

[Home](#) > ... > [Court Procedures](#) > [Civil Cases](#) > [Service of Documents: Official Transmission of Legal Documents](#)
> [Greece](#)

Service of documents: official transmission of legal documents

 Greece

Content provided by:



European Judicial Network
(in civil and commercial
matters)

1 What does the legal term "service of documents" mean in practical terms? Why are there specific rules regarding the "service of documents"?

In practical terms, 'service of documents' means that documents in civil and commercial cases must be served on or notified to the parties.

Service of documents as defined by law is the activity carried out by competent authorities and persons whereby addressees are given access to the content of documents addressed to them. This is important because if by failing to serve a document on a party the party is prevented from being heard, this may result in an extraordinary legal remedy.

Special rules apply to the serving of documents since it is a necessary requirement in litigation proceedings which stems from the principle of the right of parties to be heard. It means parties must be given access to information on the place and time of the proceedings and the material facts in a case.

2 Which documents need to be served formally?

Documents that need to be served formally include the procedural documents for an action, an application to set aside a default judgment (and additional grounds), an appeal (and additional grounds), an appeal in cassation (and additional grounds), an application for revision of a judgment (and additional grounds), third-party proceedings (and additional grounds), an application against extrajudicial and judicial acts (and additional grounds), a primary or secondary intervention, notification of a trial and third-party notice, an application for the adoption, revocation or modification of interim measures, an application for a temporary injunction to be granted or revoked, and the record of postponement if the defendant fails to enter an appearance, an application for judicial protection in non-contentious proceedings, and the revocation or modification of the judgment, a summons to a hearing or to receive a sworn affidavit, and all court judgments (final and non-final).

3 Who is responsible for serving a document?

Service is the responsibility of the party to a case following a written order given, under the document to be served, either by that party or their agent or, at the request of that party, by the competent judge or, in the case of a multi-member court, by the presiding judge of the court (Article 123 of the Code of Civil Procedure (CCP)). Documents are served by a bailiff appointed by the court in whose region the addressee has their place of residence or is staying at the time of service (Article 122(1) CCP). Where service of documents takes place under the responsibility of the court, service may also be carried out by a criminal bailiff established in the region concerned or an officer of the Hellenic Police, a forestry ranger or the municipal secretary (Article 122(2), (3) CCP). Furthermore, in proceedings for interim measures, the place and time of the hearing is notified by serving a document issued by the court registry, indicating the place, date and time of the hearing, or by

invitation of the court registry by telegraph or telephone. The judge may also order that a copy of the application be served along with the summons (Article 686(4) CCP).

4 Address enquiries

4.1 Does the requested authority in this Member State on its own initiative, try and establish the whereabouts of the addressee of the documents to be served if the address indicated is not correct ? See also notification under Article 7(2)(c) of the Service of Documents Regulation.

As far as it can, yes.

4.2 Do foreign judicial authorities and/or parties to judicial proceedings have access to registers or services in this Member State enabling the establishment of the person's current address? If yes, which registers or services exist and what procedure must be followed? What fee, if any, should be paid?

No, they do not have direct access.

All residents in the territory of Greece are registered in the database of each municipality through the competent registry offices. However, the single national database includes only adult citizens, who are registered on the basis of their identity card/passport, and which is updated as appropriate by the municipalities in Greece.

It is accessible to citizens (free of charge) only through public telephone directories.

A national citizens' register is being set up and completed, and this will make it possible to trace people.

4.3 What type of assistance in address enquiries from other Member States do the authorities of this Member State provide under Article 7(1) of the Service of Documents Regulation? See also notification under Article 7(1) of the Service of Documents Regulation.

The competent receiving agency searches for addresses by letter to other national agencies.

5 How is the document normally served in practice? Are there alternative methods which may be used (other than substituted service referred to in point 7 below)?

The usual method used for the serving of documents is to deliver the document concerned into the hands of the addressee (Article 127(1) CCP), irrespective of where the addressee is (Article 124 CCP). However, if the addressee has a place of residence, shop, office or workshop in the place where the document is to be served, either alone or with another person, or if they work there as an employee, worker or servant, the document cannot be served at a different place without their consent (Article 124(2) CCP). With regard to any alternative methods which may be used, it is possible for decrees issued upon a proposal of the Minister for Justice to establish the service of documents also by post or telegraph or telephone, and to specify how the service is to be carried out and certified (Article 122(4) CCP).

6 Is electronic service of documents (service of judicial or extrajudicial documents through remote means of electronic communication, such as e-mail, internet based secured application, fax, sms etc.) permitted in civil proceedings? If so, for which types of proceedings is this method provided for? Are there restrictions with regard to the availability/access of this method of service of documents depending on who the addressee is (legal

professional, legal person, company or other business actor, etc.)?)

Judicial documents can be served by electronic means too, provided that they have been electronically signed.

A judicial document that is served by electronic means is deemed to have been served if the sender has received electronic proof of receipt from the addressee, which must bear an advanced electronic signature and will constitute a service report (Article 122(5) CCP).

Article 122A CCP

1. A document may also be served by electronic means by a certified bailiff appointed to the court in the region where the natural or legal person to whom it is addressed has their place of residence or stay or registered office at the time of service.
2. Procedural documents may be served, in accordance with paragraph 1, also by electronic means, provided that they bear a qualified electronic signature in accordance with Article 2(20) of Law 4727/2020 (Government Gazette, Series I, No 184). Service by electronic means is deemed to have taken place only if the bailiff has received electronic proof of receipt of the document bearing a qualified electronic signature of the addressee, in accordance with Article 2(20) of Law 4727/2020. The electronic proof of receipt must be included in the service report drawn up by the bailiff in accordance with Article 139 of the CCP, failing which the service is null and void. Service is deemed not to have taken place if the electronic proof of receipt is not received by the process server within 24 hours of dispatch. If electronic service does not take place then service is performed by physical means, as provided for in Article 122 et seq.
3. Subject to paragraph 4, a natural person or, in the case of a legal person, its legal representative, who wishes to send or receive documents by electronic means, must declare a single email address in the National Notification Centre (NNC) referred to in Article 17 of Law 4704/2020 (Government Gazette, Series I, No 133). If the addressee lives or, in the case of a legal person, has its registered office abroad, the declaration must be submitted to the NNC.
4. Service by electronic means, as defined in paragraphs 1 to 3, addressed to the State, a credit institution, a payment institution, an electronic money institution or an insurance company is effected at the relevant decentralised agency or central branch of the region where, at the time of service, the bailiff is based. If there is no competent decentralised agency or central branch of the region, service is effected at the head office of the entities referred to in the first sentence. To this end, the legal representatives of legal persons are required to provide their email address to the NNC, together with the name of the representative, agent or employee authorised to receive the document served electronically.
6. A registered email address is replaced or deleted in accordance with Article 17 of Law 4704/2020.
7. Service on an authorised lawyer, in accordance with Article 143(1) and (3), may also be effected at the email address contained in a procedural document, in accordance with Article 119(1) CCP.
8. In cases of electronic service, the procedural time limits are extended by one day.
9. The conditions for the creation and operation of the electronic application for the service of documents by electronic means are laid down by joint decision of the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Digital Governance.

6.1 What type of electronic service within the meaning of Article 19(1) of the Service of Documents Regulation are available in this Member State where service is to be effected directly on a person, who has a known address for service in another Member State?

Greece reserves the right to answer the question within the deadlines laid down in Regulation (EU) 2020/1784.

6.2 Has this Member State in accordance with Article 19(2) of the Service of Documents Regulation specified additional conditions under which it will accept electronic service via e-mail

referred to in Article 19(1)(b) of that Regulation? See also notification under Article 19(2) of the Service of Documents Regulation.

The above option for serving judicial documents by electronic means depends on the issue of a presidential decree upon a proposal of the Minister for Justice, which will set out the more specific requirements to be met.

7 'Substituted' service

7.1 Does the law of this Member State allow for other methods of service in cases where it has not been possible to serve the documents to the addressee (e.g. notification to the home address, to the bailiff office, by postal service, or by poster advertising)?

If the addressee is not at their place of residence, the document will be delivered to one of the other persons living with them, provided that they are aware of their actions and are not opposing parties in the case (Article 128(1) CCP).

If none of the persons referred to in paragraph 1 is at the place of residence:

(a) the document must be posted on the door of the place of residence in the presence of a witness;

(b) on the business day following the date of posting at the latest, a copy of the document, which is drafted free of charge, must be delivered into the hands of the head of the police station in the region in which the place of residence is located and, in the absence of the head, to the officer or deputy officer in charge or the guard of the police station. In all these cases, delivery must be evidenced by a receipt drafted free of charge under the service report;

(c) on the following business day at the latest, the process server must mail the addressee a written notice indicating the type of document served, the address of the residence at which the document was posted on the door, the date of posting, the authority to which a copy was delivered and the date of delivery. Certification that the notice was sent by mail must be drafted and signed free of charge under the service report by the process server. The certification must indicate the post office from which the notice was sent, as well as the employee who received it, and that employee must endorse the certification (Article 128(4) CCP).

If the person being served is not at the shop, office or workshop, the document is delivered into the hands of the manager of the shop, office or workshop or of a partner, associate, employee or servant, provided that they are aware of their actions and are not involved in the case as the opposing party to the person being served (Article 129(1) CCP).

If none of the persons referred to in paragraph 1 is present at the shop, office or workshop, the provisions of Article 128(4) CCP apply (Article 129(2) CCP).

If the addressee or the persons referred to in Articles 128 and 129 refuse to accept service of the document or to sign the service report, or if they are unable to sign it, the serving officer attaches the document to the door of the place of residence, office, shop or workshop in the presence of a witness (Article 130(1) CCP).

If the addressee does not have a place of residence, office, shop or workshop, and either refuses to accept service of the document or is unable to or refuses to sign the service report, and their refusal or inability is confirmed by a witness hired by the serving officer for that purpose, the report is delivered into the hands of the persons referred to in Article 128(4)(b) (Article 130(2) CCP).

If the person being served is being treated in hospital or being held in prison and it is not possible to communicate with them, this is to be confirmed by the hospital administrator or prison governor and noted in the service report, and the document may be served on the hospital administrator or prison governor, who must deliver the document into the hands of the person being served (Article 131 CCP).

If the addressee is serving on board a merchant ship which is in a Greek port, and if they are absent or refuse to accept service of the document or refuse or are unable to sign the report, the document is served to the master of the ship or their deputy and, if they are absent or refuse to accept service of the document too, it is served to the head of the port authority, who is under obligation to notify the addressee (Article 132(1) CCP).

If the person on whom the document must be served is serving on board a merchant vessel which is not in a Greek port, the document is served at the person's place of residence in accordance with Article 128 and, if the person has no place of residence, it is served in accordance with the provisions governing service on persons of unknown address. In any event, the document is served at the office of the ship-owner in Greece or, otherwise, at the office of the ship's agent at a Greek port, if any (Article 132(2) CCP).

For persons in any of the following categories who are in active service, if it is impossible to serve a document on them or on their relatives or servants living with them, the document is served in accordance with Article 128(3) and (4) and as regards:

(a) those serving generally in the Hellenic Army, the document is served on the commander of the unit or station or service to which the addressee belongs. If the unit or station or service is unknown, the document is served on the chief of the relevant branch;

(b) officers, deputy officers and sailors of the Hellenic Navy, the document is served on the chief of the navy general staff;

(c) officers, non-commissioned officers and staff of the Hellenic Air Force, the document is served to the chief of the air force general staff;

(d) officers and non-commissioned officers of the Hellenic Police and Coast Guard, as well as police staff and coast guards, the document is served to the head of their service;

(e) the staff of lighthouses, beacons and signal stations, the document is served on the head of the port authority in the region in which they carry out their duties (Article 133(1) CCP).

If the person to be served lives or has their registered office abroad, the document is served on the public prosecutor of the court before which the trial is pending or which is to be seised, or on the court which passed the judgment to be served and, for trials in the small claims court, on the public prosecutor of the court of first instance of that region. Any documents relating to enforcement are served on the public prosecutor of the court of first instance in whose jurisdiction the enforcement takes place, and any extrajudicial documents are served on the public prosecutor of the last place of residence or known address abroad and, in the absence of a place of residence or known address abroad, the document is served on the public prosecutor of the court of first instance of the capital city (Article 132(1) CCP). Upon receipt of the document, the public prosecutor must, without undue delay, send it to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is under obligation to forward it to the addressee (Article 134(3) CCP).

If the whereabouts or precise address of the person to be served is not known, the provisions of Article 134(1) apply. At the same time, a summary of the procedural document being notified must be published in two daily newspapers, one of which must be published in Athens and the other either in the place where the court has its seat or in Athens also, as instructed by the public prosecutor on whom the document is served. The summary is drafted and signed by the process server and must indicate the full names of the parties to the case, the type of procedural document served, the relevant request and, in the case of court judgments, the operative part of the judgment, the court before which the trial is pending or which is to be seised, or the official who is to enforce the judgment and, if the addressee is summoned to appear or to carry out a certain act, the place and time of appearance and the type of act concerned must be indicated (Article 135(1) CCP). The above shall also apply where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirms that it is impossible to send the document to a person who is living or has their registered office abroad (Article 135(3) CCP).

If the offices or shops referred to in Articles 128(4)(b), 131, 132 and 133 are closed or the authorities or persons referred to in those Articles refuse to accept service of the document or to sign the service report, the process server drafts a report and delivers the document to the public prosecutor of the court of first instance in whose jurisdiction the place of service is located, and the public prosecutor then sends the document to the person who refused to accept service or sign the report.

7.2 If other methods are applied, when are the documents deemed to have been served?

If the method of service referred to in point 7.1 was used for a person being treated in hospital or being held in prison, or serving in the army or navy, or resident abroad, the document will be deemed to have been served as

soon as it is delivered to the authorities or persons referred to in the above point, irrespective of when it was sent and received (Article 136(1) CCP).

If the method of service referred to in point 7.1 was used for a person who was not found at their place of residence, provided that no adult relative residing with them was found either, the document will be deemed to have been served as soon as it is attached to the door of the addressee's place of residence, provided that all the requirements set out in point 7.1 with regard to the method of service are observed (i.e. service of the document into the hands of the head of the police station and mailing of a relevant written notice).

7.3 If another method of service is the deposit of the documents in a particular place (e.g. at a post office) how is the addressee informed of that deposit?

Greece has never introduced the deposit of documents at a post office as an alternative (indirect) method of service. As stated in point 7.1, if the method of service was used for a person who was not found at their place of residence, provided that no adult relative residing with them was found either, after posting the document on the door of the addressee's place of residence and delivering a copy to the head of the police station, a written notice is mailed to the addressee, indicating the type of document served, the address of the residence where the document was posted on the door, the date of posting, the authority to which the document was delivered and the date of delivery.

7.4 If the addressee refuses to accept service of the documents, what are the consequences? Are the documents regarded as effectively served if the refusal wasn't legitimate?

As stated in point 7.1, if the addressee refuses to accept service of the document concerned or to sign the service report, the serving officer posts the document on the door of the place of residence, office, shop or workshop in the presence of a witness. Once the document has been posted on the door, it will be considered as having been served.

8 Postal service from abroad (Article 18 of the Service of Documents Regulation)

8.1 If the postal service delivers a document sent from abroad to an addressee in this Member State in a situation where acknowledgment of receipt is required (Article 18 of the Service of Documents Regulation), does the postal service deliver the document only to the addressee himself/herself or may it, in accordance with national rules of postal delivery, deliver the document also to another person at the same address?

In this case, the postal service will deliver the document only to the addressee in person.

8.2 Under the rules of postal delivery in this Member State how can the service of documents from abroad, under Article 18 of the Service of Documents Regulation, be effected if neither the addressee nor any other person authorised to receive the delivery (if possible under national rules of postal delivery - see above) has been reached at the address of delivery?

In this case, the postal service will notify the absent addressee in writing that the document will remain at the post office for a specific period of time, during which they may collect it.

8.3 Does the post office allow a specific period of time for collection of the documents before sending the documents back as undelivered? If yes, how is the addressee informed that there is mail for him to collect at the post office?

See point 8.2.

9 Is there any written proof that the document has been served?

The process server drafts a report, which must contain (a) the service order, (b) a clear description of the

document served and identification of the persons concerned, (c) the date and time of service, (d) the person on whom the document was served and the method of service in the event of absence or refusal of the addressee or the persons referred to in Articles 128 to 135 and 138 (Article 139(1) CCP).

The report must be signed by the process server and the person receiving the document or, if that person refuses to sign or cannot sign, by the witness hired for that purpose (Article 139(2) CCP).

The process server must note the time and date of service on the document and sign it. This note constitutes proof for the purpose of the person served. If there is any discrepancy between the service report and the note, the report takes precedence (Article 139(3) CCP).

The report referred to in Article 139 is drafted in duplicate. One copy is delivered to the person who ordered service and the other, for which no stamp duty is charged, is kept by the serving officer. A short note is made of the service in a special book kept by the serving officer (Article 140(1) CCP).

The bailiff must, upon request, provide copies of the original documents kept in their file to the person who ordered the service and to the addressee, and to anyone having a legitimate interest, provided that approval has been given to that effect, by a note made on the request, by the presiding judge at the court of first instance of the region in which the service took place (Article 140(2) CCP).

10 What happens if something goes wrong and the addressee does not receive the document or the service is effected in violation of the law (e.g. the document is served on a third person)? Can the service of the document nevertheless be valid (e.g. can violations of the law be remedied) or must a new effort to serve the document be made?

If a party to a case was unable to observe a deadline due to force majeure or due to fraud on the part of the opposing party (e.g. invalid service by the bailiff or intentional failure of the person who received the document to notify the party to the case), that party has the right to request restoration of the *status quo ante* (Article 152(1) CCP) within 30 days of the date on which the obstacle that constituted the force majeure was raised or on which they were made aware of the fraud on the part of the opposing party (Article 153 CCP).

If a person against whom a judgment was rendered by default was not summoned at all, or was not summoned legally or within the set deadline, they have the right to have the default judgment set aside within 15 days of service of the judgment if they reside in Greece, or within 60 days of the latest publication of the summary of the judgment service report under Article 135(1) if they are of unknown address or are living abroad (Articles 501, 503(1), (2) CCP).

If a party to a case has summoned the opposing party declaring that the latter was of unknown address, despite being aware of their address, and if the opposing party has lost the case entirely or in part, the opposing party has the right to ask for a review of the judgment, within 60 days of service of the contested judgment if they reside in Greece or within 120 days if they are of unknown address or live abroad, or, if the judgment was not served at all, within 3 years of publication of the contested judgment, provided that it is final or irrevocable, otherwise from the date on which it became final (Articles 538, 544(9), 545(1), (2), (3), (5) CCP).

11 If the addressee refuses to accept a document based on the language used (Article 12 of the Service of Documents Regulation) and the court or authority seised of the legal proceedings decides upon verification that the refusal was not justified, is there a specific legal remedy to challenge that decision?

See point 10 paragraph 2 in the event of a judgment by default. If the addressee enters an appearance (in support of the ground for refusal), no application may be lodged to have a default judgment set aside. However, an appeal may be lodged.

12 Do I have to pay for service of a document, and if so, how much? Is there a difference where the document is to be served under domestic law and where the request for service originates from another Member State? See also notification under Article 15 of the Service of Documents Regulation, concerning service of a document from another Member State.

The service expenses are paid in advance by the person who orders the service (Article 173(1), (3) CCP).

The party that loses the case is ordered to pay for these expenses too (Articles 176, 189(1) CCP). The sum paid depends on the method and type of service used. The minimum service expenses amount to EUR 35.00 if the document concerned is served on a person who has their place of residence or stay in the area where the bailiff's office is located.

■ Last update: 27/03/2023

The national language version of this page is maintained by the respective EJN contact point. The translations have been done by the European Commission service. Possible changes introduced in the original by the competent national authority may not be yet reflected in the translations. Neither the EJN nor the European Commission accept responsibility or liability whatsoever with regard to any information or data contained or referred to in this document. Please refer to the legal notice to see copyright rules for the Member State responsible for this page.