

Last-minute decision leaves out ‘malicious blasphemy of religion’ provision in Greece’s revised penal code



A last-minute decision by the Greek government not to include the offense of malicious blasphemy of religion in a revised penal code - which was ratified by a large majority of Parliament deputies on Wednesday evening - continued to generate negative reactions and dissatisfaction on the part of the Church.

In a related development, debate begins on Monday on constitutional articles that are eligible for revision by the current Parliament plenum.

One of the articles that can be revised - following a vote by the previous Parliament plenum, and as per Greece’s two-step constitutional revision process - is Article 3, the most definitive provision in the country’s constitution dealing with Church-state relations.

Article III of Greece’s constitution, as revised in May 2008, begins with the phrase “... The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. The Orthodox Church of Greece, acknowledging our Lord Jesus Christ as its

head, is inseparably united in doctrine with the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople and with every other Church of Christ of the same doctrine...”