

Special Report 5/2025

National Land Registry:

Why is the land registration of the whole country delayed?

Has the operation of the Land Registry been effective, where land registration has been completed?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Land Registry is a fundamental and powerful tool for the rational organisation and development of the country. The Hellenic Court of Audit looked into the factors causing delays and malfunctions in the land registration; it also evaluated the initial registration system and examined the adequacy of mechanisms placed to update of land registry records.

The audit led to the following findings:

1. Three decades following its legislative provision, the land registration is nearing completion. However, the fact remains, that, despite the significant progress achieved over the last decade, it took excessively long to conclude this undertaking, even if it is objectively considered to be extremely complex.
2. A significant number of properties have been registered as having unknown owners. The delay in completing the land registration is due to inherent factors, as well as long-standing issues, such as the incomplete recording of public property and the lack of preparation of forest maps. The pace of implementation has slowed down due to frequent amendments in the legislative framework and operational problems, such as delays in collecting declarations, difficulties in forming commissions hearing objections, and understaffing of quality control services.
3. The land registration was prematurely concluded in many areas, because the competent Committees or the contractor had not finished reviewing correction requests and objections. No one benefited from the option provided by law, to conclude the land registration without prior posting. Moreover, the procedure provided for to examine correction requests was particularly strict. Despite speeding up the initiation of the Land Registry's operation, these measures may cause prolonged uncertainty as to the property's ownership status and place a burden on the judicial system, if handling of pending issues is not accelerated.
4. A large number of cases are still pending in some land registry offices and branches due to their understaffing. The implementation of digitising the land registry files is progressing at a satisfactory pace. The use of artificial intelligence has significantly sped up the legislative review of registrable transactions, but it also implies the need to set up appropriate safeguards. The procedures have been largely digitised; however, malfunctions are still identified.

5. The legislative framework governing the operation of the Land Registry is well-developed. There is, however, some legislative uncertainty regarding the fundamental issue of whether finalising incorrect initial entries results in the original acquisition of ownership by the wrongly registered party. The liability regime of the Hellenic Land Registry for incorrect entries needs to be reconsidered.