection

On February 4, 2020, the new law for the reform of the Civil Protection system in Greece was adopted. Specifically, the discussion and voting of the bill of the Ministry of Citizen Protection was completed in the Plenary Session of the Greek parliament: "National Crisis Management and Risk Management Mechanism, restructuring of the General Secretariat of Civil protection, upgrading of Civil Protection Volunteering, reorganization of the Fire Brigade and other provisions". (Government Gazette 27/A/7-2-2020, 2020)

According to the explanatory memorandum of Law 4662, the increasing trend of the number, intensity and extent of natural and technological disasters and other threats Greece has suffered in recent years, make urgent the adoption of a modern, flexible and effective National Crisis Management and Risk Management Mechanism, which prioritizes and guarantees the safety of human life, property, natural wealth and cultural heritage, as fundamental and constitutionally enforced obligations of the coordinated state. (Explanatory Memorandum on the Law 4662/2020, 2020)

The current climate crisis, both in terms of complexity and intricacy of the manifestation of modern natural and technological disasters and other threats as well as the inhomogeneity of the affected population groups, made the institutional framework that had been in place since 2002 obsolete to the requirements and expectations of the Greek society and the new data. Furthermore, the recorded domestic experience at both staff and operational level has shown significant operational weaknesses and structural entanglements, mainly at the level of coordination, of the actors involved in issues of prevention and management of risks and threats, which could not be removed even after the introduction of the Law 4249/2014. The weaknesses that could be summed up as follows according to the explanatory memorandum of the Law 4662/2020:

- i. There was no single national mechanism for holistic vertical risk and threat management covering emergency management from the prevention phase to the recovery phase. On the contrary, it was found that the existing responsibilities of civil protection bodies at central and regional level were fragmentary and, in many cases, institutionalized with ambiguity, which inevitably led to their overlap and frequent conflict.
- ii. Regarding the Civil Protection Operations Center, which (according to Law 4249/2014) coordinated and managed, at the national level, the actions for dealing with emergencies in cases of mobilization of civil protection in order to minimize their consequences, it was observed that in practice it did not function in accordance with its legal purpose, but was limited to a supporting structure.
- iii. There was no framework and process of cooperation with the scientific-research community resulting in a civil protection system that could not benefit from the achievements and possibilities of science and technology but remained cut off from research and innovation.
- iv. There was neither a risk analysis process nor was the National Database of Risks and Threats, determined by place and time as it was supposed to be structured and maintained. As a consequence, the Emergency Response and Consequence Management Plans were characterized by generality and on the one hand did not incorporate their specific regulatory scope while on the other hand, they did not clearly reflect the competence of each civil protection body, which inevitably made their effectiveness deficient.
- v. There were substantial shortages in equipment and means of civil protection, given that over time provisions in Law 3013/2002 regarding the financing of civil protection actions were not implemented in practice. The above, as it is easily understood, were serious weaknesses for the full development and utilization of the civil protection mechanism with a key impact on its effectiveness.

The new Law, in order to overcome the aforementioned existing chronic ankyloses and weaknesses, establishes the National Crisis and Hazard Management Mechanism (Nat-CHAMM), which is a network in which the accompanying operational, executive and support structures of Civil Protection converge, with the aim of creating a single national system of civil protection of vertical organization, which runs universally through specific statutory principles, and which covers the whole spectrum of the disaster cycle.

Coordinating structures and bodies are also established at central and regional level with fully clarified responsibilities and tasks for all levels of government (central, regional and local level) and for all stakeholders, in order to shorten time-consuming decision-making processes in critical actions

and strategic, operational and tactical level, the elimination of bureaucracy and the absenteeism regime.

Risk and threat analysis is now envisaged as a necessary prerequisite and component both for the preparation of the National Civil Protection Plan in the framework of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and for the elaboration and implementation of the Emergency Response Plans and Consequence Management. This analysis aims at the substantial specialization of the plans according to the risk to be addressed and the particularities of each case, while consequently aims at facilitating the provision of directions and instructions by the National Mechanism to both the bodies and institutions responsible for operational planning as well as to the citizens.

Finally, in the context of the adoption of an administrative model harmonized with technological and scientific developments by the country, the necessary tools are created for the utilization of scientific knowledge, the findings of applied research and innovation, infrastructure, applications and tools of Information and Communication Technologies. At the same time, the General Secretariat for Civil Protection (G.S.C.P.), as a prominent structure of the National Mechanism, is being upgraded administratively and operationally.

5. Timeline of Law Changes

It is interesting to observe the timeline of Law changes and developments demonstrating that in a period of approximately 50 years seven fundamental legislative changes were adopted.

- 1968 - The first organized system for the protection of the population in a state of emergency is introduced
- 1974 – The Legislative Decree 17/1974 "On Civil Planning for Emergencies" is published which allows recruitment policy in case of emergency with article 18.
- 1995 - The term "Civil Protection" is introduced into Greek law for the first time, with the purpose of "dealing with natural, technological and other disasters during a peaceful period».
- 2002 – Law 3013/2002 on "Upgrading of Civil Protection" is introduced, with the aim of "protecting the life, health and property of citizens" .
- 2007 - Law 3536/2007 on "Special regulations on immigration policy issues and other issues within the Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization" is introduced, as well as Law 3613 / 2007 on "Regulations of issues of Independent Authorities, Body of Inspectors of Public Administration and other issues within the competence of the Ministry of Interior"
- 2014 – The reorganization of the Services of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection and its transformation into a modern and flexible structure were dictated by a new law
- 2020 – The newest law on “National Crisis Management and Risk Management Mechanism, restructuring of the General Secretariat of Civil protection, upgrading of Civil Protection Volunteering, reorganization of the Fire Brigade and other provisions” is introduced with the intention of including Volunteers and a better use of the Fire Brigade in Crisis Management

6. Evolution of Law Changes

Law changes in Greece regarding Civil Protection are often triggered by major events like floods, forest fires or earthquakes that tend to highlight potential deficiencies in both human resources and infrastructure. Before 1968 when the first organized protection system (within the Ministry of National Defense) was introduced, a flood that occurred in 1961 in Western Attica was responsible for many material as well as human lives losses (40 in total). According to newspapers of the time and the work of Floros and Vachaviolos (2009 and 2011), the storm and the subsequent flood, due to the time that it took place caught off guard not only the residents but also the civil protection services of Attica. Greek citizens were mostly unaware of how to handle a flooding situation, since there were no educational programs in schools or general information handed to the public in order to inform them of the actions that are needed to be taken before and after a flood has occurred. (Floros, 2009) (Vachaviolos, 2011) The previous Law was replaced and enhanced in 1974 with the Legislative Decree 17/1974 which deemed the Ministry of Defense responsible for providing guidance and coordination of activities of other ministries.

In June 1978, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.5 on the Richter scale occurred in Thessaloniki. This earthquake was considered the most economically destructive earthquake, by that year in Greece, with thousands of homeless people, hundreds of collapsed buildings and an additional 49 victims (see Aristotle University of Thessalonik/ School of Geology n.d., http://www.geo.auth.gr/gr_history_1978.htm). Furthermore, in February 1981, another earthquake with a magnitude of 6.6 on the Richter scale, took place on Halcyon Islands in the Gulf of Corinth. The results were twenty dead, hundreds of injured, while about 85,000 buildings were damaged (of which 22,554 buildings were unrepairable) (see <https://www.in.gr/2020/02/24/plus/features/24-2-1981-o-seismos-ton-alkyonidon-nison/>). As such, in 1995, law 2344/1995 institutionalized civil protection in Greece. Concepts such as Civil Protection, Emergency Situation, Disaster and Civil Protection Forces were established for the first time.

In September 1999, an earthquake occurred in Athens with a magnitude of 6 on the Richter Scale and is until today regarded as one of the most devastating earthquakes in Greece. The structural damages in Athens were extensive as 80 houses and industrial buildings collapsed and more than 1,000 buildings suffered non-repairable damage. More importantly, 143 people lost their lives. About 3 billion US Dollars were roughly estimated for the caused tangible loss. From the point of view of economic loss, it was the worst natural disaster reported in the modern history of Greece. (Elenas, 2003) Following that, in 2002, Law 3013/2002 on "Upgrading of Civil Protection" was introduced. In 2003 the General Civil Protection Plan with keyword "Xenocrates" was approved by Ministerial Decision, which aimed at a general planning framework for the preparation of emergency plans at the three administrative levels (central, regional, local).

In 2007 one of the greatest natural disasters in the history of modern Greece occurred. Extensive fires in many parts of the country (most notably in Peloponnese) killed 63 people. The material losses caused by the disaster reached the amount of 3,5 billion euros, while the intensity and extent of the fires was unprecedented (see Dima 2017, https://www.efsyn.gr/ellada/120976_hroniko-tis-mayris-paraskeyis-toy-2007). Law 3536/2007, Article 27 stated that the request for assistance from other domestic or foreign authorities in order to response emergency situations can be made only by the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, while the article clarified issues of voluntary civil protection organizations and requisition issues to deal with emergencies.

In Greece's most recent history, the flood that took place in Mandra in 2017 was of comparable magnitude as the one in 1961. The number of victims however was lower (23), as were the structural damages. In 2018 two major forest fires in Kineta and Pendeli (affecting the small city of Mati) were responsible for the loss of 102 human lives as well as tens of thousands acres of forest. A lot of debate occurred about the inadequate handling of government officials as well as the lack of precautionary measures, although it was known that extreme weather conditions would prevail in eastern Attica during the summer months. (see Maltezou 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-wildfire-blowtorch-idUSKBN1KF2RL>) Among other issues raised, criticism was leveled at the non-use of systems such as the "Disaster Management framework" which has the ability to send

warning messages to residents' mobile phones (see Mpakouli 2018, <https://www.news247.gr/technologie/fotia-sto-mati-to-systima-pyroprostasias-yparchei-apo-to-2010-ti-pige-lathos.6637453.html>). At the same time, discussions focused on urban sprawl, as well as arbitrary buildings that existed in the area, which made it difficult for the residents during the evacuation. This is of course an issue that has been evident for many years. According to OECD, since 1983, Greece has experienced rapid urbanization (notably in the Athens area) as well as an expansion of tourism, which

have combined with weak infrastructure and the failure of planning controls to produce considerable disruption [OECD, 1983:20, 30,120.].

As a consequence of political pressures and the obvious deficiencies of the responsible actors and institutions as well as of the request of an adequate and modernized framework of institutional and capacity building, in 2020 a new law was introduced, with the intention of including Volunteers and making a better use of the Fire Brigade in Crisis Management.

Below, some tables are presented, containing the most important natural disasters in Greece in its most recent history (color-coded for floods, earthquakes and forest fires) and the number of deaths cause by them which can give us an idea of how natural disasters usually trigger Law Changes in order to minimize the number in subsequent events.

Year	Area	Number of Deaths	Number of Affected Population (Property Damages)
1977	Piraeus city (Attica Province)	27	1600
1979	Pella (Edessa Province)	15	N/A
1994	Rhodes, Kasos (South Aegean Province) Karditsa region (Thessalia province) Athens (Attica Province)	14	1000
1997	Larissa (Thessalia Province) Athens (Attica province) Patra, Corinth (Peloponnese province)	9	
1998	Lesvos (North Aegean Province)	3	900
2000	Athens (Attica Province), Corinthe (Peloponnese Province)	1	6000
2001	Athens city, Cape Sounio (Attica Province), Corinth (Peloponnese Province), Corfu (Ionian Province)	11	450
2006	Thessaloniki, Chalkidiki (Central Macedonia Province), Magnisia (Thessalia province)	1	3000
2007	Evros, Kommotini, Kavala, Drama (East Macedonia and Thrace Province) Arcadia (Peloponnese province) Pyrgos (Western Greece Province)	2	600
2010	Ioannina district (Ipeiros province)	1	150
2012	Achaias, Ileia (Western Greece Province)	1	200
2015	Evrou district (Anatoliki Makedonia Kai Thraki province)	3	500
2016	Kalamata (Peloponnese Province) Thessaloniki (Central Macedonia Province)	4	200
2017	Mandra, Nea Peramos, Megara (near Athens-Attica), Symi, Lefkimmi (Corfu), Igoumenitsa (Thesprotia), Ioannina (Ioanninon)	23	6000

Table 1 Important Floods that took place in Greece in the past 45 years. Source: EM-DAT (<https://www.emdat.be/>)

Year	Area	Number of Deaths	Number of Injured	Magnitude (Richter Scale)
1953	Zakynthos (Zante), Kefalonia (Ionian Islands)	476	2412	7
1954	Sophades (Karditsa)	31	200	7
1956	Santorini, Amorgos, Astypalaia, (Aegean islands), Crete, Folegrandos	53	100	8
1965	(1) Alonisos & Skopelos, (2) Patras, Corinth (3) C Peloponnesus	38	253	6
1978	Thessaloniki area	50	100	6
1981	Athens-Corinth area	22	400	7
1986	Kalamata (Southwestern Peloponese)	20	300	6
1995	Kozani, Thessaloniki, Grevena-Kozani, Patras	26	60	7
1995	Aigion	26	100	6
1999	Athens Suburbs: Menidi, Ano Liosia, Thracomacedones, Philadelphia, Zefiri, Metamorphosi, Petroupoli, N. Ionia, Moschato, Fili, Kamatero, Ilion, Elefsina, N. Halkidona, Peristeri, Ag Anargiri, Haidari and Galatsi	143	2000	6

Table 1 Important Earthquakes that took place in Greece in the past 70 years. Source: EM-DAT (<https://www.emdat.be/>)

Year	Area	Number of Deaths
1983	North	12
1985	Hydra, Evoia	3
1998	Central, North and South	14
2007	Messinia, Lakonia (Peloponese Province), Evoia (Central Greece Province), Olympia (Western Greece Province), Achaia, Korinthia, Argolidos	65
2018	Neos Voutzas, Agia Marina, Kokkino Limanaki, Mati and Rafina (Surrounding Athens)	100

Table 2 Important Forest Fires that took place in Greece in the past 40 years. Source: EM-DAT (<https://www.emdat.be/>)

7. Conclusions

Based on all the observations of the modifications in the regulatory framework and the relevant Law changes regarding Civil Protection throughout the modern history of Greece, there are some conclusions that can be drawn. The reasons that trigger a Law change and the development of a new legislation can vary and are usually a result of the political situation of the country, the scientific and technological advancements, the responses of country mechanisms as well as the consequences of large scale disasters, the green policies initiatives and the European Guidelines.

Technological Advancements are usually one of the main reasons that demand and politically press updates and changes in the existing Laws. The implementation of new applications, used either in early warning systems or for the better communication between the civil protection members, can be considered a good practice and can be part of the Law regarding the state of emergency. Early Warning Systems are an important means to reduce disaster losses. Damage, caused by a disaster, can be effectively contained if disaster warning can be given and communicated to disaster management departments, decision making officials and to all those who might be affected by a coming disaster or a tragic event and if the correct decisions are made and carried out (Zschau & Küppers, 2013). In Greece, technological advancements are usually an incentive for a Law change, 26 | An ongoing process? Greek Legislation and Regulatory Framework: Christos Zacheilas et al.

usually when the time gap between the previous and the next one is wide (e.g. between 1995 and 2002 and between 2007 and the actual law reform of 2020)

European guidelines are another incentive that can lead to a law change or reformation. The flood directive of 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the council was issued to establish a framework for the assessment and management of flood risks, aiming at the reduction of the adverse consequences for human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity associated with floods in all Member States (European Parliament, 2007). Greece, included this directive in its legislation with a 10-year delay (Joint Ministerial Decision 177772/924/2017), but it had already began adapting European policies in its legislation since 2014 (Law 4249/2014). The severe financial crisis was one of the main reasons for this delay.

The political situation of the country can also affect its legislation. As such, Greece in 1968 had its first organized system for the protection of the population in a state of emergency, driven by the military forces, since there was a junta since 1967. Due to this type of authoritarian 'administration' (dictatorship) the orientation was clearly towards the exploitation and use of military infrastructures and institutions. With the abolishment of Junta and the restoration of Democracy in 1974, a new legislation was immediately in effect, with a new Law regarding Civil protection being issued the same year, almost simultaneously with the beginning of the Third Hellenic Republic. Switching to a normal type of administration had as a result the change in the philosophy defining the whole system.

Finally, one of the most important factors is the impact, that a major disaster event has on a country. The sometimes-catastrophic consequences of a natural disaster can highlight in a dramatic way deficiency in a country's defense mechanism and therefore its legislation. Such examples are also evident in Greek history, if we take the 1999 earthquake in Attica for example, or the forest fires of 2018, also in the area of Attica. In the latter, issues like the uncontrollable urban sprawl and the insufficient fire brigade came into the light and became the trigger for discussions on how to tackle this issue, with the latest law of 2020 focusing on a complete reform of the fire department of the country.

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