

Foster care by same-sex registered partners in Greece

Following fierce consultations, deliberations and debates, a new law has been passed by the Hellenic Parliament on improving adoption and foster care procedures. The law introduces a new institution: The National Foster Care & Adoption Council, and contains provisions on the requirements and procedures for foster care, thus, enriching the existing landscape embedded in the Civil Code since 1996. It also establishes two national registries: The National Registry of adoptive applicants and the National Registry of adoptions.

The bone of contention was however the 'window' opened by the new legislation under Article 8, i.e. the right of same-sex partners to become foster parents. After a couple of weeks full of tension in the press and the Parliament, the Government moved on and secured the necessary majority for passing the provision.

This is yet another step towards full equivalence of same-sex with heterosexual couples. It was preceded by the introduction of same-sex partnerships in 2015, as an aftermath of the country's condemnation by the ECHR in the Vallianatos ruling. Still, same-sex marriage is not, and will seemingly not be allowed for quite some time in the future, given that the Supreme Court has ruled out this possibility end last year.

Finally, it should be noted that Greece has recently enacted legislation allowing the out of court dissolution of marriage in mutual consent, and abolished the compulsory application of Sharia law for Greek Muslims.