



# **GREECE:** How to conduct research in Greek law

by Theresa Papademetriou  
Senior Legal Specialist

“Meet the Legal Specialists: Expert Advice  
on Research and Acquisitions of Foreign Law”

A presentation made at the  
American Association of Law Librarians  
1999 Convention Workshop  
Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C.  
July 16, 1999

## LAW LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

## HOW TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN GREEK LAW

by Theresa Papademetriou, Senior Legal Specialist, Legal Research Directorate\*

## I. Introduction

This bird's eye view on *Doing Research in Greek Law* is intended to familiarize researchers in Greek law of the legal system of Greece and of available materials and sources. Even though the emphasis is on sources published in the vernacular language, a brief description of the limited materials in English is also included.

## II. The Greek Legal System

Greece is a civil law country and a unitary state whose administration is organized on a decentralized basis. The historical roots of the legal system of Greece can be traced back to Byzantine-Roman Law. When Greece gained its independence in 1827 after being under the Turkish yoke for 400 years, a Royal Decree of 1835 proclaimed that "the laws of the Byzantine Emperors, as contained in the Hexavivlos of Harmenopolos would continue to be enforced until a new Civil Code would be promulgated. Customs sanctioned by long and uninterrupted use or judicial decisions shall have the force of law whenever they prevail." This Decree formed the cornerstone of the development of the Civil Code that was enacted in 1940 and became effective as of February 23, 1946.

The Greek Civil Code not only codified all existing legislation prior to being enacted, but it also represents the product of a comparative approach incorporating the influence of German, French and Swiss law. It follows the traditional division of civil codes into five areas: General Principles, Law of Obligations, Law of Property, Family Law and Inheritance Law.

A major civil law reform in the area of family law occurred in 1983. The reform was initiated because of the constitutional rule of the equality of the sexes embodied in the 1975 Constitution and culminated in the adoption of Law No. 1329.<sup>1</sup> This Law eliminated the husband's supremacy and his authoritarian role in conjugal and family affairs, and it also abolished the wife's subordinate status. Law No. 1329 preserved the financial autonomy and independence of each spouse and also introduced the system of community property. It also abolished the archaic system of dowry as being contrary to the principle of equality of the sexes.

---

\* LL.B. University of Athens Law School, LL.M. George Washington University, National Law Center, International and Comparative Law.

<sup>1</sup> Law No. 1329 on the Application of the Constitutional Principle of Equality of the Sexes in the Civil Code and its Introductory Law, in Commercial Legislation, and in the Code of Civil Procedure, as well as Partial Modernization of Certain Provisions of the Civil Code Pertaining to Family Law. *Ephemeris tes Kyverneseos tes Hellenikes Demokratias* [official gazette of the Hellenic Republic] part. A, no. 25, (1983).

The Civil Code was further amended in 1996 with the enactment of a new Law on adoption. Law No. 2447/1996<sup>2</sup> abolished chapter 13 of the Family Law that dealt with adoption and replaced it with new provisions. It also amended the provisions on guardianship of minors. Moreover, the Civil Code was amended in 1997 by Law No. 2521,<sup>3</sup> which amended articles 1469 and 1470 and supplemented articles 1545 and 1646.

The Constitution of Greece is the fundamental law of the legal system. The current Constitution was approved by the Fifth Revisional Assembly and came into force in 1975, when democracy was restored after the fall of the dictatorship (1967-1974). It was subsequently amended in 1986.

Pursuant to the Constitution, Greece is an independent sovereign Republic with a presidential parliamentary government.<sup>4</sup> The Constitution is based upon the principles of separation of powers, the rule of law, popular sovereignty and political pluralism. State authority follows the traditional separation of powers, that is legislative, executive and judicial.

Legislative power is exercised by the Parliament and the President of the Republic.<sup>5</sup> The Parliament is unicameral and consists of 300 members. It is elected by direct, secret, universal ballot and its term is four consecutive years. Members of the Parliament submit law proposals or amendments to the Parliament, while the President submits bills. Every law proposal and bill has to be accompanied by a justification report that lays down the scope of the proposed legislation. Bills and law proposals are referred to the appropriate committee, which can be either a standing or a special committee for further review. The President ratifies the laws enacted by the Parliament and orders that laws be published in the official gazette.

Executive power is exercised by the President and the Government.<sup>6</sup> The President of the Republic is elected by the Parliament for a term of five years, which is renewable. Under the 1975 Constitution, the President was entrusted with a wide range of powers, which were subsequently limited in 1986, when the Constitution was amended. The Government is mainly responsible for establishing general policies. It consists of the Prime Minister and the ministers, each of whom is responsible for a particular ministry. The leader of the party who has the absolute majority of seats in the Parliament is appointed as Prime Minister.

Judicial power is exercised by the courts of law, which are composed of judges appointed for life. Judges enjoy personal and functional independence. During their exercise of duties, judges are obliged to comply only with the constitutional norms and the laws; they bear no obligation whatsoever to comply with enacted laws that impinge on the Constitution.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* No. 278 (Dec. 30, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* No. 174 (Sept. 1, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Art. 1., *See* E. VENIZELOS, *KEIMENA SYNTAGMATIKON ELEUTHERION* [Texts on Constitutional Freedoms] 15 (1993).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* art. 26.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* art. 26, para. II.

On January 1, 1981, Greece joined the European Community. The Greek Constitution of 1975 paved the way for Greece to join the Community by making it possible for authorities provided for in the Constitution to be vested in international organizations, either through an agreement or a treaty because of important national interests or considerations.<sup>7</sup> The Act of Accession of Greece to the European Community was ratified by article 1(a) of Law 945/1979<sup>8</sup> and came into force, pursuant to article 2(2) of the Act on Jan. 1, 1981. As of that date, Greece is bound under article 2 of the Act of Accession and by the provisions of the treaties establishing the European Communities as modified and supplemented by annexes, acts, and protocols annexed to them.

Greece is a member of the United Nations and UN specialized agencies, the European Union, Council of Europe, West European Union (WEU), NATO, Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), GATT, OECD and other international organizations.

### III. Sources of Law—Hierarchy

#### Statutes and Custom

The general principles in article 1 of the Greek Civil Code prescribe that the sources of law include laws and custom.<sup>9</sup> Even though this article places laws and custom on an equal footing, laws enjoy considerably more significance and status, whereas the importance of custom has slowly been diminished. Custom can no longer abolish statutory law.

The Constitution holds the highest position hierarchically. In the same rank a special category of laws, as provided by article 107, paragraph 1 of the Constitution, also stands. These enjoy a higher status than ordinary laws, since they may not be amended or abrogated by ordinary laws.

Next in the hierarchical order stands international law. The recognized principles of international law are automatically part of the domestic system. On the other hand, international conventions acquire validity only upon being sanctioned by law. The recognized rules of international law and the conventions once they are sanctioned by law "form an integral part of Greek domestic law and prevail over any contrary provision of law."<sup>10</sup>

With regard to the standing of the European Union law in the hierarchy of legal rules, the Greek Council of State has taken the stand that as of the date of accession, Greece "is bound under article 2 of the Act of Accession and by the Treaties which established the European Union as modified and supplemented...All these provisions constitute part of the Greek legal order and take precedence over any contrary legislative provision, pursuant to Article 28 of the Constitution." Thus, European

---

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* art. 28, para. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Supra* note 1, No.170 (1979).

<sup>9</sup> A. DERVENAGAS, *ASTIKOS KODIKAS KAI EISAGOGIKOS NOMOS* [Civil Code and Introductory Law] 19 (1997).

<sup>10</sup> *Supra* note 4, art. 28.

Community law has primacy over statutory law; however, the Greek Constitution is still the supreme law of the land.

Ordinary legislation, which can be in the form of statutes or codifications, ensues in the hierarchical order. Decrees issued under article 43 , paragraph II and IV are equivalent to statutory laws. Laws and regulations are published in the vernacular language. Some regulations may not be published, should their publication endanger the national defense. Only treaties are published in Greek and English. Upon publication in the official gazette, law acquires its formal validity. Pursuant to article 103 of the Introductory Law of the Greek Civil Code, the binding force of the law commences ten days after it is published, unless provided otherwise in the law.<sup>11</sup> A law remains valid until a later one either tacitly or expressly invalidates the previous one. Retroactive force is possible if it is expressly provided by the law and as long as it does not impinge on constitutional provisions. The Constitution prohibits the retroactive force of criminal laws and laws imposing financial charges, such as tax laws.

Next stand the decrees passed under Article 43, paragraph 1 of the Constitution. By virtue of this article, the President issues the decrees required for the implementation of the laws. Such decrees have a lower standing than statutory laws. Finally, ministerial decisions hold standing lower than decrees.

### **Jurisprudence**

Inasmuch as Greece is a civil law country, jurisprudence is not considered a formal source of law. In practice , however, the decisions of the higher courts, especially those of the Supreme Court do possess an influential force upon the lower courts. Moreover, the rulings of the Special Highest Court on the unconstitutionality of laws are complied with.

### **Works of Legal Scholars**

Legal writing (doctrine) does not constitute a source of law; nevertheless, it does play a role since Greek judges often cite and take under consideration the opinions of legal scholars who have established themselves as authorities in their respective fields. Legal writing appears usually in the form of treatises, monographs, articles in legal journals, or comments on judicial decisions.

## **III. Court Structure**

Courts are divided into administrative, civil, and criminal courts and their organization is subject to special laws.

There are ordinary administrative courts whose jurisdiction has been enlarged by various laws. The jurisdiction of the Council of State ,as the highest administrative court, includes the annulment of executive acts of administrative authorities for abuse of power or violation of the law; the reversal of final rulings of administrative courts; the trial of substantive administrative disputes; and the elaboration of all decrees of a regulatory nature.

---

<sup>11</sup> Art. 103, the Introductory Law to the Greek Civil Code, *supra* note 9, at 362.

The Comptroller's Council is also established by article 98, paragraph 1 of the Constitution. Its jurisdiction includes disputes arising from pension grants, audit of expenditures of the state and of local government agencies and public corporate bodies, audit of accounts of accountable officials and local government agencies. In addition, it decides cases related to the liability of public servants, military officers, and others.

Civil courts have jurisdiction over all private disputes, including all cases of voluntary jurisdiction, whereas the jurisdiction of regular criminal courts comprises the punishment of crimes and imposition of all measures as provided by law. Felonies and political crimes are tried by mixed jury courts composed of regular judges and jurors. Pursuant to the Code of Civil Procedure, there are three types of civil courts: justices of peace, one-member courts of first instance and three-member courts of first instance. Under pending legislation, the justice of peace courts will be abolished. Appeals go to the thirteen courts of appeals, which are established in large cities and adjudicate cases *de novo*, both on the law and the facts. The Supreme Court (*Areios Pagos*) sits in Athens and usually hears cases in panels of five justices or in full bench. It is restricted to review only questions of law.

Criminal courts are classified following the traditional division of crimes into felonies, misdemeanors, and petty violations.<sup>12</sup> The most serious felonies and political crimes are tried before the mixed court, composed of judges and jurors. Felonies also are tried before the three-member and on appeal by a five-member court of appeals. Misdemeanors are tried either before a one-member or a three-member misdemeanor court, depending on the severity of the case. The petty violations court has jurisdiction over petty violations. Offenses committed by minors fall within the jurisdiction of the juvenile courts. The Supreme Court sits on appeal for errors of law only.

There are also a number of special courts specifically provided for in the Constitution. These include the following: the Special Highest Court<sup>13</sup>, the Special Court for crimes of the Prime Minister, the Ministers, the Under secretaries and the President of the Republic,<sup>14</sup> the military, naval and air force tribunals,<sup>15</sup> and the special court for mistrial suits against judges<sup>16</sup>

Judicial review is entrusted in all courts. This is explicitly stated in the Constitution: "the courts are bound not to apply a law, the content of which is deemed to be contrary to the Constitution."<sup>17</sup> Thus, the central focus of the judicial review is to examine whether or not a law is unconstitutional and not on its constitutionality. The review is also limited to the content of the law and does not encompass review of whether or not the rules of Parliamentary procedure have been observed.

---

<sup>12</sup> Art. 1, Code of Civil Procedure. NOMIKE VIVLIOTHEKE, 4 KODIKES 781 (1995).

<sup>13</sup> Art. 100, Const.

<sup>14</sup> Art. 86, Const.

<sup>15</sup> Art. 96IV, Const.

<sup>16</sup> Art. 99, Const.

<sup>17</sup> Art. 93, para. 4, Const.

The Special Highest Court has jurisdiction to settle whether a law enacted by the Parliament is fundamentally unconstitutional and on the interpretation of provisions of such a law when conflicting judgments have been pronounced by the Council of State, Supreme Court, or the Comptroller's Council.<sup>18</sup> It is composed of the Presidents of the Council of State, the Supreme Court and the Comptroller's Council, four members of the Council of State and four members of the Supreme Court, who are chosen by lot for a two-year term.

Any provisions of the law that have been declared unconstitutional by the Special Highest Court are invalid as of the date of publication of the judgment deciding on the issue or as of the date specified in the judgment.

#### IV. The Greek Bar

Statistical data indicate that there are approximately 20,000 lawyers and 63 bar associations in Greece, a country with a 10,616,000 population. The vast majority of lawyers is concentrated in Athens, Piraeus, and Thessalonika. Lawyers tend to share office space and expenses without necessarily creating legal partnerships, even though the latter have been allowed by law since 1989.<sup>19</sup> Most lawyers are general practitioners. The other percentage deals mainly with criminal law or maritime law.

The Lawyers' Code—as codified by Legislative Decree No. 3026/1954<sup>20</sup> and further amended and supplemented—is the basic law regulating all aspects associated with the exercise of the legal profession in Greece. Attorneys are called in the vernacular language *dikegoros* and *dikegoroi*. The Lawyer's Code specifies that the legal profession can be exercised only by those who are registered with the Lawyers' Associations. The Lawyers' Code prescribes the following academic, practical, age and nationality qualifications for one to enroll in the registers: a) a law degree from a Greek or a foreign university which has been recognized as equivalent. Greece has three law schools which are located in Athens, Thessalonika and Thrace. Education is free at all levels. Entry to law schools is possible upon passing national exams after high school graduation. Academic studies last 4 years. A diploma is awarded upon successful passing of the final exams; b) practical training for an uninterrupted period of 18 months. Within six months upon graduation, a graduate of a law school must enroll as a trainee with the Lawyer's Association of the area where one is intended to be trained. Along with the diploma, a graduate must furnish a statement of the lawyer with whom he has registered as a trainee; practical training may also take place at the president's office of the Legal Council of the State. The training includes thirty mandatory presentations by the trainee along with the lawyer he has been trained by before the district courts and signing of the pleadings. It also includes attendance to lectures and special courses as organized by the Lawyer's Associations; c) the trainee must be less than 33 years old to register in the special registers of the Lawyers' Associations. An exception to this rule exists when the applicant is blind. There is also a cut-off date for

---

<sup>18</sup> Art. 100, Const.

<sup>19</sup> By virtue of Presidential Decree No. 518.

<sup>20</sup> 6A P. RAPTARCHES, DIARKES KODIX NOMOTHSIAS [Continuous Compilation of Laws] 337(o) (Athens, looseleaf).

participation in the exams at the end of the training period. In this case, the trainee must be less than 35 years old. The 35th year is considered to have been completed by December 31 of the corresponding year. Upon successful passing of the final exams, one is eligible to be appointed as a lawyer; and d) Greek citizenship. The Lawyer's Code requires that only Greek citizens are appointed as lawyers. A foreigner who has been naturalized as a Greek citizen for a period of five years may also be appointed. The Minister of Justice may also allow foreigners of Greek origin to be appointed as lawyers, after a concurring opinion of the appropriate Lawyer's Association—provided that the permission has been requested and granted before the foreigner begins his practical training.

The European Union has adopted special rules for the practicing of the legal profession in the 15 Member States. Pursuant to Council Directive 89/48/EEC of December 21, 1988, on a general system for the recognition of higher education diplomas awarded on completion of professional education and training of at least three years duration,<sup>21</sup> a lawyer who is fully qualified in one Member State may already ask to have his diploma recognized in order to have himself established in another Member State in order to practice the profession of a lawyer under the professional title used in that state. This Directive does not modify the rules which govern the profession in Member States.

The most recent action of the European Union towards facilitating the practice of the legal profession in the Member States is the adoption of Directive 98/5/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council to Facilitate Practice of the Profession of Lawyer on a Permanent Basis in a Member State other than that in which the Qualification was Obtained.<sup>22</sup> Greece like the other Member States, is required to implement the Directive by March 14, 2000. Upon transposition of this Directive into the national legal system, a lawyer from a Member State of the European Union shall be entitled to practice in Greece under his home-country professional title and shall be registered with the appropriate bar association upon presentation of a certificate confirming his registration with the competent authority in the home member state. Such a lawyer will be able to carry out the same professional activities as a lawyer practicing under the relevant professional title used in Greece (*dikegoros*), including the right to give advice on his home member state, European Community law, international law and the law of his host Member State.<sup>23</sup> After practicing for a period of three years and after furnishing the necessary documentation, a lawyer of a Member State may apply to have his diploma recognized with the view to gain admission to the profession and practice it under the professional title of (*dikegoros*). He will be also subject to the same rules of professional conduct as those specified for Greek lawyers by the Lawyers' Code.

## V. Doing Research in Greek Law

The natural starting point for individuals who are familiar with the Greek language and want to find a specific piece of legislation in Greek law is the official gazette (*Ephemeris tes Kyverneseos tes Hellenikes Demokratias*). This is the official source for finding the authoritative text of the law and citing the law as well. Legislation is published in parts A and B. The Gazette contains annual

---

<sup>21</sup> OJ L 19/16 (1989).

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* L 77/36 (1998).

<sup>23</sup> This was already allowed as regards the provisions of services under Council Directive 77/249/EEC of March 22, 1977, to facilitate the Effective Exercise by Lawyers of Freedom to Provide Services. OJ L 78/17, as amended.



indexes. The latter are useful if the researcher knows when the law was published. Otherwise one needs to resort to the time-consuming task of researching all the previous years.

An extremely useful and practical compilation of all the Greek legislation in force is a loose-leaf set titled: *Diarkes Kodix Nomothesias*, commonly known as *Raptarchis*. *Raptarchis* published by the National Printing Office in Athens, is composed of approximately 105 volumes. The last two volumes contain a subject and a numerical index. It is an indispensable tool to those practicing law, or to those who are involved in in-depth research of Greek law. The legislation also contains citation of the official gazette. This is of help when one needs to cite only official sources. Its great value has been to some extent affected by the arrival on the market of two databases, one offered by the Athens Bar Association and the other available in CD Rom. One of the drawbacks associated with this loose-leaf collection is the time-consuming task of replacing the old legislation and receiving the loose-leaf pamphlets in a timely fashion from Greece. For instance, the LC collection of *Raptarchis* is usually about six months behind the current developments. As stated above, this is a legislation-oriented collection. No cases are reported. Another drawback is the lack of full text of some secondary legislation, such as ministerial decisions. However, in that case one may find a reference to the official gazette.

Another important research tool, although outdated, is the *Leksikon Nomikes* (Dictionary of Legal Terms). It encompasses 15 volumes and contains very basic information on legislation and cases. However, it has not been updated since 1973.

In addition to *Raptarchis*, legislation is also published in several other commercial collections. The most significant ones include the following:

*Kodikas Nomikou Vematos* (Code of Legal Tribune)

*Kodix Nomon* (Code of Laws)

*Pandektes Poinikou Dikaiou* (Pandect of Penal Law)

*Kodikas Poleodomikes Nomothesias* (Code of Urban Planning)

*Diarkes Hermeneutikos Kodikos tes Ergatikes Nomothesias*  
(Continuous Interpretation Code of Labor Legislation)

*Kodikas Epitheoreseos Ergatikou Dikaiou* (Code of Labor Law Review)

*Kodix Phorologikes Nomothesias kai Nomologias* (Code of Tax Legislation and Cases)

*Deltion Autokinitistekes Nomothesias kai Nomologias* (Bulletin of Automobile Legislation and Cases)

*Diarke Eureteria Nomologias kai Nomothesias* (Continuous Indexes of Cases and Legislation)

*Kodikas Nomikou Vematos* and *Nomikon Vema* deserve special mention. The latter contains court decisions. These two publications are published by the Athens Bar Association on a monthly basis. Both

are reliable sources with annual indexes for search. These, along with *Raptarchis*, mentioned above, are the most frequently used sources.

In the absence of official collections of court decisions, several publishers of legal periodicals have undertaken this effort with some success. A number of well-known bookstores, such as Sakkoulas, Kratzas and Zacharopoulos located in Athens have bound the summaries of the majority of the cases on an annual basis. In Greece, court decisions are cited by the name of the court that issued them, by number and by the year. The names of the judges are also mentioned.

The best known publications include the following:

*Archeio Nomologias* (Archives of Cases)

*Deltion Phorologikes Nomothesias* (Bulletin of Tax Legislation)

*Dike* (Trial)

*Hellenike Dikaiosyne* (Greek Justice)

*Hellenike Epitheorese Europaikou Dikaiou* (Greek Review of European Law)

*Harmenopoulos*

*Ephemeris Hellenon Nomikon* (Journal of Greek Jurists)

*Epitheoreses Emporikou Dikaiou* (Journal of Commercial Law)

*Epitheorese ton Europaikon Koinoteton* (Journal of European Communities)

*Epitheorese Ergatikou Dikaiou* (Journal of Labor Law)

*Epitheorese Nautiliakou Dikaiou* (Journal of Maritime Law)

*Epitheorese Emporikou Dikaiou* (Journal of Commercial Law)

*Epitheorese Demosiou kai Dioiketiku Dikaiou* (Journal of Public and Administrative Law)

*Epitheorese Demosion Ergon* (Journal of Public Works)

*Epitheorese Dikaiou Koinonikes Asphaliseos* (Journal of Social Insurance Law)

*Epitheorese Sygkoinoniakou Dikaiou* (Journal of Law of Transportation)

*To Syntagma* (The Constitution)

## Major Codifications

Written legislation plays a significant role in the Greek legal system. In addition to the Civil Code other major codifications of laws include: the Criminal Code, the Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure, the Military Criminal Code and Commercial Code. Other specific issues exist in a codified form, such as the Citizenship Code, the Code of Private Maritime Law, Code on Taxation of Income, Agricultural and Forest Codes, and a few others.

Article 76 VI of the Constitution provides for a special procedure to be followed for codes. Pursuant to this article, judicial or administrative codes drafted by committees of experts established under special laws may be passed in a plenary session of the Parliament by a special law ratifying them as a whole.

One of the most current editions of the Civil Code is that by A. Dervenagas, *Astikos Kodikas kai Eisagogikos Nomos* (1997).

Four Codes - Civil Code, Code of Civil Procedure, Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure - have been published together in one handy volume by Nomike Vivliotheke, a bookstore specializing in legal materials. The last edition available at the Library of Congress is from 1995.

Another publication dealing with Criminal Code is the *Poinikos Poinikos, Scholia -Nomologia* by Nomike Vivliotheke. It is composed of two volumes and includes an impressive commentary and reference to court decisions. The last edition available at the Library of Congress dates from 1995.

## VI. An Overview of Materials Available in English

Even though this brief guide is mainly intended to familiarize researchers with materials available in the vernacular language, it is important that one is aware of the scarce sources on Greek law that are available in English. The most-often used and cited are the following:

*Introduction to Greek Law*, edited by K.K. Kerameus and P. J. Kojyris. One of a kind, this work contains chapters written by a recognized authority in each field covered and includes a small, but useful, bibliography of materials available in Greek and other languages, mainly French or English. It is highly recommended to researchers for becoming aware of the intricacies of Greek law.

Two translations of the Greek Civil Code exist in English. One is *Greek Civil Code*, by C. Taliadoros, published in 1982. This was followed by a supplement in 1983 that included a major reform of the Civil Code. The translation does not contain the last amendments stated above. The second one is *An Outline of the Greek Civil Law*, published by A. Iatrou in 1986.

In the area of constitutional law, a monograph on *Constitutional Law in Hellas* by Philippos Spyropoulos (1995) is an excellent source. It was originally printed as a monograph in the International Encyclopedia of Laws/Constitutional Law.

The Criminal Code has been translated into English by Nicholas B. Lolis under the *American Series of Foreign Penal Codes*. It is a 1973 translation, which is still valuable but must be used with extreme caution, since the Criminal Code has been amended numerous times since then.

## Major Codifications

Written legislation plays a significant role in the Greek legal system. In addition to the Civil Code other major codifications of laws include: the Criminal Code, the Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure, the Military Criminal Code and Commercial Code. Other specific issues exist in a codified form, such as the Citizenship Code, the Code of Private Maritime Law, Code on Taxation of Income, Agricultural and Forest Codes, and a few others.

Article 76 VI of the Constitution provides for a special procedure to be followed for codes. Pursuant to this article, judicial or administrative codes drafted by committees of experts established under special laws may be passed in a plenary session of the Parliament by a special law ratifying them as a whole.

One of the most current editions of the Civil Code is that by A. Dervenagas, *Astikos Kodikas kai Eisagogikos Nomos* (1997).

Four Codes - Civil Code, Code of Civil Procedure, Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure - have been published together in one handy volume by Nomike Vivliotheke, a bookstore specializing in legal materials. The last edition available at the Library of Congress is from 1995.

Another publication dealing with Criminal Code is the *Poinikos Poinikos, Scholia -Nomologia* by Nomike Vivliotheke. It is composed of two volumes and includes an impressive commentary and reference to court decisions. The last edition available at the Library of Congress dates from 1995.

## VI. An Overview of Materials Available in English

Even though this brief guide is mainly intended to familiarize researchers with materials available in the vernacular language, it is important that one is aware of the scarce sources on Greek law that are available in English. The most-often used and cited are the following:

*Introduction to Greek Law*, edited by K.K. Kerameus and P. J. Kojyris. One of a kind, this work contains chapters written by a recognized authority in each field covered and includes a small, but useful, bibliography of materials available in Greek and other languages, mainly French or English. It is highly recommended to researchers for becoming aware of the intricacies of Greek law.

Two translations of the Greek Civil Code exist in English. One is *Greek Civil Code*, by C. Taliadoros, published in 1982. This was followed by a supplement in 1983 that included a major reform of the Civil Code. The translation does not contain the last amendments stated above. The second one is *An Outline of the Greek Civil Law*, published by A. Iatrou in 1986.

In the area of constitutional law, a monograph on *Constitutional Law in Hellas* by Philippos Spyropoulos (1995) is an excellent source. It was originally printed as a monograph in the International Encyclopedia of Laws/Constitutional Law.

The Criminal Code has been translated into English by Nicholas B. Lolis under the *American Series of Foreign Penal Codes*. It is a 1973 translation, which is still valuable but must be used with extreme caution, since the Criminal Code has been amended numerous times since then.

## VI. Automated Sources

The best available Greek law database is the one operated under the auspices of the Athens Bar Association. It is available on the Internet on a subscription basis. Its address is <http://www.themis.dsa.gr>. The Law Library does not have access to it yet due to some technical difficulties. It is a wonderful authoritative research tool and a friendly-user system with advanced capabilities. The entire Greek legislation and court decisions are included as well as summaries and citations to law journals.

Another automated source is *HELLASLEX*. It used to be available online, but currently is available in CD ROM. The Law Library does not subscribe to it.

There is no database on Greek law in NEXIS-LEXIS. On Internet there are a number of official websites operated by the various Ministries in Greece which may provide information on certain legislative measures, such as the site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A few others, such as <http://senanet.com/dikaio> and <http://www.lawnet.g/indexlegal.html> do not appear to be reliable and comprehensive legal databases.

## VII. Law Bookstores

For those interested in enhancing their collections on Greek law, a special mention should be made for two bookstores among the plethora of bookstores that exist in Athens. Both specialize in legal materials. The first one, *Sakkoulas* contains an extensive collection of monographs, whereas the second, *Nomike Vivliotheke*, is smaller but still good.

In the area of commercial law, a monograph on *Corporations and Partnerships in Hellas* by Ioanna G. Anastasopoulou is quite extensive. It was originally published in the *International Encyclopedia of Laws, Corporations and Partnerships* and was published again in 1993. An earlier monograph by Lambros Kotsiris on *Greek Company Law* (1989) is also a good source.

*Doing Business in Greece*, edited by E. Rossides, Hatzi and Marketos, is an excellent legal and practical reference tool intended to assist especially those who are interested in investing in Greece. It also has an excellent guide to Internet sources. The most recent edition is from 1996. Another guide pertaining to engaging in business activities in Greece is *Doing Business in Greece* by Price Waterhouse (1992). A very recent publication of the Ministry of Press and Mass Media is *Greece Your Strategic Partner in the New Millennium* (1999). This is a more general and brief guide, providing information on legislation pertaining to business and the economy.

A number of classic sources, some of which are outdated but still necessary, for researching Greek law are the following:

The Chapter on the "Legal System of Greece" found in the *Modern Legal Systems Encyclopedia* (1985) is old but still useful. The chapter on Greece in *International Encyclopedia of Comparative Law* is well written. The section on "Greece Law Digest" from the recent edition of *Martindale and Hubbell* (1999) is also a good reference guide.

The section on Greece in *Foreign Law, Current Sources of Codes and Legislation in Jurisdictions of the World*, edited by Thomas H. Reynolds and Arturo A. Flores, is valuable, well arranged by subject, and practical.

The section on "Greece" in the *Encyclopedia of Labor Law* is a well written, quite comprehensive entry.

For those interested in maritime law, the translation of the Code of Maritime Law in the *Greek Code of Private Maritime Law* by Theodoros Karatzas and Nigel Ready (1982) is still an excellent source.

The entry about the Greek Constitution in *Constitutions of the Countries of the World* (ed. by Albert Blaustein and Gisbert H. Flanz) is an excellent source for the text of the Constitution.

A noteworthy bibliography was prepared by Claire D.C. Spirou and appears in, English, French, German and Italian Language Materials Relating to Greek Law: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography, *17 Int'l J. L. Inf.* 10 (1989).

Last but not least, a special note for a top quality law journal. This is the *Revue Hellenique de Droit International*. It is published by the Hellenic Institute of International and Foreign Law under the direction of A. Gazis and D. Kerameus. The analytical, well researched articles are written in English or French.