

Greek high court rules church-going by primary school pupils, daily morning prayer in public schools constitutional



A plenum of Council of State (CoS) justices, the highest administrative court in Greece, on Friday ruled that church-going by elementary school and kindergarten pupils is constitutional and legal. The ruling also covers the daily prayer at the commencement of every school day.

Conversely, a majority of high court justices ruled that failure to offer parents and guardians a legal exemption from both the church-going and daily prayer, on the grounds of religious conscience, is unconstitutional and contravenes the European Convention on Human Rights.

According to a relevant announcement released by the CoS secretariat, the decision, 942/2020, comes on the heels of previous such decisions, and states that

“...prayer and church-going, within the framework of the educational process, comprise, just as with the teaching of religious study classes, a necessary means by which the constitutional mandate of cultivating Greeks’ religious conscience, as per Article XVI, paragraph 2 of the constitution, is served.”