Παιδί με 2 Γονείς Αστική Μη Κερδοσκοπική Εταιρεία
A Child Needs 2 Parents AMKE
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Piraeus, 25 November 2026

To:

Chairperson Amina Bouayach

Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)

Cc:

1. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
2. Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR)
3. Ministry of Justice of the Hellenic Republic

Subject: Protection of children's rights in parental separation proceedings in Greece and the need for effective monitoring by the National Human Rights Institution.

Dear Madam Chairperson,

The Civil Non-Profit Company "A Child Needs 2 Parents", a Greek civil-society organization active in protecting children's rights and family life, is writing to the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) to bring to your attention an issue that, in our view, goes beyond the debate concerning individual policy choices in Greek family law and relates more broadly to the effective monitoring of human-rights implementation by national institutions entrusted with their protection.

Our organization has undertaken institutional advocacy before national, European and international bodies concerning the application of family law, the protection of children's rights following parental

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separation, the need to collect reliable judicial data, and the effective enforcement of the relevant court decisions.

This letter does not seek to ask GANHRI to take a position on the substantive content of Greek family-law legislation. Rather, we wish to highlight a broader institutional question: how can a National Human Rights Institution effectively assess the actual protection of children's rights when the competent State authorities state that they do not possess systematic, structured data on how the relevant rights are applied in practice?

1. The established data gap

The issue now has an objective institutional basis. Following a request submitted by our organization and the related parliamentary scrutiny, the Greek Ministry of Justice acknowledged, in document No. 238/14.10.2026, that although JustStat collects statistics on judicial caseloads, the aggregated and separate collection of data on decisions concerning parental responsibility, day-to-day care and contact, by year and court, is not currently feasible. The relevant information is contained in the text of court decisions, but is not recorded as separate structured fields in the relevant information system.

The same Ministry stated that 73,582 family-law decisions were issued during the period 2021-2026, noting that extracting the critical information would require a detailed review of many decisions. This creates a critical human-rights deficit: the State knows the overall volume of judicial activity but lacks a corresponding systematic picture of its outcomes for children.

Consequently, it is not currently possible to assess systematically:

- how parental responsibility is applied in practice,
- how day-to-day care is allocated,
- the actual extent of children's contact with their parents,
- how often children are heard and with what safeguards,
- how often social or psychological assessments are used,
- how long proceedings take, and
- whether the relevant court decisions are actually enforced.

2. Why this is a children's rights issue

The issue is not primarily statistical. Articles 3, 9, 12 and 18 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child establish an interconnected framework of protection concerning the child's best interests, the child's relationship with both parents, the right to be heard, and the common responsibilities of parents.

Furthermore, in its 2022 concluding observations CRC/C/GRC/CO/4-6, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child issued specific recommendations to Greece concerning the exercise of parental responsibilities following separation.

Effective monitoring of these obligations requires the ability to assess their implementation in practice.

3. Recurring indications of operational problems

The lack of official data is particularly significant in view of recurring indications emerging from case law and empirical research.

Our organisation's documentation study of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights identifies, in Greek cases spanning more than two decades, recurring issues concerning the duration of proceedings, enforcement of decisions, protection of contact, procedural safeguards, expert assessments and the hearing of children.

At the same time, various empirical studies, including a primary analysis of 431 decisions of the Athens Single-Member Court of First Instance, research on decisions of the Piraeus Court of First Instance, and academic qualitative research into the experiences of separated parents following national Law 4800/2021, provide additional indications warranting systematic investigation.

We do not present these sources as proof of a widespread violation or as nationally representative. On the contrary, their limitations demonstrate precisely why an independent, systematic and nationwide assessment is necessary.

4. The particular importance of the Greek National Human Rights Institution

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights has historically addressed these matters.

As early as its 2008 Observations on Greece's Third Periodic Report concerning the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it highlighted, among other matters, issues relating to the implementation of the child's right to be heard and the need to establish the family courts and social services provided for under national Law 2447/1996. Eighteen years later, it remains difficult to assess systematically the extent to which these earlier institutional observations have been addressed.

For this reason, we have already approached the GNCHR, requesting, among other things, its intervention to promote:

- the creation of structured and comparable family-justice data,
- the periodic publication of anonymised indicators,
- a representative study of judicial practice,
- an assessment of the existing legislative framework before further substantive amendments are introduced, and
- monitoring of the protection of key children's rights.

5. The issue we submit to GANHRI

We fully recognize and respect GANHRI's distinct institutional mandate and do not ask it to act as a mechanism for examining individual cases or as a supervisory body for Greek family law.

We submit a narrower but, in our view, fundamental issue concerning the role of NHRIs:

Can there be effective national human-rights monitoring when the State does not collect the data needed to determine whether legislative and judicial safeguards work in practice?

A core purpose of GANHRI is to strengthen National Human Rights Institutions and their capacity to protect and promote human rights effectively in accordance with the Paris Principles.

In this context, we believe that the Greek case may serve as a useful case study for a broader institutional discussion on evidence-based human-rights monitoring and the conditions required for NHRIs to assess not only the formal existence of legislative safeguards, but also their actual implementation. This is especially important in areas such as family justice, where delays and failures of implementation may have irreversible effects on children's lives.

6. Requests

Considering the above, we respectfully ask GANHRI and you personally, in your capacity as Chairperson, to consider, insofar as this falls within your institutional role, the possibility of:

1. Bringing this documentation to the attention of the GNCHR and encouraging institutional dialogue on the need for systematic, data-based monitoring of children's rights in parental separation proceedings.

2. Highlighting, within GANHRI's mandate to strengthen NHRIs, the importance of their access to adequate, structured and comparable data, and considering the exchange of good practices and the development of comparable approaches or indicators for monitoring children's rights within justice systems.

3. Informing us of any existing guidelines, good practices or experiences of other NHRIs that could be used in Greece.

Our aim is therefore to help create the conditions for the competent national institutions to assess the Greek framework independently, objectively, in a child-centered manner and based on reliable evidence.

Our approach does not frame the issue as a conflict between mothers and fathers. The child and the practical protection of the child's rights remain at the center, with an individualized assessment of the child's best interests and full protection in cases where substantiated allegations of violence or abuse are raised.

We remain at your disposal to provide the complete supporting documentation and, should you consider it useful, to present in greater detail the issues arising from the Greek experience.

Yours sincerely,

For the Board of Directors of the Civil Non-Profit Company "A Child Needs 2 Parents"

Yiannis Zacharatos, Chair of the Board

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Related material and supporting sources

A. International and European framework

1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 3, 5, 9, 12 and 18.

2. United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on Greece, CRC/C/GRC/CO/4-6, 28 June 2022.

B. Greek legislation

3. Law 2447/1996 (Government Gazette A 278/30.12.1996), Articles 48-50 concerning specialised family-law divisions and social services at Courts of First Instance.

4. Law 4800/2021 (Government Gazette A 81/21.5.2021), "Reforms concerning parent-child relations, other family-law matters and other urgent provisions".

C. Academic works and studies by "A Child Needs 2 Parents"

5. Thomas-Christos Efstathiou, "Case law following Law 4800/2021 concerning the shared custody of minor children", Postgraduate Program in Civil Law, Law School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, September 2025.

6. Viktoria Frizi, "Psychological and legal experiences of alienated and non-alienated separated parents from their own perspective in Greece following Law 4800/2021", Master's thesis, Postgraduate Program in Forensic Psychiatry, School of Medicine, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, December 2025.

7. Study of Judicial Decisions in Family Disputes of the Piraeus Court of First Instance, Civil Non-Profit Company "A Child Needs 2 Parents", 2022.

8. Civil Non-Profit Company "A Child Needs 2 Parents", documentation study "The ECtHR and the protection of family life", 2026.

D. Institutional documents

9. Ministry of Justice, document No. 238/14.10.2026.

10. GNCHR Observations on the Third Periodic Report concerning implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (2008).

11. Submission by "A Child Needs 2 Parents" to the GNCHR, dated 23 November 2026.