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Greek Council of State Rules Art School Classification Unconstitutional

The Greek Council of State (CoS) issued a major ruling declaring unconstitutional the classification of graduates of Higher Schools of Artistic Education under a Presidential Decree of 2022 as secondary education.

According to the court's Plenary decision, the decree [wrongly placed art school graduates in the Secondary Education](#) (DE) category for public sector jobs. The CoS found this violates Article 16 of the Constitution, which protects higher education and artistic studies.

The court clarified that Higher Schools of Artistic Education have been legally recognised as tertiary (higher) institutions since a 1981 law, meaning their graduates should not be treated as if they have only secondary or post-secondary education.

The ruling emphasised that the State has a constitutional duty to promote art and education and must distinguish these graduates from other categories. By failing to create a special classification for them, the State restricted their right to fair access to public sector positions.

The decision follows [earlier rulings in 2024](#) on the

same issue and calls for immediate legislative action to establish a new category that properly reflects the graduates' educational level.

Back in 2022 the artists' movement occupied theatres and artistic institutions for about a month to protest the law.

Greece's Higher Schools of Artistic Education form a vital part of the nation's cultural heritage. Their roots go back to the Athens School of Fine Arts (????), founded in 1837, followed by institutions such as the National School of Dramatic Art (1930) and the Hellenic Conservatory (1860s). These schools combine professional artistic training with academic study and are selective, admitting students through national exams.

Their higher-education status was first codified by Law in 1981, which recognised them as tertiary institutions—equivalent to universities and technical institutes (TEIs). A law passed in 2001 integrated them into the European Higher Education framework (the [Bologna Process](#)).

Across Europe, [higher artistic education](#) is recognised as tertiary but managed differently from country to country. Spain's 2024 Law on Higher Artistic Education created a dedicated framework for such degrees, ensuring direct access to public sector positions.

France, Italy, and Germany already treat their national art academies and conservatories as full higher

education institutions.

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) promotes standard recognition of bachelor's and master's degrees, though classification inconsistencies persist—particularly in Southern Europe.

For graduates, this decision marks not only a vindication of years of advocacy and protest but also a path toward full professional recognition—aligning Greece with European norms and its own constitutional vision of art as a public good.