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Assessing Better Regulation Reforms in the in Law Making Process: An Empirical Study of Greece's Compliance With Better Regulation Criteria From 2015 to 2023 and the Effects of Regulatory Framework Reforms

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, the better regulation agenda has emerged as a powerful instrument for enhancing the law-making process across the EU. This paper empirically investigates Greece's adherence to better regulation principles, focusing on key aspects such as the regulatory text, public consultation processes, impact assessments, parliamentary procedures, and the activation of subordinate legislation. Utilizing a novel dataset spanning from 2015 to 2023, this study analyzes the developments in key better regulation principles following the enactment of two critical laws aimed at reforming Greece's lawmaking process. While notable progress has been observed in several areas, such as public consultations and the structure of the regulatory text, persistent shortcomings in amendments, impact assessments, and practical implementation remain. This analysis provides valuable insights into the dynamics of recent institutional reforms and their effectiveness in aligning Greece's legislative output with the overarching goals of better regulation.

1 | Introduction

During the economic recession and the sovereign debt crisis period in Greece, the country went through several institutional reforms. The *Troika* mandated extensive reforms on several state sectors, from which those on public administration in particular aimed at implementing more robust policies, enhancing transparency, and strengthening the rule of law. At the epicenter of the reforms was the better regulation agenda, which sought to overhaul the law-making processes. The initiation of better regulation in Greece as a public policy was significantly advanced by the enactment of Law 4048/2012, marking a crucial consolidation of efforts and proposals that had evolved over the previous decade (Kivotidis 2018; Karkatsoulis 1990; Papantoniou 1990; Prime Minister's

Circular 190/1872006 2006). This law established a robust framework for better regulation which includes the necessity, appropriateness, and proportionality of regulations to fulfill their intended objectives; the clarity and simplicity of legal texts; adherence to national, EU, and international laws; effectiveness and efficiency with a focus on minimizing unnecessary financial and administrative costs; and the transparency and accountability of entities enforcing the legislation. These provisions were similar to other initiatives of better regulation evolved in European countries before (Ranchordás 2014; Veit and Jantz 2011).

Despite a currently improved, and in some parts new, regulatory framework, Greece's journey towards better regulation has undergone numerous challenges. The tradition of an extended

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role of the state in economic regulation necessitates continual corrective interventions (Calabresi 1982; Kysar 2011), which has seen an increase in collateral legislation, significantly limiting Parliament's legislative scope. Theoretical analyses have shown that issues are particularly pronounced in secondary legislation, where the absence of clear quality criteria frequently leads to legislative pathologies (Berman 2013). Additionally, the obligation of states to comply with decisions from supranational bodies, in the Greek case mostly by the EU, has perpetuated a rising tide of legislation; this reflects both the legislative demands and the unique social and cultural specifics of each country that heavily influence its regulatory framework (Brown and Scott 2011; Radaelli 2007).

The issue of overregulation (*polynomia*, Greek: πολυνομία), which involves the existence of multiple regulations for the same issue, exacerbated during times of crises, such as economic downturns or political instability, can lead to rapid and often excessive legislative output (Karkatsoulis et al. 2023; Sotiropoulos and Christopoulos 2017). The result is a complex legal and institutional framework for public administration, including the judiciary tasked with upholding the law, who struggle to both manage and interpret the sheer volume of regulations (Linos 2013). This complex environment adds burden not only to the public administration bodies, but also contributes to delays in relevant processes (OECD 2011). Business and citizens find it difficult to understand which documents and processes regulate their affairs and what is required to align with the legal framework, resulting in additional administrative costs and informational obligations. Addressing these challenges is therefore crucial not only for the efficiency of governance, but also for ensuring that Greek law-making produces sounder and more transparent policies (OECD 2012). Better regulation practices vary across institutional contexts, yet comparative research shows that overregulation, poor impact-assessment quality, and opaque amendment practices are common—to varying degrees—across EU member states. Southern European countries such as Italy and Portugal display similar implementation gaps despite having adopted formal procedural frameworks aligned with OECD standards (OECD 2022; Langman et al. 2021). Today, the theory and practice of better regulation conceptual framework are increasingly acknowledged as key principles for enhancing legislative functions and the quality of democracy in Greece. Yet, despite numerous theoretical and conceptual analyses concerning the quality of Greece's law-making process (Fitsilis and Theodorakopoulos 2024), there remains a significant gap in empirically measuring the fundamental principles of better regulation and evaluating the recent improvements or deficiencies in the process. Similar to Brenner and Fazekas (2023), who test the relationship between ex-ante impact assessments (IAs) and post-enactment legal stability using a large cross-national dataset of more than 2500 laws in France, Hungary, Italy and the UK (2006–2012), our contribution seeks to address this gap using and expand the knowledge around process alignment and persistent shortages in better regulation, which can situate the country within this broader context of better regulation assessment. The quantitative analysis will allow us to understand the country's performance not as uniquely deficient, but as part of the wider practices of partial compliance and institutional learning across the EU.

The following sections review the literature on the better regulation framework, outline the key components of the Greek law-making process, describe the data and methodology used to address our research questions, and present our empirical analysis. The discussion provides additional insights into the advancements in the principles of better regulation, and the conclusion summarizes the main findings and limitations of our analysis, linking them to a broader comparative perspective of better regulation studies.

2 | The Better Regulation and the Quality of Regulation Framework

Better regulation is built upon the cornerstones of regulatory quality and open governance. Drafting itself proceeds in five stages: understanding the proposal, analyzing it, designing the law, composing the draft, and verifying it (Xanthaki and Stefanou 2013). The jurisprudence literature converges on two complementary standards of legislative quality—the substance of the legal act and its form (Mader 2001; Vanterpool 2007; Karpen 2012; Mousmouti 2012). The substantive dimension requires a specific, clear solution to a defined problem, with predictable impacts, necessity, and proportionality; the formal dimension requires clear and simple communication of the proposal's purpose. Together, these qualities define a “good law”—one clear enough to produce the outcomes initially designed by policymakers. In this context, Xanthaki and Stefanou (2013) notes that legislative effectiveness, a term that aligns with regulatory quality, involves forecasting main outcomes, stating clear objectives, providing appropriate means for implementation, and conducting timely ex-post evaluations. This fundamental concept of legislative effectiveness is a cornerstone of the better regulation agenda, as according to OECD (2002) it incorporates efficiency and seeks to minimize burdens on citizens and businesses. A crucial tool of this agenda to achieve all the above targets is the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA), a report that aims, among others, to analyze the costs, benefits, and risks of regulations, ensuring that legislation is well-informed and efficient (Osifodunrin and Lopes 2022).

Impact assessment process involves, besides the estimation of the consequences, a strategy of consulting a wide range of stakeholders to identify the most suitable policy options (Langman et al. 2021; Osifodunrin and Lopes 2022). The adoption of this process in RIA across the EU and its member states¹ reflects its foundational principles in the field of economics of law, the models of public choice theory, and the theory of democratic ideals (Martin et al. 2014). As described by the OECD (2002), RIAs are crucial in assessing regulatory effects and promoting accountable governance. These estimations and the assessment provided in the accompanied reports are necessary for evaluating impacts on various economic, societal, and environmental aspects and are part of a broader strategy to reduce several types of regulatory burdens, as seen in the widespread adoption of the Standard Cost Model over the past decade. Either as part of RIA or as an independent process, public consultation is also a critical component of the better regulation agenda. As outlined in the Mandelkern Report on Better Regulation (2001), open and public

consultation is based on the principle of open governance, and it complements traditional policymaking by incorporating diverse stakeholder inputs early in the policy development cycle. It aims at helping to avoid delays and disputes in later stages, by an *ex-ante* evaluation of the provisions to be regulated by the stakeholders and the public.

Additionally, in later stages of the regulatory cycle the *ex-post* review of regulations and the simplification of existing provisions, is considered the most suitable strategy aimed at updating existing laws and turn them into more effective. With simplification, administrative burdens are reduced and transparency is enhanced to facilitate better compliance and understanding among stakeholders. This process ensures that regulations remain effective and aligned with policy goals, provisions with no application are repealed, facilitating easier compliance and reducing burdens and bureaucracy (Binh and Nguyen 2024; Hosken et al. 2017; Mufarrige and Zywicki 2021; Potěšil et al. 2021).

Finally, in a similar logic implementation strategies and reports review the success and seek to identify areas for improvement on the post-implementation cycle. However, the literature shows that there is a struggle to consistently assess whether regulations achieve their intended policy objectives as initially planned (Neven and Zenger 2008), indicating a gap between legislative intent and practical outcomes.

3 | The Fundamentals of the Current Law-Making Process in Greece

Better regulation principles and enhanced regulatory quality are incorporated in the Greek institutional framework by three main sources: the Constitution, the law 4622/2019 (Hellenic Republic 2019) (which amended and complemented the previous law 4048/2012 (Hellenic Republic 2012)) and the Parliament's Standing Orders. Apart from these, other regulations also describe the processes and requirements that need to be followed in the law-making process, such as the Manual of Legislative Methodology (2020) (General Secretariat for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs 2020a, 2020b).

According to Vlachopoulos (2018a) and Vlachopoulos (2018b) the Constitution, as exemplified in the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament (Hellenic Parliament n.d.), provides a series of explanatory memoranda and opinions, which must accompany the submission of a bill or draft law to Parliament. These include the explanatory memorandum, the report on amended provisions, fiscal-impact reports from the General Accounting Office and the responsible Ministers, and, for pension bills, the opinion of the Court of Auditors (the constitutional anchors of each requirement are listed in Appendix A.1). Vlachopoulos also highlights that the Constitutional clauses in Article 74 dictate that "... bill or law proposal containing provisions not related to its main subject matter shall not be introduced for debate" is constantly violated in practice (Hellenic Republic 2008).

The Parliament's Standing Orders (Articles 87–88) further regulate amendments, requiring submission at least 3 days before debate, accompanying explanatory and impact-assessment

reports, and a substantive connection to the bill's main subject; in practice, however, these provisions are routinely violated (Vlachopoulos 2018a). The full text of the relevant Standing Orders provisions is reproduced in Appendix A.1 in [Supporting Information](#).

Greece's recent enactment of law 4622/2019, titled "Executive State: Organisation, operation and transparency of government, state institutions, and central public administration," represents a significant advancement in the country's regulatory framework (OECD 2022). This law emphasizes the necessity for a systematic approach to drafting, evaluating, and implementing laws, underlining principles such as proportionality, simplicity, and transparency, which aim to enhance the efficiency and clarity of regulations. A key characteristic of this law is the requirement that all primary laws be accompanied by a Regulatory Impact Assessment before their submission to Parliament. This provision ensures, on paper, a thorough evaluation of potential impacts, including socioeconomic factors and gender equality, thereby substantiating legislative decisions and fostering accountability in governance. The law also mandates, as an essential aspect of democratic legitimacy, public consultations for all primary legislation, facilitating stakeholder engagement. Moreover, the law stipulates the establishment of the Special Secretariat for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Government Program, a decision that aims to enhance the commitment to refining the regulatory environment through *ex post* evaluations, which assess the actual impacts of laws post-implementation. Additionally, Law 4622/2019 enshrines the creation of a coordinated service within each Ministry to oversee the application of better regulation tools throughout the law-making process (Fitsilis and Theodorakopoulos 2024).

Article 64 of Law 4622/2019 establishes a Committee for Quality Evaluation on the Law-Making Process within the General Secretariat for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. The Committee provides *ex-ante* review of constitutional compatibility, EU and international-law conformity, textual coherence, and the methodological quality of RIAs; Spyridon Vlachopoulos (2024) reports early positive effects on title accuracy, structural clarity, and legal certainty (full mandate and remit in Appendix A.1 in [Supporting Information](#)).

4 | The Research Questions

Despite the institutional and procedural changes in Greece's better regulation framework through Laws 4048/2012 and 4622/2019 described above, and the theoretical discussion in the literature regarding these institutional reforms (Spyridon Vlachopoulos 2024; Koromilas 2024; Fitsilis and Theodorakopoulos 2024; Kaiafa-Gbandi 2018; Kivotidis 2024; Mantzoufas 2018; Petrakis 2024; Sotiropoulos and Christopoulos 2017), there remains a notable gap in empirical evaluations of law-making's adherence to this legal framework. Amending the provisions is one thing, but the practical alignment with these changes is another. Therefore, this study aims to address this shortage by collecting and analyzing data regarding the application of key better regulation principles and monitoring adherence trends over time. Consequently, the primary research questions of this analysis are:

RQ1. To what extent do practices of legislative process in Greece adhere to the provisions enacted by the laws 4048/2012 and 4622/2019 during the 2015–2023 period? More specifically, we look at a set of indicators that concern the regulatory text RIAs, public consultations, and streamlined parliamentary procedures.

RQ2. Do the empirical trends in selected indicators suggest that Law 4622/2019 contributed to improving the quality of regulation in specific areas of the legislative process? In this question we statistically explore whether the observed differences in the selected indicators can plausibly be attributed to the enactment of the law itself.

These questions have only been theoretically analyzed in literature, given the lack of empirical and open-access data on law-making processes and regulatory output. Our study will use a novel dataset on better regulation indicators in Greece to empirically examine these questions and contribute to the advancement of law-making debate in Greece in recent years.

5 | Methodology

Our analysis employs a two-step empirical strategy to assess Greece's alignment to its better regulation framework. First, we begin with a descriptive trends analysis over the period January 2015–April 2023, in which the laws 4048/2012 and 4622/2019 are in effect. This analysis seeks to address the question of the extent to which the legislative practices in Greece align with the institutional framework set out in the respective enacted laws. These indicators are grouped into five core dimensions of regulatory quality: (i) regulatory text, (ii) public consultation, (iii) impact assessment, (iv) parliamentary process, and (v) law activation.

In order to answer our second research question on the effect of Law 4622/2019 on the law-making process and legislative output indicators, we employ a bivariate approach on 15 measurements of better regulation in the eras before and after the law enactment. To identify any relationships between our variables, we employed the Mann–Whitney test as a non-parametric alternative equivalent of the *t*-test, since our data do not follow the normal distribution, a prerequisite for the *t*-test.² Thus, the measurements are first ordered from lowest to highest value and then the tied values are given the average rank. Therefore, we formulate the following two research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 0. *There is no statistically significant difference in the average rank of the selected better regulation indicators before and after the implementation of Law 4622/2019.*

Hypothesis 1. *There is a statistically significant difference in the average rank of the selected better regulation indicators before and after the implementation of Law 4622/2019.*

In our analysis, we compare the average rank in 15 better regulation indicators to observe if statistically significant differences occur, which we interpret as a sign of effect after the law enactment. Our research design is based on a before–after

comparison, and the changes could be towards both an improvement or a deterioration in the law-making process and output.

5.1 | Data and Case Selection

To conduct our analysis, we employ the dataset underpinning the Center for Liberal Studies—Markos Dragoumis (KEFiM), measuring regulatory quality for a composite indicator (European Commission 2024; Karkatsoulis et al. 2023; Saravakos et al. 2022). The dataset provides measurements for 489 primary laws,³ covering three government terms from January 2015 to April 2023. This dataset consists of manual data collection of all primary laws voted in the Greek parliament in this period from official sources such as the Government Gazette, the website of parliament, the OpenGov platform on public consultations, and data on the activation of subordinate regulation from the legal information database NOMOS.⁴

5.2 | Indicators Measuring Better Regulation Principles

Our analysis focuses on key better regulation guidelines and regulatory quality prerequisites we described earlier and reflects the degree to which primary laws in Greece align with the institutional framework of the law-making process. We have selected 26 indicators across five main areas of the law-making process, which we believe capture a wide range of better regulation and regulatory quality aspects presented before. However, this selection is not a vis-a-vis comparison, but an attempt to proxy the concepts of better regulation by the selected variables.

Almost 60% of them measure scale measuring averages such as the average number of pages in the laws, while the rest 40% is about percentages of law with specific characteristics, such as the percentage of laws in a given year regulating only one issue. The law-making/regulatory quality areas, the indicators and their connection with the institutional framework are as follows:

5.2.1 | Regulatory Text

Laws should focus on a single function of government,⁵ so as to ensure clarity and specificity (OECD 2002; Xanthaki 2010; Mousmouti 2012). Whether a law regulates a single function of government or has a wide range of unrelated topics, affects its interpretability and enforceability.⁶ The provision of Article 74 of the Greek Constitution, explicitly addressed in Law 4622/2019 and the Manual of Legislative Methodology (2020), emphasize the need for issue consistency and legislative coherence.⁷ The measurements of the length of the law, such as pages and number of articles, should ideally be concise to avoid complexity in legal codification, while ensuring comprehensiveness. Also, the inclusion of “other provisions” in the title often indicates a lack of specificity, by introducing other provisions with no direct relevancy with the main issue on the title, potentially complicating the law's application. Therefore,

this proxy operates as indicator of regulatory sprawl or late-stage insertions, which are often unrelated to the law's original intent and can violate best practices for legal drafting (Mader 2001; Fitsilis and Theodorakopoulos 2024).

5.2.2 | Public Consultation

Indicators that measure the existence of a wide, external, open, and public consultation process, as well as its duration can offer meaningful insights into the depth of stakeholder engagement and the inclusivity of the consultation process. Whether a law was available for an open consultation process prior to its parliamentary submission reflects baseline compliance with procedural obligations. This proxy aligns directly with Article 6 of Law 4048/2012, Article 66 of Law 4622/2019, and the Manual of Legislative Methodology (2020), as all of them require public consultation for all primary legislation. The percentage of the law's articles that were open to public consultation proxies the extent provisions are hidden during the legislative cycle, reflecting the transparency of the process. According to the Manual, consultations should last a minimum of 14 days, extendable or reduced by ministerial discretion. The current Manual of Legislative Methodology (2020) dictates that open and public consultations shall be held for all primary laws and last for 14 days (and by Minister's decisions, this can be shortened or extended by a week), accompanied by an explanatory report. This proxy operates as a sign of whether stakeholders are given adequate opportunity to respond.

5.2.3 | Impact Assessment

A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) accompanies quality legislation, providing a structured evaluation of the potential effects of the law. This basic compliance proxy operates as procedural check of a formal impact assessment requirement, as mandated by both 4048/2012 (Article 7) and the Law 4622/2019 (Article 62), and the Manual of Legislative Methodology (2020) for all primary legislation. RIA should not only be present but should also signaling the institutionalization of ex-ante evaluation procedures, by informing for simplified procedures, which indicate efforts towards reducing the bureaucratic burden and enhancing operational efficiency. These practices reflect efforts to improve regulatory efficiency and are consistent with EU recommendations on smart regulation and administrative burden reduction (Martin et al. 2014). Along with the simplification, RIA should also engage in evidence-based policymaking, by quantifying expected economic, social, or administrative impacts.

5.2.4 | Parliamentary Process

In the parliamentary process the use of ordinary parliamentary procedures, in which committees, debates, and stakeholder input are fully enabled, reflects adherence to deliberative law-making and reflects a substantial aspect of legislative quality. The frequent use of emergency or expedited procedures, which took place excessively during the Greek crisis, usually indicates reduced legislative scrutiny and weaker procedural safeguards. Also, the volume, timing, and relevance of legislative

amendments are critical indicators of process quality and a continuous challenge in the Greek regulatory framework. A high number of amendments, in particular unrelated to the core subject matter, signal incoherence, opportunism, or weak initial drafting and can undermine legal certainty, leading to violations of the constitution and procedural norms, such as Article 74 of the Greek Constitution and Articles 87–88 of the Parliament's Standing Orders. The average number of amendments submitted 1 day before or on the day of voting is a proxy for legislative opacity and lack of deliberation, as last-minute amendments bypass scrutiny, preventing proper evaluation and public debate. The Manual of Legislative Methodology (2020) reiterates the constitutional provisions regarding amendments, emphasizing their relevance and timely submission. The repetition of these rules in all institutional frameworks can be perceived as an effort to address longstanding challenges of incoherence, opacity, and executive-driven legislative overload.

5.2.5 | Law Activation

The number of authorizations granted for subordinate regulation (Presidential Decrees and Ministerial Decisions) is used as a proxy to capture the quality of the legislative strategy for implementation. Excessive or vague authorizations may indicate weak legislative planning or over-delegation to the executive, which can risk regulatory fragmentation and ambiguity. The activation rate of those authorizations, within the time limit of 6 months, is a direct measure of institutional follow-through in a sensible period of time. A low activation rate suggests either administrative inefficiency or symbolic lawmaking, that is, laws are enacted for political signaling without serious intent to implement them.

Table 1 summarizes the 5 areas and 26 indicators of law-making process and regulatory quality chosen and provides a brief description of their *rationale* and what they measure. Of these, 15 indicators were suitable for statistical comparison before and after the enactment of Law 4622/2019, as they are measured on a scale (e.g., average number of pages), and were therefore included in the Mann–Whitney tests. The remaining indicators are reported descriptively due to distributional constraints.

This selection of indicators is necessarily partial. Because few prior studies have attempted to measure the better regulation framework with quantitative data, indicator availability is itself a binding constraint, and the chosen variables function as proxies rather than direct measures. Complementary indicators that we could not operationalize—language complexity and structural clarity of the regulatory text; whether and how consultation comments are incorporated; the qualitative depth of RIA impact estimates; the share of subordinate regulation eventually activated—would enrich the assessment in future work. We therefore treat our indicator set as a first empirical step rather than an exhaustive measurement instrument.

6 | Results

This section presents the empirical results, organized around five dimensions of regulatory quality: legislative volume and

TABLE 1 | Better regulation dimensions, indicators, and conceptual rationale.

Area	Indicator	Rationale	Measurement
The regulatory text	Does the law regulate issues that fall into only one function of government?	The law should focus on a single function of government to maintain clarity and specificity.	Percentage of laws regulating only one function of government
	Number of pages of the law	Ideally, laws should be concise. The number of pages can indicate complexity and potential overregulation.	Number of pages
	Number of articles in the law	The quantity of articles should be minimal to avoid complexity and enhance readability.	Number of articles
	Are “other provisions” mentioned in the title?	Mentions of “other provisions” may indicate that the law addresses multiple unrelated issues, reducing specificity.	Percentage of laws with “other provisions” mentioned in the title
	How many laws and Presidential Decrees in force from 0 to 3 years does it amend?	Frequent amendments of recent laws may suggest instability in the legal framework or rushed legislation.	Number of laws and Presidential Decrees
	Are all the amended provisions explicitly and collectively mentioned in one article or table?	Clarity in amended provisions enhance structure and clarity and ensures transparency about changes and helps maintain legal coherence.	Percentage of laws with amended provisions explicitly and collectively mentioned in one article or table

(Continues)

TABLE 1 | (Continued)

Area	Indicator	Rationale	Measurement
Public consultation	Was there external/non-parliamentary consultation on the law?	Consultation beyond parliament can enhance transparency and public engagement.	Percentage of laws available for external/non-parliamentary consultation
	How many days did the external/non-parliamentary consultation on the law last?	The duration of consultations reflects the depth of engagement and opportunities for meaningful input.	Number of days the external/non-parliamentary consultation on the law lasted
	What percentage of the articles that the law finally had was included in the public consultation?	This percentage shows the extent of public involvement and transparency during the drafting process.	Average percentage of the articles that the law finally had included in the public consultation
Impact assessment	Is the law accompanied in the public consultation by a document that justifies the regulation and includes impacts? (either explanatory report or impact assessment report)	Accompanying documents can provide crucial context and rationale, supporting a transparent law-making process.	Percentage of laws accompanied in the public consultation by a document that justifies the regulation and includes impacts
	Is the law accompanied by a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) report in the Parliament?	An RIA report enhances transparency and allows for a more informed debate about the law's implications.	Percentage of laws accompanied by a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) report in the Parliament
	In how many areas of the Regulatory Impact Assessment are quantitative data on the impacts of the regulation on society, economy, environment, and state given?	Quantitative data in RIAs illustrate the concrete impacts of the law, enhancing understanding and accountability.	Average percentage of the total 17 fields where any kind of quantitative data on the impacts of the regulation on society, economy, environment, and state were given
	Does the Regulatory Impact Assessment contain simplification of procedures?	Procedure simplifications in the RIA indicate efforts to reduce bureaucratic burden and increase efficiency.	Percentage of laws for which Impact Assessment contain simplification of procedures
	Has the measurement of administrative burdens been done in the Regulatory Impact Assessment?	Measuring administrative burdens is crucial for assessing the practical implications of the law.	Percentage of laws for which Impact Assessment contain measurement of administrative burdens

(Continues)

TABLE 1 | (Continued)

Area	Indicator	Rationale	Measurement
Parliamentary process	What was the procedure by which the law was voted?	The voting procedure can affect the depth of discussion and the inclusivity of the legislative process.	Percentage of laws voted by ordinary process, emergency process, and extra emergency process
	How many amendments were voted?	A low number of amendments may indicate a well-considered and stable legislative proposal.	Number of amendments voted in each law
	What is the total number of articles in the amendments voted?	The article count per amendment can indicate the scope and impact of changes.	Number of articles in the amendments voted in each law
	What percentage of the amendments that were voted were related to the main content of the law?	Amendments closely related to the main content suggest coherence in the legislative process.	Percentage of amendments related to the main content of the law
	How many of the amendments that were voted were submitted 1 day before the vote or on the same day as the vote?	Late amendments may indicate rushed decisions or lack of thorough discussion.	Number of the amendments that were voted were submitted 1 day before the vote or on the same day as the vote
	Was there a hearing of social partners during the discussion of the bill in the parliamentary committees?	Hearings can provide crucial insights and stakeholder perspectives, enriching the legislative debate.	Percentage of laws for which a hearing of social partners during the discussion of the bill in the parliamentary committees took place
	How many social partners participated in the hearings in the parliamentary committees?	The number of participants in hearings can indicate the breadth of consultation and inclusivity.	Number social partners participated in the hearings in the parliamentary committees
	How long (minutes) on average did each social partner's hearing last?	The duration of hearings can reflect the depth of engagement and the opportunity for detailed discussion.	Average minutes each social partner's hearing lasted

(Continues)

TABLE 1 | (Continued)

Area	Indicator	Rationale	Measurement
Law activation	How many authorizations for the issuance of Presidential Decrees does it provide?	The number of authorizations for decrees indicates the scope of delegated powers, which should be used judiciously.	Number of authorizations for the issuance of Presidential Decrees given in the law
	What percentage of authorizations for Presidential Decrees have been activated?	High activation rates can suggest that the law is effective and that the decrees are necessary.	Percentage of authorizations for Presidential Decrees provided in the law that were activated within 6 months of its publication.
	How many authorizations for Ministerial Decisions does it provide?	Ministerial decisions often handle specifics; their prompt activation can indicate a well-planned legislative process.	Number of authorizations for the issuance of Ministerial Decisions given in the law
	What percentage of authorizations for Ministerial Decisions have been activated within 6 months from the publication of the law?	A high activation rate for ministerial decisions suggests effectiveness and a proactive approach in law enforcement.	Percentage of authorizations for Ministerial Decisions provided in the law that were activated within 6 months of its publication.

Source: Saravakos et al. (2022). Own elaboration.

coherence, public consultation practices, impact assessment quality, parliamentary procedure, and law activation. The emphasis here is on structural patterns that reveal whether reforms in the better regulation framework led to substantive improvements or primarily procedural alignment.

The results show a mixed trajectory. While formal compliance mechanisms seem to have strengthened, indicators related to legislative complexity, amendment practices, and executive delegation suggest persistent structural weaknesses. The legislative output over the period under study indicates a clear upward trend in volume and structural complexity. Figure 1 shows that in 2021 alone, primary legislation amounted to 7785 pages and more than 5000 articles. While legislative expansion may partly reflect crisis management and policy backlog due to the COVID-19 pandemic urgent conditions, the Greek literature has repeatedly identified high legislative inflation and regulatory density as structural features associated with legal fragmentation and implementation difficulties (OECD 2012; Sotiropoulos and Christopoulos 2017, 14–15; Karkatsoulis et al. 2023).

It is crucial to highlight that the volume of legislation introduced from external sources, such as EU legislation, accounts for an average of 22% of domestic primary legislation adopted during the period of the study (measured as the percentage of enacted primary laws incorporating or transposing EU legal acts).

Figure 2 shows the percentage of laws incorporating EU legislation. The declining trend and the relatively low average observed during the period under study suggest that EU transposition does not constitute the main driver of the legislative expansion identified above. However, it should also be noted that the timing and bundling of EU transposition measures rely on governmental discretion, due to the absence of a fully centralized transposition management mechanism by the EU. Therefore, governments may delay incorporation or consolidate multiple EU obligations into single legislative acts, thereby influencing the observable volume and distribution of EU-related legislation domestically.

EU transposition is also frequently bundled with unrelated domestic provisions, indicating that the inclusion of irrelevant clauses—a violation of the Constitution—is a horizontal practice that affects both domestic and transposing legislation (an illustrative case is presented in Appendix A.2 in Supporting Information).

6.1 | Indicators Measuring the Quality of the Regulatory Text

The first six better regulation indicators in our analysis pertain to the structure and quality of the regulatory text. Although Law 4048/2012, Law 4622/2019, and the Manual of Legislative Methodology stipulate that legislation should be short, clear, and specific, this is often not the case in the Greek law-making process. Although new drafting requirements have been put into force, the legislative output exhibits an increasing structural complexity and thematic dispersion. Figure 3 shows that the

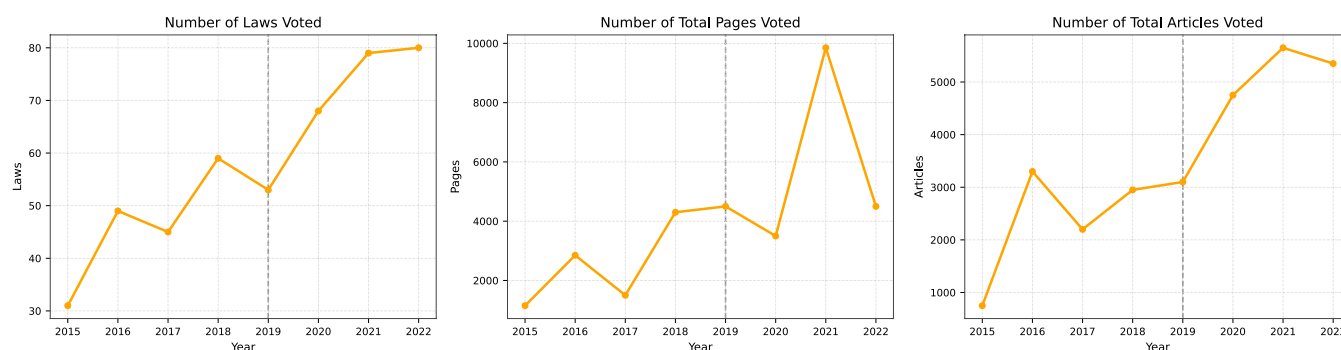


FIGURE 1 | Legislative output and structural complexity of primary laws (2015–2022). The vertical dashed line indicates the enactment of Law 4622/2019. Year 2023 is excluded because data are available only until April. International agreements are excluded.

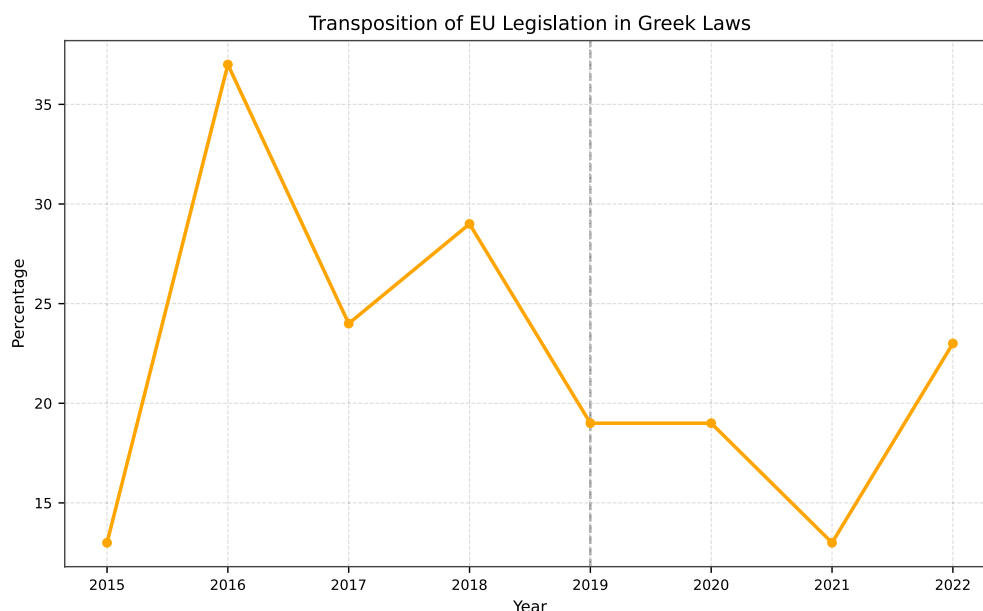


FIGURE 2 | Share of primary laws incorporating EU Legislation (2015–2022). The vertical dashed line indicates the enactment of Law 4622/2019. Percentages are calculated as the share of primary laws incorporating or transposing EU legal acts.

percentage of laws regulating only one function of government reached 35%–50% between 2018 and 2021, followed by a significant declining trend. This is more evident from the rise in the percentage of laws with “other provisions” in the title since 2021, which remains high for most of the period from 2016 to 2023. In terms of length, the laws are increasing both in pages and articles, though the former shows more fluctuations. Regarding the content, since 2019 there has been an increase in laws and Presidential Decrees being amended that have only been in force for 0–3 years. This suggests that no *ex-post* evaluation has been conducted, and the same government frequently amends laws it has itself enacted. Despite the introduction of a codification table with all amended provisions starting in 2019, this trend has also declined.

6.2 | Indicators Measuring the Quality of Public Consultation

Open public consultation indicators have improved over the years, although they started low in 2015, when data first became available. As shown in Figure 4 (top-left panel), the share of laws

undergoing external consultation increases markedly after 2019. However, the intensity of consultation, measured by the share of articles included (top-right panel), exhibits greater volatility. In the best case, in 2020, only 60% of the final articles, on average, were available for public consultation, meaning that almost half of the law was not. The increase in supporting documents during public consultations demonstrates good practice in providing available information and justification for the provisions of the law, even though not all provisions are covered.

6.3 | Indicators Measuring the Quality of Impact Assessment

Although impact assessment has become a requirement in the Greek law-making process and is typically included with almost every law, the quality of its content is quite poor. Figure 5 shows the divergence between procedural compliance and substantive analytical depth: while the share of laws accompanied by an RIA increases steadily (top-left panel), the proportion of RIA areas supported by quantitative data declines markedly after 2020 (top-middle panel). On the other hand, the percentage of

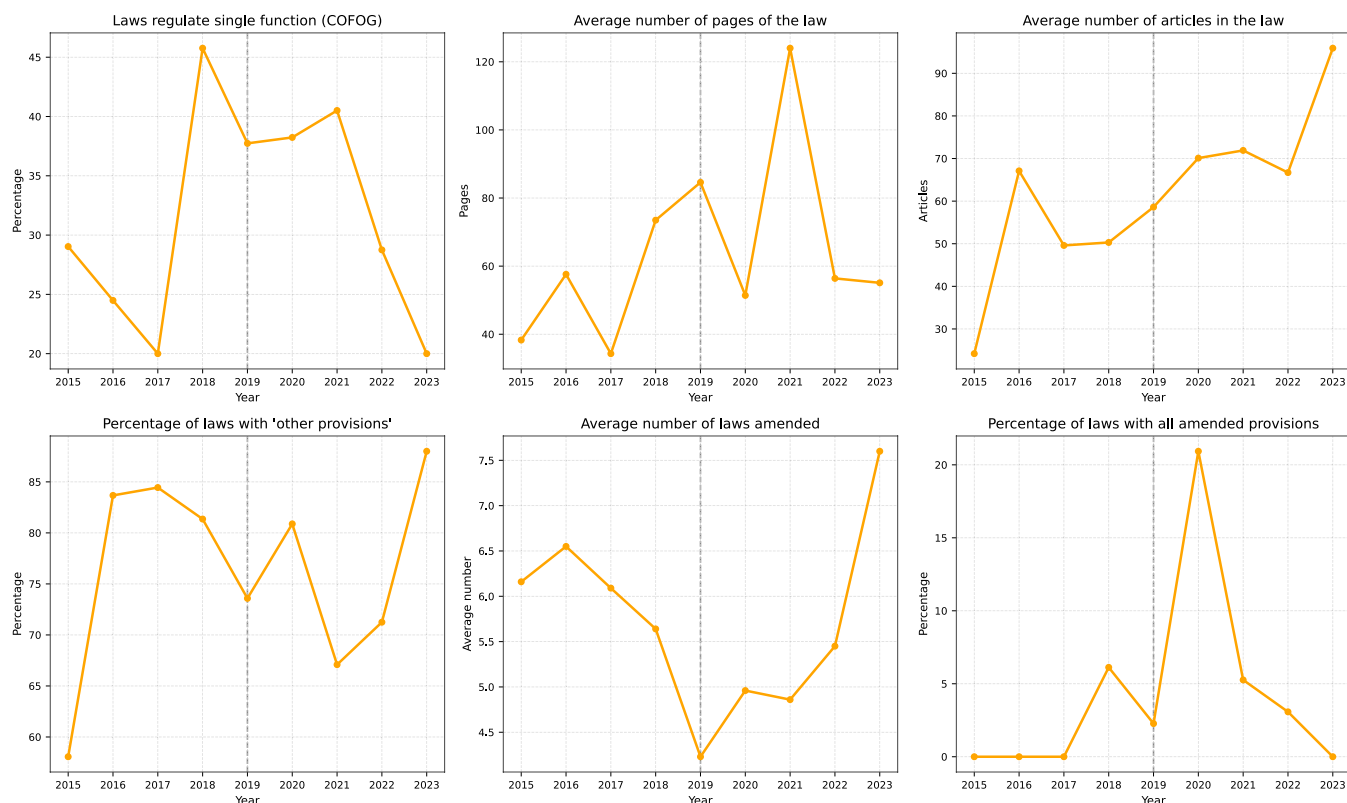


FIGURE 3 | Structural characteristics and amendment practices of primary laws (2015–2023). The vertical dashed line indicates the enactment of Law 4622/2019. Data for 2023 refer to the period January–April only.

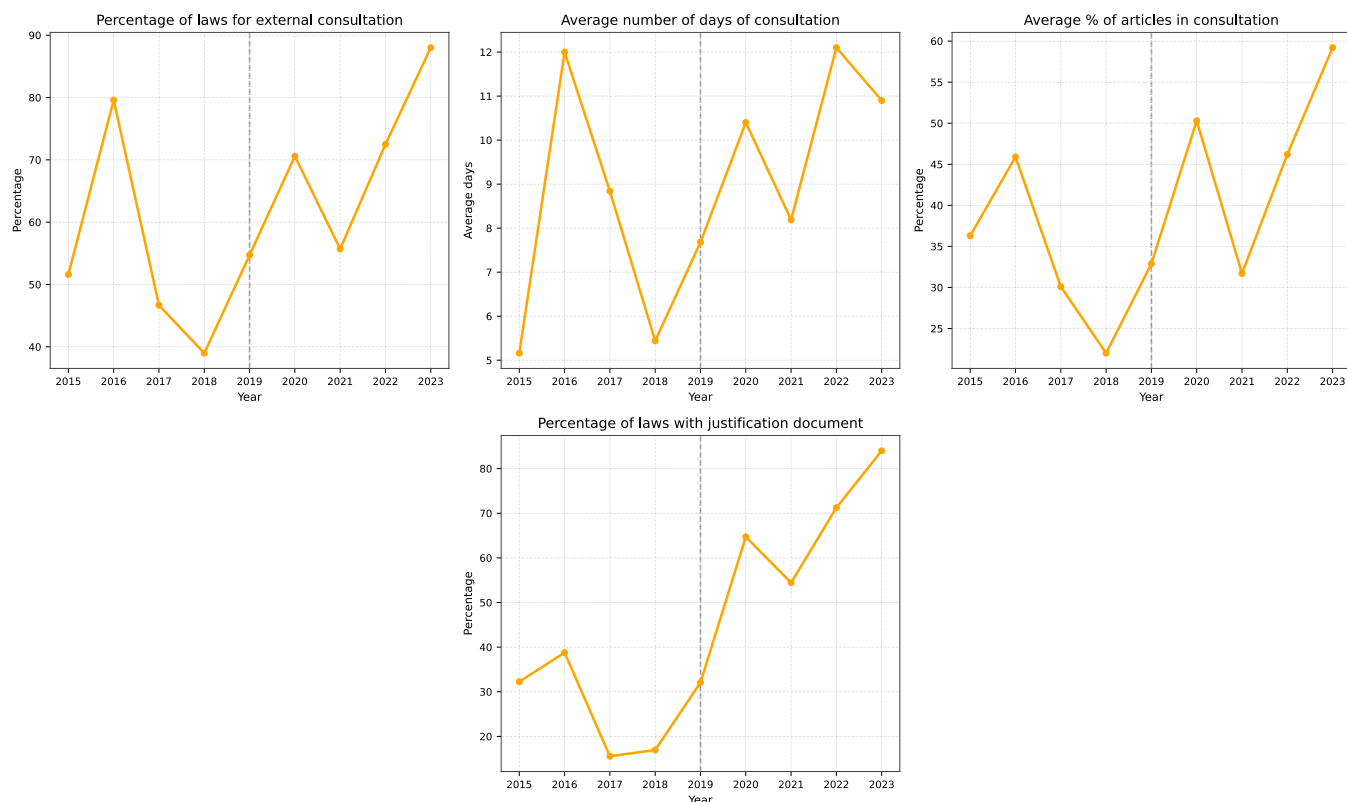


FIGURE 4 | Public consultation compliance and intensity (2015–2023). The vertical dashed line indicates the enactment of Law 4622/2019. Data for 2023 refer to January–April only.

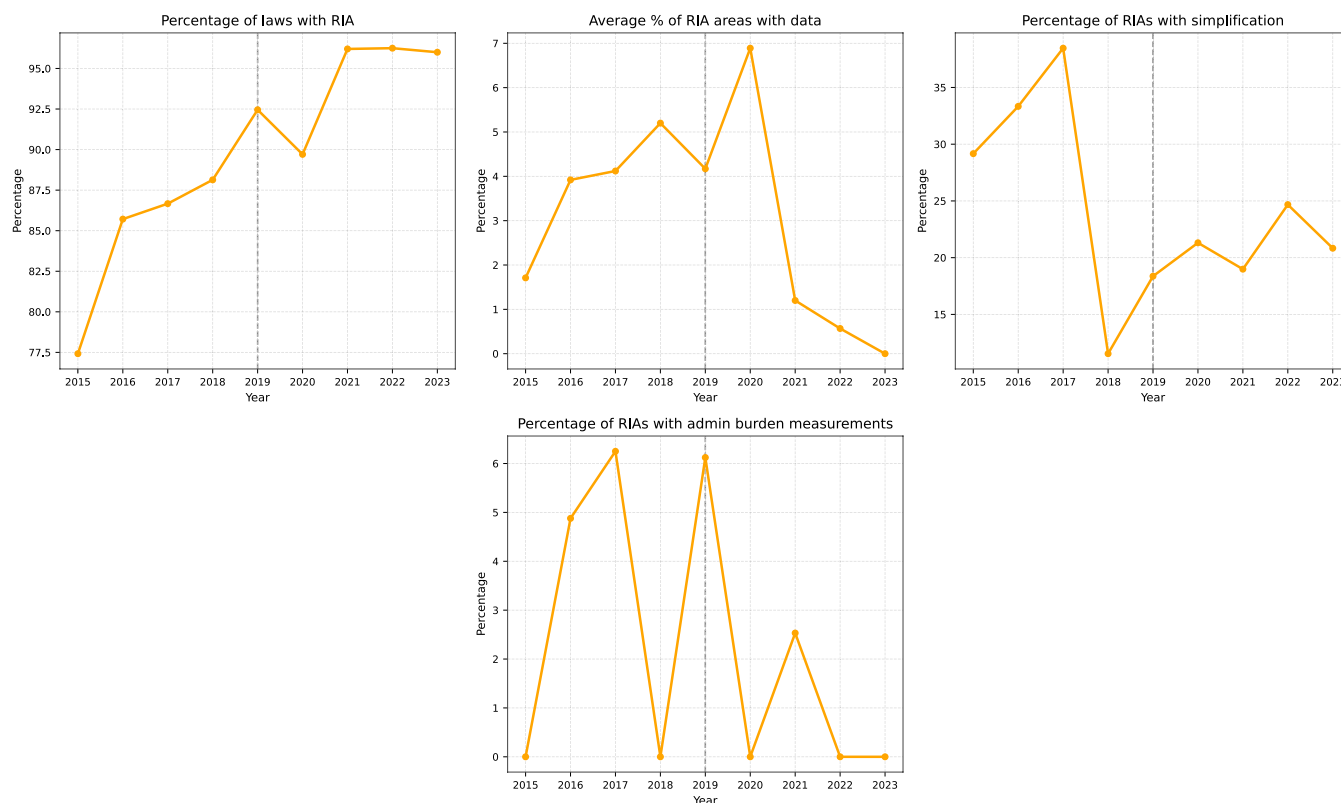


FIGURE 5 | Presence and substantive content of Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs), 2015–2023. The vertical dashed line indicates the enactment of Law 4622/2019. Data for 2023 refer to January–April only.

RIAs that include simplification of procedures has improved, while the percentage addressing the measurement of administrative burdens (a field that also requires quantification and data) remains quite low.

6.4 | Indicators Measuring the Quality of Parliamentary Process

In the parliamentary process, which is critical for the rule of law and respect for constitutional clauses and the legal framework, some indicators seem to improve. Figure 6 reveals a dual dynamic. While the share of laws adopted through the ordinary legislative procedure approaches 100% after 2019 (top-left panel), when it comes to amendments, the average number of amendments voted on has been decreasing since 2017, with a sharp decline since 2019. However, this decrease is only due to the rising number of articles in amendments. In fact, the average number of total articles in amendments has increased, worsening the issue. Amendments often include multiple unrelated articles, which can only be voted on as a whole. Therefore, Members of Parliament can only vote for or against all unrelated articles, even if they agree with some policies and oppose others. As a result, the average number of amendments related to the main subject of the law has been decreasing, a trend that started in 2017. This practice violates constitutional clauses in Article 74 and Article 88 of the Parliament's Standing Orders. Members of Parliament tend to accept irrelevant amendments under pressure from the government.

In terms of last-minute amendments, the average number of amendments submitted 1 day before or on the same day as the vote has increased since 2018, with a steep rise during the COVID-19 period (2020–2021). The combination of irrelevant amendments, numerous articles, and last-minute submissions represents a critical deterioration in the indicators measuring the quality of the parliamentary process.

Regarding social partners' hearings in parliament, the percentage of laws where stakeholders are heard has significantly increased, and the average minutes given to each of them have also increased (though still low in absolute terms, at around 4–5 min each). However, the number of stakeholders invited has been decreasing since 2019.

6.5 | Indicators Measuring the Law Activation

Figure 7 shows the expansion of delegated rulemaking. The average number of authorizations for Ministerial Decisions increases substantially after 2019 (bottom-left panel), while activation rates display volatility (bottom-right panel). Although follow-through improves in certain years, the structural reliance on delegated acts remains high.

This extensive use of authorizations for Ministerial Decisions—84% of the laws in 2015–2023 grant at least one such authorization, with some granting over 100—indicates a high degree of delegated rulemaking embedded within primary legislation. While delegation is not inherently a problem, as it may

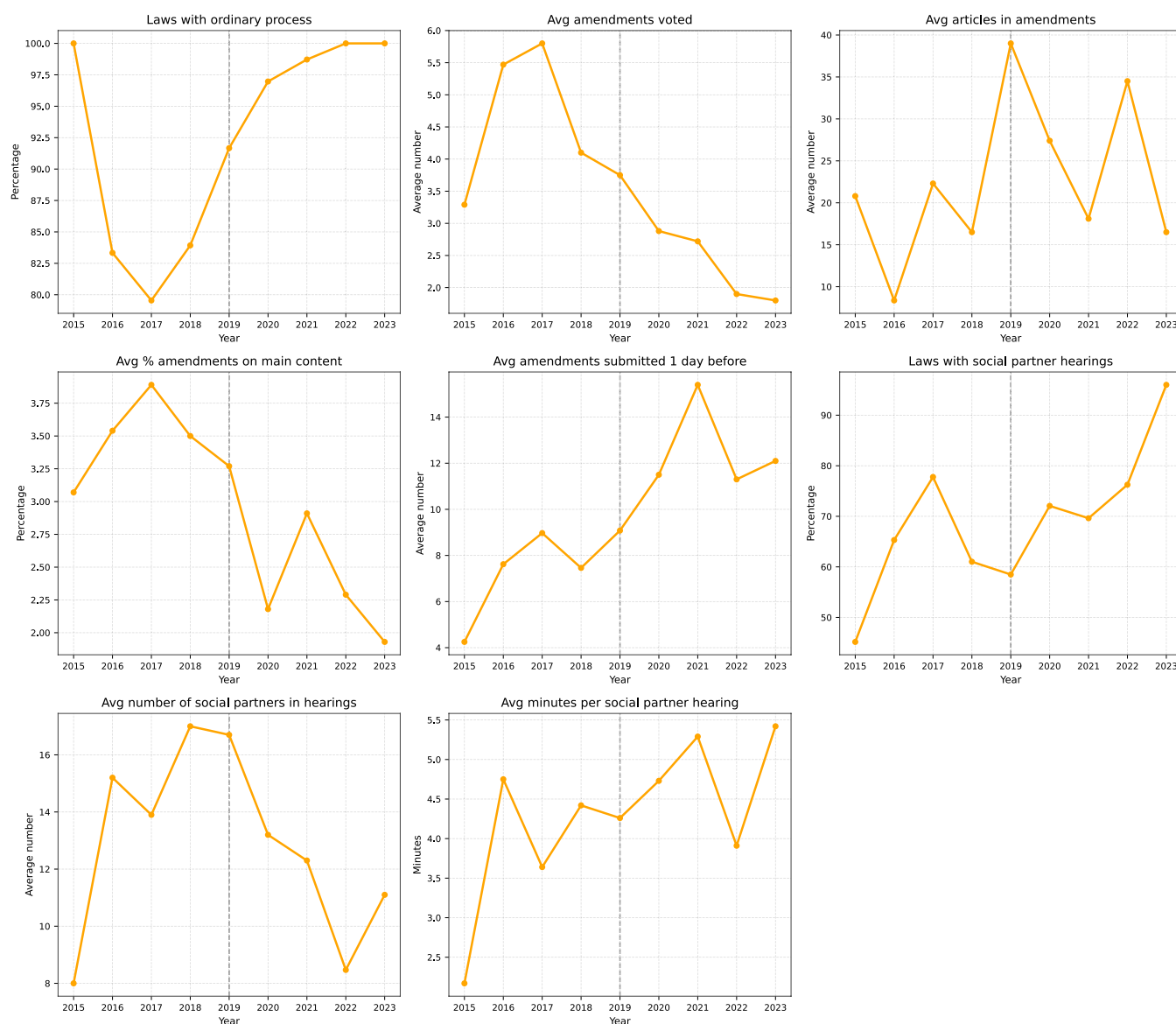


FIGURE 6 | Parliamentary procedure, amendment practices, and Deliberative Activity (2015–2023). The vertical dashed line indicates the enactment of Law 4622/2019. Data for 2023 refer to January–April only.

enhance flexibility and administrative efficiency, its systematic and expansive use raises structural concerns. In cases when the parliamentary majority, usually controlled by the governing party, routinely grants broad and numerous regulatory powers to (the party) ministers, it effectively shifts substantive norm-setting from the legislature to the executive.

The low activation rates in authorizations may be attributed either to administrative ineptitude or to the symbolic, nominal nature of the law, where the legislator proclaims an ideological stance without the intent of practical enforcement. This issue is further exacerbated by the lack of effective tools for implementing the law. The disparity in the number of authorizations for the two types of regulations, Presidential Decrees and Ministerial Decisions, can be explained by their relative ease of issuance. Issuing a Presidential Decree involves a particularly complex and cumbersome procedure, further complicated by the independence of the Council of State, which does not simply follow the recommendations of the executive.

6.6 | The Effect of Law 4622/2019 on Better Regulation Indicators

Since the introduction of the new law on better regulation in 2019, a lot of better regulation practices seem to have changed. Some trends point to a better and some others to worse regulation, yet the answer to if this change is related to the new framework or if the same practices just happened also before to the same extent should be addressed.

The Mann–Whitney test we employed on 15 better regulation indicators in our dataset yielded statistically significant changes in better regulation indicators before and after the implementation of Law 4622/2019.

The Mann–Whitney *U* Test results (Table S2) show significant differences before and after the enactment of Law 4622/2019. These results suggest that we should reject the Hypothesis 0 and accept the Hypothesis 1, indicating that there is a statistically

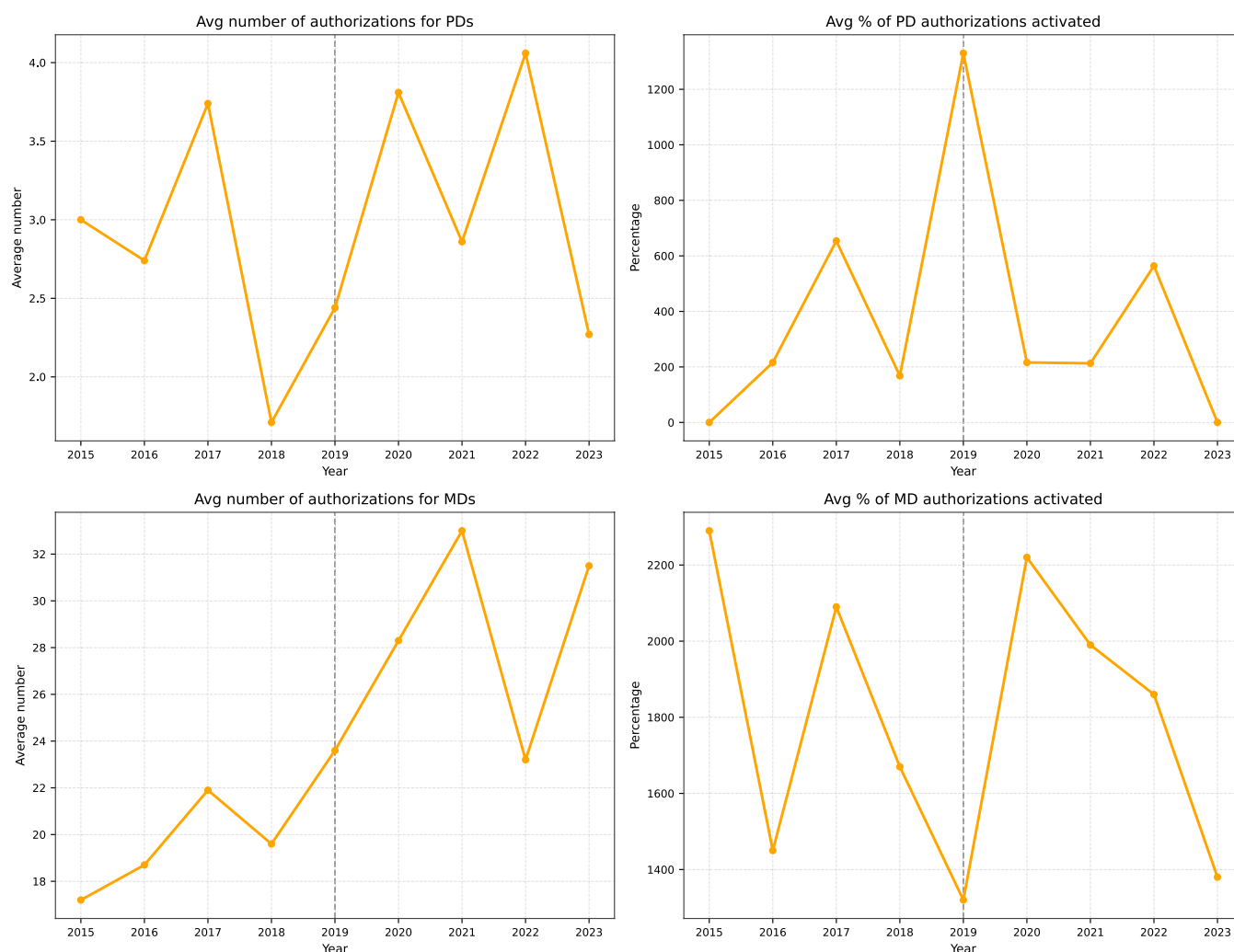


FIGURE 7 | Delegated rulemaking and activation of Presidential Decrees and Ministerial Decisions (2015–2023). PDs stands for Presidential Decrees and MDs stands for Ministerial Decisions. The vertical dashed line indicates the enactment of Law 4622/2019. Data for 2023 refer to January–April only.

significant difference in better regulation indicators before and after the enactment of Law 4622/2019. The number of pages in the law (statistic: 25,432; $p=0.012$) and the number of articles in the law (statistic: 24,602; $p=0.002$) both showed significant variability. Additionally, the duration of external/non-parliamentary consultations (statistic: 24,997; $p=0.004$) reflected a different level of engagement outside traditional parliamentary debates. The inclusion of articles in public consultations was also notable (statistic: 25,134; $p=0.006$), and the same applies to the need for quantitative data in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (statistic: 16,936; $p<0.001$; statistic: 24,567; $p=0.002$). The number of amendments voted with a law and the number of articles in those amendments changed significantly (statistic: 21,000; $p<0.001$), as did the urgency of submitting amendments just before or on the day of voting (statistic: 7038; $p=0.001$). The number of social partners participating in hearings was significantly notable (statistic: 15,058; $p=0.007$), as well as the minutes each social partner's hearing lasted (statistic: 12,630; $p<0.001$). Finally, the percentage of authorizations for Ministerial Decisions activated within 6 months also showed significant change (statistic: 18,000; $p=0.023$).

In terms of the size and the direction of the changes, Figures 8 and 9 provide a consolidated overview of reform effects across all 15 indicators. Significant improvements are observed in procedural alignment indicators, while substantive indicators show limited or negative shifts. Figure 8 illustrates the mean ranks for better regulation indicators, comparing values before and after the implementation of Law 4622/2019.

Figure 9 displays the effect sizes (rank biserial correlations) and their confidence intervals for each better regulation indicator. The results show that the reform generated moderate positive effects in procedural indicators (e.g., ordinary procedure use, social partner hearings), while substantive indicators such as RIA quantitative depth display small or negligible effect sizes. The magnitude of change is therefore uneven across dimensions.

Since the enactment of Law 4622/2019, there have been statistically significant improvements in both the stages of public and parliamentary consultation. The number of days for external/non-parliamentary consultation increased, as did the percentage

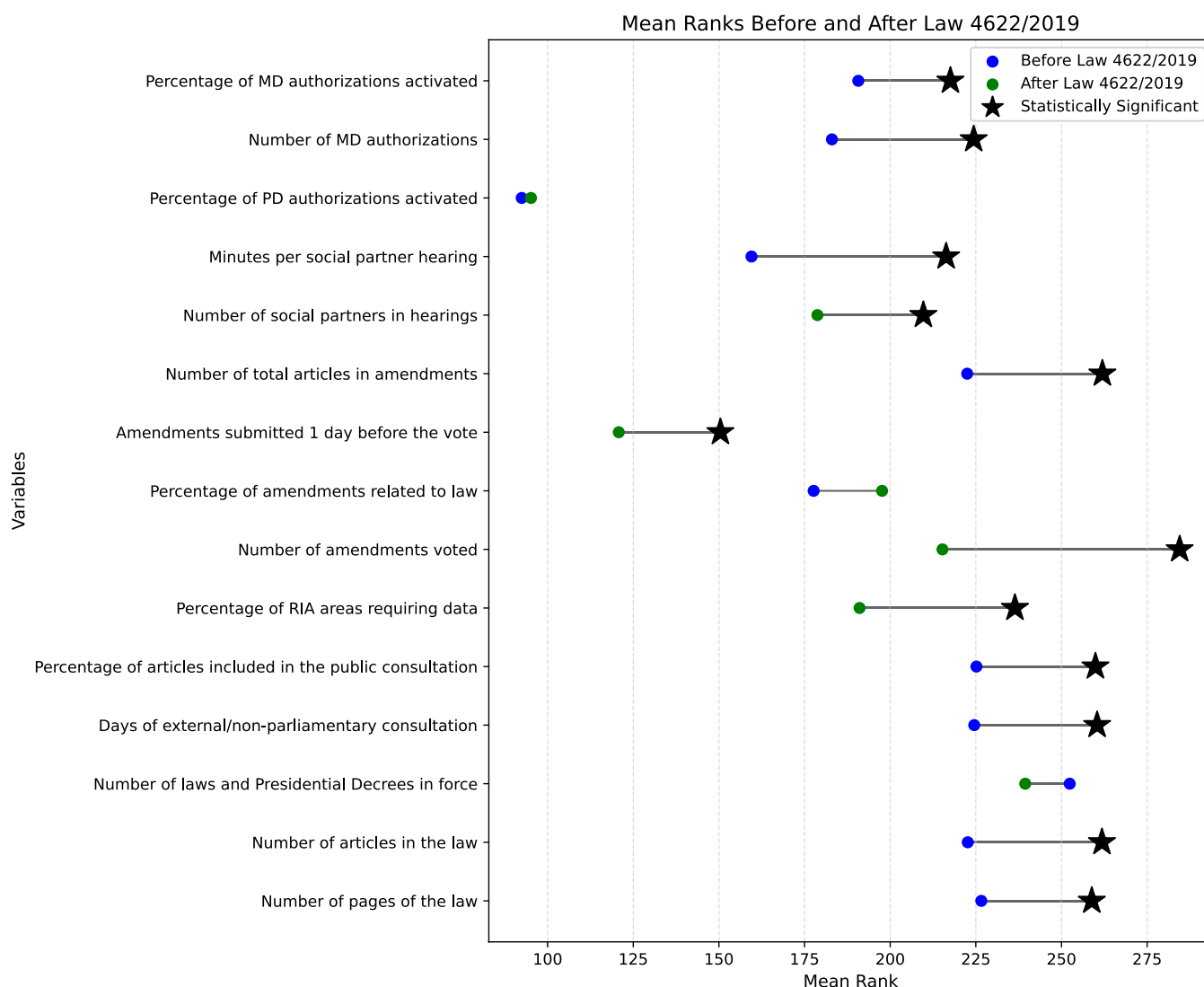


FIGURE 8 | Pre- and post-reform comparison of better regulation indicators (mean ranks, Mann-Whitney U test). Blue markers indicate mean ranks for laws enacted before Law 4622/2019, and green markers for laws enacted after its entry into force (July 2019); laws of 2019 are assigned to each period according to their enactment date relative to the law. Gray lines connect pre- and post-reform values for each indicator. Black asterisks denote statistically significant differences at $p < 0.05$.

of articles included in consultation. In more minutes were allocated for each social partner's hearing, despite fewer stakeholders were invited; these changes indicate a higher level of public and stakeholder engagement in the legislative process and an improvement in open consultation practices. The number of amendments voted in the parliament and the submission of last-minute amendments in the laws has reduced significantly. The activation rates for subordinate legislation, the ones related to Ministerial Decisions, also increased. However, the change of government in July 2019 left some authorizations for Ministerial Decisions of the previous government inactivated due to shifts in policy.

On the other hand, after the implementation of Law 4622/2019, there were statistically significant changes pointing to a decline in regulatory quality. The number of pages and articles in laws increased, indicating a higher legislative volume, which is also reflected in the growing number of laws passed each year. Although legislative length does not directly imply lower regulatory quality, given that complex policy problems may require

detailed regulation, the statistically significant trend of a sustained expansion in statutory size seems to signal a trajectory of deliberately increased regulatory volume and structural complexity rather than regulatory consolidation.

The percentage of areas in the RIA requiring quantitative data dropped to zero, as the new template introduced in August 2020 no longer mandates such data. Additionally, the total number of articles in the amendments passed significantly increased, suggesting that any reduction in the number of amendments or last-minute submissions is superficial and does not represent real improvement. The number of authorizations for the issuance of Ministerial Decisions also rose, indicating that the legislative process remains heavily influenced by the executive branch, further highlighting the power imbalance between a strong executive and a weakened legislature.

The enactment of Law 4622/2019 did not affect the number of laws and Presidential Decrees in force from 0 to 3 years that were amended, the percentage of amendments passed relating

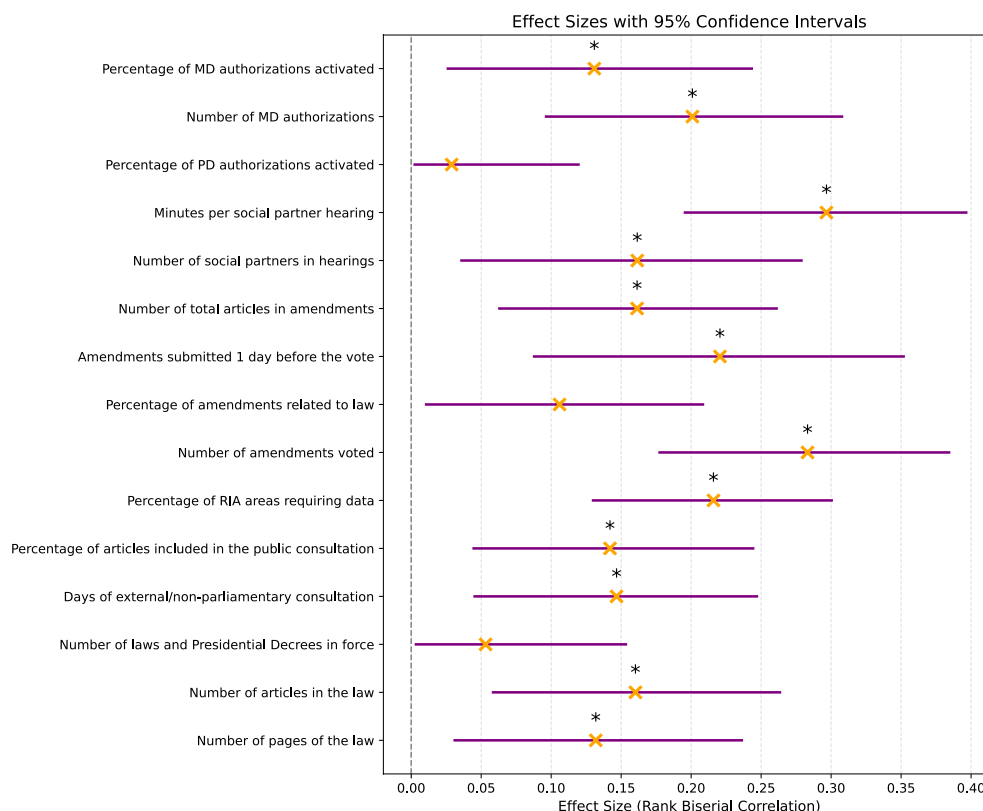


FIGURE 9 | Effect sizes of reform (rank-biserial correlations with 95% confidence intervals). Points represent rank-biserial correlations comparing laws enacted before and after Law 4622/2019 (July 2019). Horizontal lines indicate 95% confidence intervals. Asterisks denote statistically significant differences (confidence intervals not crossing zero). The vertical dashed line at zero indicates no difference between periods. Positive values indicate higher post-reform ranks.

to laws, or the percentage of authorizations for Presidential Decrees activated within 6 months. These lack of effects suggest that no improvements were made in these areas, despite the law's provisions for better codification schemes, compliance with the Constitution regarding the main issue of the law amendments, and improvements in law implementation and *ex-post* analysis.

7 | Discussion: Towards a Procedural Alignment or Substantive Reforms?

Our study documents an uneven trajectory in Greek Better Regulation since 2015. On the improvement side, open consultations cover more laws and more articles, supporting documents are more frequent, the ordinary parliamentary procedure is now near-universal, last-minute amendments have declined, more time is allocated to stakeholder hearings, and activation rates for subordinate regulation have risen. On the deterioration side, the regulatory framework continues to expand rather than streamline; thematic coherence remains weak, with unrelated clauses persisting in most laws and recently enacted legislation frequently amended without *ex-post* review; impact assessments still lack quantified estimates and administrative-burden measurements; amendments contain a growing number of articles, often unrelated to the bill's subject; and reliance on Ministerial Decisions over Presidential Decrees points to executive overreach and a widening implementation gap. Improved activation rates do not undo this last concern: when primary laws rely extensively on ministerial rulemaking for their substantive

content, repeated conferral of broad delegated powers reinforces executive dominance rather than strengthening legislative oversight. In order to assess better the data analyzed, we can insert a useful conceptual distinction between procedural and substantive improvement/deterioration. There are indicators that measure the extent there is a procedural alignment and others that deal with substantive reforms that deal with certain practices that weaken law making in Greece. There are certain cases, documented in the existing literature (OECD 2022, 12), where there is procedural alignment, namely, laws are streamlined through a more standardized process, but not impactful reforms. Radaelli and Dunlop (2013) argue that there is a formal adoption of better regulation tools; nevertheless, they are not used substantially. Consistent with this procedural-substantive alignment, Brenner and Fazekas (2023), found that the presence of an *ex-ante* Impact Assessment is associated with greater legal stability post-enactment (namely lower likelihood of both first and repeated amendments), especially when political power or ideology shifts. The laws accompanied by Impact Assessments are, on average, amended less often, suggesting that when assessments are substantive (not merely attached), they can mitigate amendments to legislation after it has been voted. For example, laws are more frequently accompanied by all the required documents, and in some cases, even more than formally mandated. However, the fact that a law is consistently accompanied by a report does not guarantee that the report is meaningful in terms of its scope. Renda (2006) has found that the incorporation of RIAs in the regulatory framework leads to procedural compliance; nevertheless, the reports

lack substantive analytical depth. Although Law 4622/2019 in Article 62 introduced a significant innovation requiring all data concerned a proposed regulation be made available in an open and editable format (Koromilas 2024), this requirement is still not met, even in the case of data presented within Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs). Wiener and Alemanno (2011) support this finding at the international level, arguing that in many EU members RIAs' quality is poor, with little effort to report useful quantitative evidence.

In most cases, RIAs are weak in providing quantitative data to assess policy impacts, and this issue became more pronounced after 2020, when the new RIA template eliminated fields requiring quantitative estimation of the provisions' impacts, contrary to the previous manual. Nevertheless, even under the earlier manual, which did require a quantitative approach, the average percentage of RIAs containing evidence-based provisions remained very low, although it showed a slight upward trend.

Another instance of procedural alignment but practical incompetence is the number of amendments. The problem of amendments has been cited as one of the most challenging regulatory practices in the Greek framework, as they are less subject to quality control (OECD 2024). Although the number of amendments has been reduced—along with the number of last-minute amendments—the rising number of articles contained within those amendments suggests that this reduction is artificial. In fact, irrelevant and last-minute provisions are all gathered under one or two amendments, reducing the absolute number and increasing the number of articles.

Despite the challenge of amendments, the inclusion of unrelated provisions in portmanteau bills may, in some contexts, serve as a necessary regulatory tool to overcome procedural deadlock and address certain regulatory needs (Krutz 2021). However, the routine use of such practice within the Greek legislative framework suggests institutionalized reliance rather than exceptional necessity, which leads to law-making distortions. Bar-Siman-Tov (2021) shows that such omnibus legislation, or the so-called “Christmas tree bills,” is widespread and serves as a powerful tool of the executive to dominate the legislature. It is frequently criticized for weakening deliberation and undermining legislative quality, particularly when heterogeneous and complex packages are advanced through accelerated procedures. At the same time, comparative experience suggests that fully eliminating omnibus lawmaking is quite rare, even in institutionally mature settings such as the United States and France, with reforms typically aiming instead to curb its most challenging uses.

In implementation, the slight increase in the activation of Ministerial Decisions is a meaningful improvement; however, the fact that the lawmakers frequently opt to issue Ministerial Decisions instead of Presidential Decrees means the executive effectively reduces the role of the Council of State as a control mechanism. The Council is legally empowered to review Presidential Decrees, ensuring a balance of institutional checks within the polity. This preference for Ministerial Decisions over Presidential Decrees leads to an imbalance in the institutional counterweights of the Republic, undermining the structured oversight intended by law. According to Symeonidis (2018), this practice effectively substitutes legislative inertia by shifting the

burden of regulation to the executive. This shift from legislature to executive can undermine parliamentary oversight and accountability, in particular in regulatory frameworks where subordinate legislation becomes the dominant form of regulation (Rose-Ackerman 2011).

An attempt to assess the regulatory changes overall would point out that the severe challenges of the Greek law-making process do not appear to have improved, despite several attempts to introduce a more robust regulatory framework. Both the older (4048/2012) and newer (4622/2019) and the Manual of Legislative Methodology provisions on better regulation have failed to address the longstanding structural weaknesses of the Greek legislative process. Our analysis shows that, based on the indicators studied as proxies for certain aspects of better regulation, improvements are mainly linked to formal procedures rather than substantive outcomes, and some of the main regulatory problems are still persistent.

The systematic inclusion of unrelated provisions in Greek bills constitutes one of the most consistently violated constitutional safeguards on legal certainty, with the *interna corporis* doctrine and the absence of judicial review of parliamentary self-regulation removing external correction mechanisms (Vlachopoulos 2018b; Gerapetritis 2018). A fuller treatment of the Greek constitutional setting is provided in Appendix A.3 in Supporting Information. Non-enforced authorizations, such as unenforced laws that remain unused for a long time or are applied in very few cases, constitute instances of symbolic legislation (Edelman 1964). These are cases where the rule of law is exploited to create the impression that social problems are being managed by those in power. In such instances, both the law and the Parliament seem to operate more as instruments of the executive branch's will than as mechanisms of genuine democratic governance. Unfortunately, there is no systematic public discussion of this critical issue, let alone any policy measures aimed at addressing it. Galenianou (2024) identifies timely implementation shortcomings as one of the most challenging regulatory issues.

The assessment of the Greek law-making process shows that better regulation is not only a concept based on procedural safeguards, but also one that relies on a broader political culture of self-restraint, deliberation, and accountability by politicians and authorities. This latter dimension appears to be the crucial missing element in the Greek context, where parliamentary practices often reflect weak constraints on Members of Parliament and a political culture that tolerates, or even enables, excessive executive dominance. Peters (2018), emphasizes this phenomenon of political culture by arguing that well-designed procedural reforms can be halted by a culture of weak legislative scrutiny and over-reliance on executive initiative.

8 | Conclusion

In this paper, we conceptually analyze the better regulation framework in Greece, which was first introduced by Law 4048/2012 and later amended by Law 4622/2019. These legal frameworks, along with Constitutional provisions, the Standing Orders of the Hellenic Parliament, and subordinate regulations

such as Manuals on Law Drafting, constitute the state of the art in the law-making process in Greece. Despite the fact that the current better regulation framework is updated and robust, there is a lack of empirical knowledge on the extent to which the rules and best practices of better regulation are applied. Our paper addresses this gap by (a) analyzing trends in 26 better regulation indicators using a novel dataset, and (b) identifying average differences in 15 of these indicators before and after the enactment of Law 4622/2019, which amended the better regulation framework, using a non-parametric approach.

As the results of our study indicate, since 2015, the Greek law-making process has shown an improvement in areas such as public and parliamentary consultations, the provision of impact assessment reports, the voting process in Parliament (with a reduction in the use of emergency procedures), and the number of amendments voted on. However, there are also signs of deterioration, such as an increased regulatory volume (pages, articles, laws), a rise in the frequency of amending laws enacted within 0–3 years without *ex-post* analysis, low-quality impact assessments in terms of quantitative impacts, an increased volume of articles in amendments, and a higher number of amendments submitted on the same day or 1 day before the law is voted on. Additionally, fewer stakeholders are being invited to parliamentary consultations. The average number of authorizations for Ministerial Decisions has also risen sharply.

The Mann–Whitney *U* test suggests that there are significant differences following the enactment of Law 4622/2019. On the improvement side, the number of days for external consultations increased, as did the percentage of articles included in the final law. More minutes were allocated for each stakeholder's hearing, while the total number of amendments and last-minute amendments voted on decreased. Additionally, the activation rate for Ministerial Decisions improved. On the downside, the number of pages and articles in laws increased, the inclusion of quantitative data in RIAs dropped to zero, and the total number of articles in amendments significantly increased. Moreover, the number of authorizations for the issuance of Ministerial Decisions also rose.

Our findings contribute to the broader academic debate on state regulatory capacity in the EU, as the patterns observed in Greece—such as increased formal compliance but uneven substantive quality—mirror those seen in other semi-peripheral or crisis-affected EU states. The impact of recent reforms is often mediated by administrative culture, political incentives, and institutional inertia; that is, endogenous burdens of the modern regulatory state. Our distinction between procedural and substantive indicators in better regulation improvements documented is also aligned with the international literature, which points to the formal adoption of such practices; however, with limited impact in the actual regulatory output.

We should also note that our analysis is constrained by several methodological limitations, which must be considered when interpreting the results. The first limitation is that during the period under study (January 2015–April 2023), Greece was still experiencing a severe economic and fiscal crisis for the first 3 years, while the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–2021 disrupted both parliamentary operations and economic and social life,

necessitating a vast number of new/amended regulations. The second limitation is that this period includes three different governments and two senior government majorities in Parliament. Therefore, any effects of the institutional framework cannot be solely attributed to the legal environment but also to the practices of the governing coalitions. However, it is important to acknowledge that the rules of better regulation are largely imposed by the governing majority in Parliament and controlled as such. Our study is also restricted to a selection of indicators available, which do not necessarily reflect all the range of better regulation principles we seek to measure, and therefore, are only a part of the concepts explored. Therefore, our findings should be treated with caution until other evidence supports them or rejects the patterns identified.

Another limitation of our non-parametric analysis is the absence of several potential confounders that could have influenced the relationship between better regulation indicators and the institutional framework. The lack of a counterfactual makes it difficult to establish robust relationships. Nevertheless, the analysis still identifies areas for future research on the effects of the institutional framework of law-making practices in regulatory output. Specifically, the determinants of the effects of laws on better regulation should not only be attributed to institutional factors but also to economic and social factors, which remain to be explored in future studies.

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The authors have nothing to report.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Endnotes

¹ See the “Fit for Future” platform on EU level, which highlights ongoing efforts to simplify EU law and address new challenges, such as updating regulations on fisheries and spatial information infrastructure (Delbeke et al. 2009).

² Levene's test for equality of variances was applied to assess the homogeneity of variance between the groups (before and after the implementation of Law 4622/2019). Levene's test indicated a violation of this assumption ($p < 0.05$), meaning that the variances were significantly different between the groups, it was necessary to employ a non-parametric alternative to *T*-Test, the Mann–Whitney *U* test.

³ We exclude from our analysis the international agreements for which the integration into the Greek legal order is characterized by diverse procedural approaches. According to Article 112 of the Rules of

Procedure of the Parliament, international conventions and treaties are typically ratified “without or with limited debate.” This process generally precludes the invitation of bodies for hearings and imposes stringent time constraints on the voting process. In contrast, the procedural framework for primary laws exhibits greater variability, which also highlights potential areas for improvement.

⁴Intrasoft International, Nomos legal information database. Retrieved from <https://www.nomos.gr>.

⁵In this criterion, we use the function of government (COFOG) classification, which is less strict to determine if the a regulation falls into one or more public policy areas. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Classification_of_the_functions_of_government_\(COFOG\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Classification_of_the_functions_of_government_(COFOG)).

⁶In 2006, the Prime Minister's Circular 190/1872006 stipulated that each Ministry proposing a new regulation is required to prepare a ‘Report on the impact of a new regulation’, called ‘Regulatory Impact Assessment Report’ (2006). The Manual asked the administrative burdens and impact on economy, competition, budget, environment to be quantitatively specified by standard estimation models.

⁷⁷ Law 4957/2022 granted 118 authorizations for the issuance of Ministerial Decisions, Law 4727/2020 granted 126, Law 4823/2021 granted 128, Law 4635/2019 granted 162, Law 4782/2021 granted 184, Law 4512/2018 granted 192, and Law 4781/2021 granted 247.

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section. **Appendix A** Greek institutional and procedural details. **Appendix A.1.** **Appendix A.2.** **Appendix A.3.** **Appendix B.** Statistical tables. **Table S1:** Descriptive statistics for better regulation indicators (2015–2023). **Table S2:** Pre- and post-reform comparison of better regulation indicators (Law 4622/2019, Mann–Whitney *U* test). **Data S1:** rego70186-sup-0002-Data_S1.xlsx.