

**ISI STATEMENT ABOUT PERSISTING LEGAL ACTION AGAINST
ANDREAS GEORGIU
FORMER ELSTATⁱ PRESIDENT**

**WHY IS HE BEING PROSECUTED AFTER EIGHT YEARS FOR FOLLOWING
STATISTICAL PRINCIPLES?**

The ISI again expresses its deep concern about continued legal action against Andreas Georgiou.

Mr Georgiou has faced eight years of prosecution by the Greek government for allegedly falsifying Greece's debt and deficit figures, when in fact he brought them up to international standard, as certified by the EU. Despite these prosecutions, the revised figures continue to be used by the Greek government. Mr Georgiou has also faced a number of criminal and civil proceedings on account of his applying statistical principles in his work as head of the national statistics office. The legal harassment of Mr Georgiou has been condemned internationally – including by ISI which has over the last seven years issued five critical statementsⁱⁱ on this issue.

In September last year Mr Georgiou was awarded a special commendation by the ISI, the American Statistical Association, the Royal Statistical Society and other statistical societies to acknowledge his upholding of the highest professional standards in his public service in the pursuit of integrity of statistical systems.

We are pleased to note that justice seems to have finally prevailed in the case of the alleged falsification of deficit and debt figures and Mr Georgiou has been acquitted after so many years and two reversals of previous acquittals.

However, justice is not yet fully done. It is of great concern to us that the legal harassment of Mr Georgiou is not yet over. There are three legal cases against him in Greece which are still open. He took these actions in accordance with statistical principles in his capacity as head of the national statistics officeⁱⁱⁱ. In one case, Mr Georgiou is appealing a 2017 decision of a civil court ordering him to indemnify the former (2006-2010) director of the national accounts division of the Greek statistics office for 'simple' slander. The appeal will be heard in Greece in January 2020. Mr Georgiou was found liable by the civil court for public statements he made in 2014 defending ELSTATS's revised 2009 public finance statistics and the civil court ordered him to pay damages to the plaintiff and also publish parts of the court decision as a public apology. Note that under Greek law you can be convicted of 'simple' slander if what you say is true, but it damages the reputation of the other party.

Defending official statistics, as required by the UN Fundamental Principles of Statistics and the European Statistics Code of Practice, should not lead to any legal proceedings and even less to damages being awarded and public apologies. Now is the time for a fresh start in Greek statistics, and the ending of the victimisation of Mr Georgiou.

The Hague, 18 December 2019

John Bailer

ISI President

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ⁱ The Greek national statistics office

ⁱⁱ Earlier ISI statements and further background to this case can be found on the [ISI website](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Two cases have been for years at the criminal investigation stage: one from 2013 concerning Mr Georgiou's efforts to align ELSTAT practices with the European Statistics Code of Practice principle of statistical confidentiality and the other, from 2016, about the same issue of alleged manipulation of public finance statistics for which he has been acquitted in a different case! There have been no charges pressed yet, but there is also no indication that the cases have been closed.