

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Greece

I. Introduction

Greece does not have a well-established or prevalent tradition of providing legal pro bono legal services. Some Greek law firms actively advertise their pro bono legal services but this practice does not appear widespread and there are often particularities or limitations to what services can be offered.

By contrast, a pro bono culture, led by Greek and international NGOs, which focuses solely on the needs of refugees and migrants has burgeoned following the concentrated arrival of migrants to Greece over the last decade. Such pro bono legal services, alongside some legal aid services, have mobilised to assist refugees on a range of issues, from asylum applications, family reunification applications through to the protection of their human rights. However, the demand for free legal services greatly outstrips supply in this field.

Overall, the pro bono legal services offered in Greece appear underdeveloped and much can still be done by way of legal reform to improve Greece’s pro bono culture.

II. Overview of Pro Bono Practices

(a)	Professional Regulation	
	<p>1. Describe the laws/rules that regulate the provision of legal services?</p>	<p>In Greece, the legal profession consists of lawyers (or <i>Dikigoros</i> – δικηγόρος) who can also serve as legal advisers (νομικοί σύμβουλοι) – there is no distinction between barristers and solicitors and advocates.</p> <p>The provision of legal services in Greece is subject to the Lawyers Code (Κώδικας περί Δικηγόρων)¹, which regulates disciplinary law, fees and advancement in status in general.</p> <p>Lawyers in Greece must also comply with a Code of Conduct (Κώδικας Δεοντολογίας)² and the rules of the Bar Associations (Εσωτερικοί Κανονισμοί Δικηγορικών Συλλόγων), which follow the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Lawyers in the European Union provided by the Council of Bars and Law Societies of the European Union (the <i>CCBE</i>).³</p>

¹ Law no. 3026/54, as continually amended, notably by law no. 3919/2011 (see <http://ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/SERIAL/89474/102803/F-973007144/A-32.pdf>, last visited on May 1, 2019) and law no. 4194/2013 (see https://www.ccbe.eu/fileadmin/speciality_distribution/public/documents/National_Regulations/DEON_National_CoC/EL_Greece_KODIKAS_ELLINON_DIKIGORON.pdf, last visited on May 1, 2019).

² See https://www.ccbe.eu/fileadmin/speciality_distribution/public/documents/National_Regulations/DEON_National_CoC/EL_Greece_Code-of-Conduct.pdf (last visited on May 1, 2019).

³ For the latest version of the CCBE Code of Conduct, see page 10-17 of https://www.ccbe.eu/fileadmin/speciality_distribution/public/documents/DEONTOLOGY/DEON_CoC/EN_DEON_CoC.pdf (last visited on May 1, 2019).

		<p>There are 63 local Bar Associations in Greece⁴ – one for each court of first instance (πρωτοδικείο). Each of these bars is a self-regulatory disciplinary body, and has its own Disciplinary Board of Lawyers.⁵</p> <p>As of 2018, there are approximately 44,000 registered lawyers in Greece;⁶ of these, some 22,000 members belong to the Athens Bar Association alone.⁷</p> <p>Further information can be obtained from previous Pro Bono Institute surveys.⁸</p>
	<p>2. Describe any licensure requirements governing the provision of legal services.</p>	<p>To enter the legal profession, a Greek citizen must first obtain a Greek law degree or hold an equivalent qualification from a recognized foreign university.</p> <p>Upon graduating, the graduate must register as a trainee lawyer (ασκούμενος δικηγόρος) with a Bar Association of their choice and complete an 18 month traineeship in a law firm. Once this training has been completed, the candidate must successfully pass the bar examination to obtain a licence to practice.</p> <p>Licensed lawyers are then admitted to the relevant Bar Association and entitled to practise in the courts of first instance (πρωτοδικείο).</p> <p>After 3 years of practice, and subject to the approval of the relevant Bar Association, licensed lawyers are entitled to practise in the courts of appeal (εφετεία).</p> <p>After a further 5 years of practice, and again subject to the approval of the relevant Bar Association, licensed lawyers are entitled to practise in the Supreme Court (Άρειος Πάγος).</p>

⁴ For a list of the Bar Associations see <https://portal.olomeleia.gr/en/content/57493> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

⁵ See https://www.ibanet.org/Regulation_Directory_project_Greece.aspx (last visited on May 1, 2019).

⁶ See <http://www.greece-lawyer.com/practice-areas-of-law/general-information/greek-lawyers-code-practice/> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

⁷ See https://www.ccbe.eu/fileadmin/speciality_distribution/public/documents/Statistics/EN_STAT_-2018_Number-of-lawyers-in-European-countries.pdf (last visited on May 1, 2019); see also <http://www.dsa.gr/page/identity-athens-bar-association> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

⁸ For the 2010 survey, see <http://www.probonoinst.org/wpps/wp-content/uploads/greece.pdf> (last visited on May 1, 2019); for the 2015 survey, see <https://www.lw.com/admin/Upload/Documents/Global%20Pro%20Bono%20Survey/pro-bono-in-greece.pdf> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

		Further information can be obtained from the Law Society website, previous Pro Bono Institute surveys, and the European e-Justice Portal. ⁹
(b)	Pro Bono Practice and Culture	
	1. Describe the rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services e.g. any explicit regulation or limitation on providing free legal services in some or all contexts, details of any mandatory or minimum fees imposed on provision of legal services.	<p>There are no rules which expressly regulate the provision of pro bono legal services in Greece.</p> <p>The fees of Greek lawyers are generally regulated by Articles 91 to 180 of law no. 3026/1954, as amended by law no. 3919/2011.¹⁰</p> <p>It should be noted that the Lawyers Code requires Greek lawyers to receive a fee for the provision of any legal services.¹¹ Certain exceptions to this rule exist, but they are extremely limited in scope (for example, the provision of legal advice to retired lawyers or close relatives).</p> <p>A Greek lawyer's fees can be agreed between the lawyer and the client in writing. As amended by law no. 3919/2011, the Lawyers Code no longer dictates the minimum or maximum fees to be charged. To the extent no such agreement is made in writing, the Lawyers Code does, however, provide a fallback position, setting out a minimum fee structure for the provision of legal services.¹²</p> <p>Notwithstanding the prohibition described above, private practice lawyers, local organisations and international organisations continue to provide free legal services in Greece.</p>
	2. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?	Greek lawyers are not required to work any minimum number of pro bono hours.

⁹ See <http://communities.lawsociety.org.uk/international/regions/europe/greece/how-to-practise-in-greece/5043351.fullarticle> (last visited on May 1, 2019); <http://www.probonoinst.org/wpps/wp-content/uploads/greece.pdf> (last visited on May 1, 2019); and https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_lawyers_training_systems_in_the_member_states-407-en.do?idTaxonomy=407&plang=en&removebanner=true (last visited on May 1, 2019): select "Greece" from the list of EU member states.

¹⁰ https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_costs_of_proceedings-37-el-restore-en.do?member=1

¹¹ Refer to Article 175 of the Lawyers Code (restated by law no. 3919/2011), see <https://www.lw.com/admin/Upload/Documents/Global%20Pro%20Bono%20Survey/pro-bono-in-greece.pdf> (last visited on May 1, 2019); see also https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_costs_of_proceedings-37-el-restore-en.do?member=1 (last visited on May 1, 2019).

¹² See <http://www.greece-lawyer.com/practice-areas-of-law/general-information/greek-lawyers-code-practice/> (last visited on May 1, 2019); see also https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_costs_of_proceedings-37-el-restore-en.do?member=1 (last visited on May 1, 2019); Article 63 of law no. 4194/2013 provides an example of one such default position, see <http://kpag.com/greece-lawyers-greek-law-firm/> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

<p>3. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services in order to become licensed lawyers?</p>	<p>There is no requirement for a Greek trainee lawyer (ασκούμενος δικηγόρος) to complete any minimum number of pro bono hours in order to qualify into the profession or become a licensed lawyer.</p>
<p>4. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for the provision of pro bono legal services? What are the major unmet legal needs?</p>	<p>The widely-publicised European ‘refugee crisis’ saw the arrival of large migrant populations to countries throughout Europe over a relatively short period of time, mainly during 2015. At the height of the crisis, the UNHCR recorded 211,663 people arriving on Greek shores during the month of October 2015.¹³ Although the number of migrants arriving month-by-month to Greece by sea has since abated,¹⁴ arrivals have not ceased altogether and many migrants have remained in Greece. The UNHCR estimates that approximately 50,508 migrants have remained on the Greek mainland or surrounding islands since the 2015-2016 flow.¹⁵</p> <p>This concentrated arrival of refugees and migrants has put severe strain on small Greek island communities that lack the basic infrastructure and services to adequately respond to the humanitarian needs of these people. In terms of basic housing, of the approximate 4,500 buildings and apartments located across Greece used to accommodate its migrant population, just 310 of these are located on Greek islands.¹⁶ As such, islands such as Samos, which is situated close to the Turkish coast, are less able to cope; a recent UNHCR report said that Samos is inhabited by a migrant population five times larger than the intended capacity of its reception and identification centre.¹⁷</p> <p>The refugee crisis has created an important need for legal pro bono initiatives directed towards the protection, immigration and reunification needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Greece – a need which is only growing.</p>

¹³ See <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

¹⁴ 1,129 arrivals by sea were recorded by UNHCR in the first 20 days of January 2019, see <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

¹⁵ See <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67711> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

¹⁶ See <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67704> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

¹⁷ As of December 2018, see <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67711> (last visited on May 1, 2019); UNHCR records c. 11,000 asylum seekers on Samos and Lesvos during the month of November 2018, see <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67726> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

		<p>Indeed, the demand for asylum and immigration services is fast growing as the crisis matures and focus shifts to the asylum process. This is despite the drastically reduced number of arrivals to Greece. The Greek Asylum Service, for example, received 66,970 asylum applications in 2018 up from 13,186 in 2015.¹⁸ Some pro bono initiatives, such as RLS-Athens (a registered UK charity), focus solely on reviewing, supporting and providing advice in relation to asylum claims.¹⁹</p> <p>Much remains to be done in Greece in relation to the refugee crisis and pro bono legal services will likely continue to play an important role in the future in this space unless changes to domestic policy address the deficit of free legal services first.²⁰</p>
	<p>5. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services? e.g., NGOs, governmental or other public services, schools and universities, private law firms (local or international) or corporate organizations?</p>	<p>The main providers of pro bono legal services in Greece appear to be a split of private practice law firms and NGOs.</p> <p>Information relating to university pro bono schemes or initiatives, if any, do not appear to be readily available.</p> <p>The Greek government does not appear to readily offer pro bono legal services. However, the Greek government does offer legal aid subject to certain eligibility criteria (see (d)1 below).</p>
(c)	Obstacles to Provision of Pro Bono Legal Services	
	<p>1. Do lawyers require a license to provide pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>Greek lawyers do not require a licence to provide pro bono legal services.</p>

¹⁸ See [http://asylo.gov.gr/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Greek Asylum Service Statistical Data EN.pdf](http://asylo.gov.gr/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Greek_Asylum_Service_Statistical_Data_EN.pdf) (last visited on May 1, 2019).

¹⁹ See <https://www.refugeelegalsupport.org/athens> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

²⁰ In some reports cases, pro bono lawyers in Greece are actively providing services formerly provided on an ad hoc basis, e.g. local police handling asylum applications, see <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/commentary-and-opinion/is-pro-bono-work-enough-to-tackle-the-refugee-crisis/5063970.article#commentsJump> (last visited on May 1, 2019); on the issue of Greek policy, reform measures have been introduced intended to streamline the asylum application process (to reduce backlogs and expedite the process if there is an urgent need for it), see <https://www.asylumineurope.org/news/20-04-2018/greece-reception-standards-and-further-dismantling-procedural-safeguards-latest> (last visited on May 1, 2019); also see <https://www.asylumineurope.org/news/04-04-2016/greece-asylum-reform-wake-eu-turkey-deal> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

<p>2. Do foreign lawyers require any additional license(s) to provide pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>Foreign lawyers wishing to provide pro bono legal services in Greece do not need any additional licences to do so. However, foreign lawyers must be entitled to practise in Greece.</p> <p>Foreign lawyers who qualified in another member state of the EU may practise on a permanent basis in Greece (in a self-employed or a salaried capacity) under their home-country professional title, pursuant to Presidential Order 152/2000 (in compliance with Directive 98/5/EC). This is subject to conditions, such as the foreign lawyer must register with the relevant Bar Association in Greece and keep chambers in their specific practice.</p> <p>Once registered with a Bar Association, the foreign lawyer becomes subject to the same obligations and assumes the same rights as Greek lawyers.</p> <p>However, the foreign lawyer may only integrate fully into the Greek legal profession once they can evidence three years of regular legal practice in Greece. During this period, foreign lawyers wishing to represent a client in court must be assisted by a lawyer entitled to appear before the court hearing that case.</p> <p>Furthermore, acts or duties which Greek law considers to constitute an exercise of public authority may only be performed by lawyers of Greek nationality.²¹</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers require professional indemnity legal insurance cover for any pro bono legal services that they provide? If so, are they prohibited from working under the cover of another pro bono provider, such as a private law firm or organization working on the same pro bono project?</p>	<p>Specific rules on lawyers' liability exist in Greece, refer to liability for in-court activity and presuppose fraud or gross negligence of the lawyer.²² If these conditions are met, it can be argued that these rules are applicable also in the context of provision of pro bono legal services.</p> <p>There is no Professional Indemnity insurance scheme in Greece. Lawyers may enter into private insurance contracts voluntarily.</p> <p>Piraeus Bar Association has negotiated an insurance scheme for its members, which is in force and also</p>

²¹ See <https://www.lw.com/admin/Upload/Documents/Global%20Pro%20Bono%20Survey/pro-bono-in-greece.pdf> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

²² See https://www.ccbe.eu/fileadmin/speciality_distribution/public/documents/INSURANCE/INS_Position_papers/EN_INS_20100827_Revised-Comparative-Table-on-Professional-Indemnity-Insurance-October-2009.pdf (last visited on May 1, 2019);

		<p>covers members of other Greek Bars. However, the scheme is voluntary and run by private companies.</p> <p>An optional auxiliary insurance fund called Λογαριασμός Ενισχύσεως Δικηγόρων Επαρχιών (ΛΕΔΕ) aiming at supporting lawyers working in the Greek Province recently (as of the beginning of March 2019) has negotiated an insurance scheme for its members. The insurance is provided free of charge by a private insurance company.²³</p> <p>It should be noted that any provision limiting a lawyer’s liability for fraud or gross negligence is considered null and void.</p>
	4. Are there any rules that prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?	<p>There are rules that prohibit advertising of pro bono successes. The Lawyers’ Code²⁴ prohibits advertising which enables others to identify clients (Article 40.3 (ε)). These rules also prohibit lawyers advertising the outcome of cases, their success rates and/or the turnover of cases (Article 40.3 (γ),(δ)). Lawyers are not prohibited from soliciting new pro bono clients. The Lawyers’ Code prohibits lawyers from giving press interviews discussing pending cases and providing information or data in relation to such cases.</p>
	5. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?	<p>This question does not apply to Greek lawyers as there are no Continuing Legal Education or education requirements for qualified lawyers in Greece.²⁵</p>
(d)	Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts	
	1. Describe any governmental sources of pro bono and/or other legal services in Greece.	<p>There do not appear to be any main governmental sources of pro bono in Greece.</p> <p>However, publicly funded legal aid (as distinct from pro bono legal services) is offered in various forms by the Greek state. This summary does not focus on legal aid but, for completeness, a short summary</p>

²³ See <http://www.lede.gr/%ce%b5%ce%bd%ce%b9%cf%83%cf%87%cf%8d%cf%83%ce%b5%ce%b9%cf%82-%cf%80%cf%81%ce%bf%cf%82-%cf%84%ce%b1-%ce%bc%ce%ad%ce%bb%ce%b7/#astikh> (last visited on 27 March 2019)

²⁴ See <http://www.dsa.gr/sites/default/files/news/attached/n.4194-2013-kwdikas-dikigorwn-fek-a-208.pdf> (last visited on May 1, 2019)

²⁵ See <https://www.lw.com/admin/Upload/Documents/Global%20Pro%20Bono%20Survey/pro-bono-in-greece.pdf> (last visited on May 1, 2019); see also https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_lawyers_training_systems_in_the_member_states-407-en.do?idTaxonomy=407&plang=en&removebanner=true (last visited on May 1, 2019).

follows. Further information can be found in the links contained in the footnotes to this section d(1).

Citizens with a low income are entitled to receive legal services without paying fees.²⁶ Articles 194 to 202 of the Code of Civil Procedure, and 100 and 304 of the Code of Penal Procedure, respectively, also provide for the possibility of receiving legal aid in trial proceedings. In principle, the main costs of a trial have to be borne by the party who brings the action; however, the losing party will be ordered to bear the costs of trial for both parties. Legal aid exempts the applicant from all legal costs, including judicial stamp duty, duty on the writ of execution, surcharges on these stamp duties, solicitor’s and bailiff’s fees, costs relating to witnesses and experts, and the fees of the lawyers or other representatives.

Legal aid is available before all civil, criminal and administrative courts, both for contentious and non-contentious proceedings, but not for procedures before administrative authorities. The lawyer is appointed on the basis of lists put together and kept by local Bar Associations. Lawyers are included on these lists on a voluntary basis and, if selected, are obliged to provide their legal services without receiving fees. The Ministry of Justice covers the legal fees owed to these lawyers.²⁷

The Greek government also supports a separate programme for Greece’s young people (which is supplementary to the general legal aid system) called “Legal Aid for Youth”. This initiative was launched in 2010 by the General Secretariat for Youth of the Greek State and recently approved for the 2017-2019 period by the Education Ministry General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth.²⁸ The scheme aims to provide free legal aid targeted at minors and socially vulnerable groups of young citizens (up to 30 years of age). Legal services are provided by young lawyers (up to 35 years of age). The programme seeks to serve two

²⁶ See law no. 3226/2004.

²⁷ See <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/eu-legal-aid-greece-20150427.pdf> (last visited on May 1, 2019); and <http://www.probonoinst.org/wpps/wp-content/uploads/greece.pdf> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

²⁸ See <https://government.gov.gr/egkrisi-odigou-programmatos-nomiki-voithia-gia-neous-legal-aid-gia-to-chroniko-diastima-2017-2019/> (last visited on May 1, 2019); see also <https://www.minedu.gov.gr/news-in-english-all/25270-09-11-16-ministry-legal-aid-programme-for-minors-youth-in-vulnerable-groups> (last visited on May 1, 2019); see also <https://edu.klimaka.gr/nomothesia/diaforoi-nomoi/2957-legal-aid-nomiki-voitieia> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

		<p>purposes: (i) to fight against social discrimination and isolation often experienced by the programme’s target groups; and (ii) to encourage and support young lawyers to take on similar cases. The programme deals with criminal-law related cases (abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking, drug-related offences), civil cases, administrative cases and labour law-related cases.</p>
	<p>2. Describe the main non-governmental sources of pro bono and/or other pro bono resources in Greece.</p>	<p>There does not appear to be any main non-governmental source of pro bono in Greece. However, some organisations and some private practice law firms do offer a limited range of pro bono legal services.</p> <p>Private practice law firms</p> <p>Some Greek law firms freely advertise pro bono legal services and undertake to provide pro bono legal services to charitable organizations and non-profit institutions (advising, in particular, on the formation, ongoing governance and compliance requirements of such organizations), as well as individuals, foundations and start-up companies created by young entrepreneurs.²⁹</p> <p>Some Greek law firms also offer English-speaking pro bono legal services to UK nationals in exceptional circumstances or on a case by case basis. However, many firms also do not – the UK government maintains a list of law firms that can be instructed by UK nationals which can be accessed via the UK government website.³⁰</p> <p>In the past, Greek lawyers have led pro bono initiatives to address topical issues such as the national debt or to provide counselling services to migrants.³¹</p> <p>Non-governmental organisations</p>

²⁹ For some examples of such firms, see <https://www.papapolitis.com/about/> (last visited on May 1, 2019); or <https://dftlaw.gr/pro-bono/> (last visited on May 1, 2019); or <http://www.felioslawfirm.gr/firm/pro-bono-work/> (last visited on May 1, 2019); or <http://koslawoffice.gr/social-responsibility/kos-law-firm/9-pro-bono-cases> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

³⁰ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greece-list-of-lawyers> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

³¹ One example of this is the Group of Lawyers for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees, see <http://omadadikigorwnenglish.blogspot.com/> (last visited on May 1, 2019): This group operated from February 2016 to December 2018 to (i) provide legal counselling to migrants and refugees on the full range of issues relating to their immigration status, (ii) provide legal assistance in exceptional cases, and (iii) contribute to the public debate on immigrant and refugee issues; see also, the Greece Debt Free (“GDF”) initiative: not active since 2015, GDF was aimed at reducing Greece’s national debt and some pro bono services were offered by Greek law firms through the initiative.

	<p>The only cases of pro bono court representation are those provided by certain human rights NGOs in cases concerning migrants, refugees and certain vulnerable groups of people. The following are examples of foundations or programmes that are active in providing such pro bono legal services:³²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights (“MFHR”) – established in 1978 the MFHR offers free legal services to people (without any discrimination as to race, religion, sex, language, nationality or social origin) whose fundamental human rights and freedoms have been infringed and who are unable to pay for legal counsel.³³ • The Integration Centre for Migrant Workers: Ecumenical Refugee Programme (“KSPM-ERP”) – established in 2012 as the successor of the Integration Centre for Migrant Workers (which had been operating as an office of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece since 1978 and operating officially since 1994), the KSPM-ERP runs various programmes which aim to defend and support justice, the dignity and rights of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and Greek repatriates.³⁴ The KSPM-ERP runs two offices: the ‘Ecumenical Refugee Programme’ and the ‘Reintegration Center for Returning Migrants’. Both offices have a strong history of working with national and international NGOs to further their underlying mission.³⁵ • AITIMA NGO (“AITIMA”) – AITIMA was founded in 2008 with the aim of defending human rights and protecting the environment. The organisation achieves these aims by providing free legal advice and consultation to vulnerable groups (including refugees, minorities and newly arrived communities), delivering training, providing education, leading cultural events and conferences, conducting research and appealing to the judiciary system.
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³² For a general overview, please see <http://www.refugeelaidinformation.org/greece-pro-bono-directory> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

³³ See <http://www.mfhr.gr/en/means-of-action.html> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

³⁴ See <http://www.kspm-erp.com/?lang=en> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

³⁵ For more information, see <http://www.kspm-erp.com/ecumenical-refugee-programme/?lang=en> (last visited on May 1, 2019); and <http://www.kspm-erp.com/reintegration-center/?lang=en> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Greek Council for Refugees (“GCR”)³⁶ – founded in 1989, GCR was created to support refugees and asylum seekers in Greece and assist with their integration with a range of social, psychosocial and legal services. GCR also works to support and protect the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable members of Greek society and, in collaboration with a range of partners—from ministries and local government to international organizations— GCR offers legal support and representation services.³⁷ • HIAS Greece³⁸ – established in the USA in 2016 to provide legal representation to refugees arriving on the Island of Lesbos, HIAS Greece has since partnered with Islamic Relief USA to provide improved legal services to refugees in Greece throughout 2018 through the Greece Refugee Rights Initiative. From its new office in Athens, HIAS Greece is now able to follow up on cases, pursue strategic litigation, engage in advocacy on behalf of refugees and provide free legal assistance for asylum and reunification proceedings from a local Greek base. HIAS Greece in a branch of HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society founded in 1881. • RLS-Athens (“RLS”)³⁹ – set up in 2017 by UK asylum and immigration lawyers, RLS runs a law clinic out of the Athens Solidarity Centre to provide free legal support and assistance in relation to asylum and reunification issues. RLS relies on the voluntary services of EU asylum lawyers who rotate their time in Athens. Other RLS activities include supporting and evidencing asylum claims, running advice and information sessions, outreach, contributing to strategic litigation, providing legal education and capacity building within the Greek asylum law community, and training community interpreters.⁴⁰
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³⁶ See <https://www.gcr.gr/en/> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

³⁷ See <https://www.gcr.gr/en/our-work/our-services/gcr-legal-unit> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

³⁸ See <https://www.hias.org/greece> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

³⁹ See <https://www.refugeelegalsupport.org/> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

⁴⁰ Further information is available at <https://reachvolunteering.org.uk/org/refugee-legal-support-athens-rls-athens> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawyers Against Poverty (“LAP”)⁴¹ – established in 2015, LAP is an Oxfam initiative which aims to inspire lawyers to play a part in global justice, facilitate the establishment of legal projects that support access to justice, facilitate access to legal education, raise awareness of poverty and work to relieve poverty. Since 2018, LAP have been working with refugees and asylum seekers in Greece to provide timely and effective legal advice in advance of immigration interviews.⁴² • Advocates Abroad (“AA”)⁴³ – set up in early 2016 to provide refugees in Greece with information about their rights, AA relies on the work of volunteer lawyers and field teams to run legal clinics in camps and shelters. The clinics are designed to prepare refugees and asylum seekers for asylum interviews, and assist with family reunification applications and appeals. AA also runs information sessions and their Greek qualified lawyer-volunteers also provide court representation for asylum related claims. <p>Legal Aid</p> <p>In the legal aid space, Greece’s volatile economic situation and the humanitarian crises affecting it have also led to the emergence of charitable or volunteer led initiatives which provide private mechanisms of legal aid. The actions of groups such as Solidarity Now, ARSIS, the Ecumenical Refugee Programme and some local Bar Associations all provide examples of alternatives to state-sponsored legal aid.⁴⁴ The Legal Service offered by ARSIS, for example, is free for beneficiaries of the service subject to such beneficiaries meeting certain financial criteria; it is staffed by a mix of paid lawyers and volunteers. No further explanation of such legal aid is provided in this summary.</p>
	<p>3. Is there any public or private organization with which a local or foreign attorney can register in order to be made aware of pro bono opportunities?</p>	<p>There are no public or private organizations in Greece with which a local or foreign attorneys can register in order to be made aware of pro bono opportunities.</p>

⁴¹ See <https://lawyersagainstpovetry.org/activities/projects/> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

⁴² Further information is available at <http://www.simmons-simmons.com/en/news/2018/october/lawyers-against-poverty-launch-initiative-to-assist-refugees> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

⁴³ See <https://advocatesabroad.org/aboutus/> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

⁴⁴ See <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/eu-legal-aid-greece-20150427.pdf> (last visited on May 1, 2019).

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May 2019
Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Greece

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