

09 March 2016

*Mr. Dimitris A. Mavros
President
AGMORC
Ypereiðou 7,
105 58, Athens, Greece*

Dear Mr. Mavros,

Many thanks for your correspondence informing us that your Government had contacted you to consult on a future revision of the Greek legislation governing the use and publication of opinion polling in the context of elections.

As requested, ESOMAR is pleased to provide the following submission in support of your upcoming representation activities as part of the Greek government's upcoming consultations.

[Robust self-regulation coordinated by two world bodies, ESOMAR and WAPOR](#)

ESOMAR, the World Association for Market, Opinion, and Social Research has been working closely with WAPOR, the World Association for Public and Opinion Research in order to set comparable professional standards to govern the conducting of polls and ensure their impartiality as an essential element to a functioning democratic society.

[Recognising the core function of polling in modern, democratic societies](#)

Both associations recognise and highlight the importance of a number of principles that have underpinned the development and adoption of polls as an important ingredient for evidence-based decision-making.

Independent polling free of government or special interest interference is key to ensuring that society is able to benefit from access to information that interests them and enables them to make decisions on the basis, or despite, of the information provided.

The role of polling as a means of democratising information is therefore crucial and must be defended by free and democratic governments. Furthermore, independent polling allows a diversification of information sources that prevents capture of information by governments, politicians, or indeed business elites.

[Polling is not a perfect science, but the best method we have available to measure public opinion](#)

This had led to our two associations updating our guidelines on the publication of opinion polls in the last year underlining the importance both associations place in maintaining up-to-date standards for the global polling community.

During the last national elections in the United Kingdom, polling agencies were blamed for failing to correctly predict the outcome of the elections. Subsequently, we acknowledge that many governments throughout the European Union are concerned that similar issues may face upcoming elections in their countries, including legitimately, the Greek government.

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Indeed, these concerns are shared by the industry which has swiftly launched an inquiry under the supervision of an independent panel and with the full support of the British equivalent to ESOMAR, the Market Research Society. We expect the findings and recommendations to be published in the coming months following a robust review, noting that the British government has rejected misguided attempts to change laws hastily thereby preventing polling from continuing to serve its societal function.

The Greek legal framework provides sufficient safeguards to guarantee quality in polls

Nonetheless, ESOMAR supports AGMORC, the Greek National association for market, opinion, and social research in urging the Greek government not to take a rash action considering the 2007 Legislation in operation in Greece has proven to be sufficient in ensuring that polling agencies in Greece accomplish their important societal task of capturing snapshots of public opinion at any given moment. Further modifications would further distance the Greek legal framework from its neighbours, creating unnecessary legal complications for both operators in Greece and international polling agencies.

Indeed, the 2007 law enshrines a number of key principles particularly the importance of adhering to accepted international standards when conducting polls, the importance of transparency when publishing poll results, and the ability at all times to audit the results in the event the results are questioned by any party. These important safeguards ensure that the Greek polling community follows accepted international standards and that the Greek authorities and indeed the Greek citizen can test the veracity of the results published.

Towards an operating environment for polls of less, not more restrictions

In 2012, WAPOR published a Report on the Freedom to Publish Poll Results which outlines the regulatory frameworks of 61 countries including 35 European countries. It had identified that in 2012, most European countries were moving towards a reduction in the embargoes with many countries removing all outstanding restrictions to embargoes on publishing polls including notably France, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Switzerland and other EU member states found in Central and Eastern, and Western Europe.

Greece need not become an exception

During the most intense days of the Greek sovereign debt crisis, polls served an important function to underline both the attachment of the Greek people to the European project and the European Union whilst at the same time registering their fervent opposition to the proposals of Greek creditors to resolve the crisis. Such is the importance and power of the polls and indeed the importance of maintaining the 2007 legal framework intact and without further reforms.

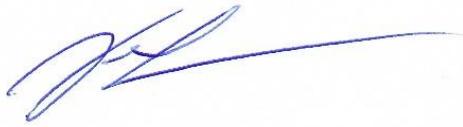
Further reforms would not serve the purposes of promoting fair, quality polling, an effort best left to the robust self-regulatory schemes that have proven their effectiveness of raising professional standards not just in Greece but indeed globally across 130 countries.

Should the Greek government feel that these assurances are insufficient, we would be happy to participate in a meeting in the presence of top global pollsters who can further advise the Greek government on how best to achieve its objectives whilst retaining maximal freedom to conduct and publish polls for the benefit of society.

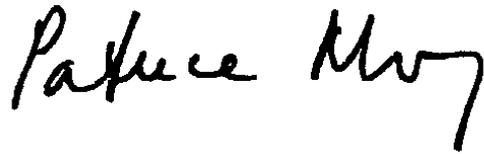
We remain at your disposal for any further queries that you may have.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the market, opinion, and social research sector:



Kim Leonard Smouter
Government Affairs Manager
ESOMAR



Patricia Moy
President
WAPOR

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ESOMAR
WORLD RESEARCH

Founded in 1948, ESOMAR gathers nearly 5000 professionals and over 400 companies in 130+ countries providing or commissioning research, including public and academic bodies. For further information on ESOMAR and its activities, contact Kim Smouter, Government Affairs Manager.

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WAPOR
WORLD ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

Founded in 1947, WAPOR is the international leading association in the field of public opinion research with approximately 500 members in more than 65 countries. For further information on WAPOR and its activities, contact Patricia Moy, President.

WAPOR

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