Technical Chamber of Greece Automates the Count of Election Votes with ABBYY FlexiCapture®

Customer Overview

Name

Technical Chamber of Greece

Location

Athens, Greece

Industry

Government

Challenge

Improve the time-consuming processing of election results in the Chamber.

Solution

ABBYY FlexiCapture

Results

- Improved workflow: votes processes in 1 week instead of 6 months;
- Minimized risk of mistakes.

Established in 1923, the Technical Chamber of Greece (TCG/Τεχνικό Επιμελητήριο Ελλάδας (ΤΕΕ)) is a Greek professional organization that serves as the official technical advisor of the Greek state and is responsible for awarding professional licenses to all practicing engineers in Greece. The public organization has elected administration, consisting of 17 Administrative Committees of the Regional Sectors — 175 candidates.

Challenge

Every 3 years elections are held, determining the composition of the Chamber for the next term. The electoral competition itself is lively, but the export of the results used to be prolonged and agonizing.

Applying the conventional method of counting votes, the Electoral Commission used to manually process all 150,000 ballots, checking for compliance with all voting rules, addressing and fixing potential objections, and manually compiling all the necessary protocols, which were then registered in internal data base.

This laborious, repetitive, time consuming process used to take 6 months before the results could be published.

Solution

Automation of the process was first introduced as a solution during the 2007 election. IID company — one of the largest and most authoritative providers of integrated electronic archiving & archive digitization solutions — was invited not only as an integrator in the project but also as an expert consultant, recommending ABBYY FlexiCapture as a data capture solution for the project.

The preference was given to ABBYY FlexiCapture due to several objective reasons; chief among them was the fact that ABBYY technology has one of the most advanced supports of Greek scripts and fonts. This made it possible to process huge volumes of paper ballots with hand-printed checkmarks within the shortest time period and with minimal human control.

Since the first success in election ballots processing, every 3 years the project is held with the help of ABBYY data capture technologies.

The process improved even further with the creation of a special ballot format, which featured a new design and integrated rules defining how the data should be extracted and

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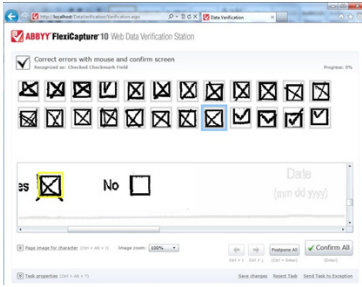
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automatically verified, depending on the government body and the region concerned. This was done with the help of special ABBYY FlexiCapture tools, namely Form Designer and Document Definition.

Each ballot now has a special header, containing the number and barcode for each government body; the rules state the number, combination and specific locations of checkmarks per side to identify the validity of every particular document. All of the above is applied to all 293 different ballot types, some of them listing up to 175 candidates.

Extracted from the ballot box, the filled-in forms are scanned and automatically recognized to find the votes and calculate the results. Before publishing the results, ABBYY FlexiCapture performs logical checks, described above. Then the Election Committee confirms the verification and registers the results; a report is then automatically compiled.

The system has been processing over 150,000 paper ballots each election.

"For Technical Chamber of Greece, the decision to move to a digital system was not made lightly. The project was very critical and we had to work very close with the TCG team, proactively and reactively providing them with full assistance in order to achieve the best results. Using ABBYY FlexiCapture technology, we managed to deliver an accurate, reliable and user friendly solution to Technical Chamber of Greece. The use of ABBYY technology convinced TCG that automatic data input can be done with significant reduction of human errors, so that they can get an accurate & good data analysis."

Andrew Mikonios, Software Development Manager, IID Interlease Dsa

Results

ABBYY FlexiCapture provides powerful tools to integrate custom stages and external modules. Thus it has been seamlessly been integrated into the existing results collection system of the Technical Chamber, through which the results are approved by Electoral Commission.

The export of the results now takes less than 1 hour, but due to the approval procedure the final publication time increases up to 3 hours. This is definitely a major improvement compared to the previous results processing.

As a result, IID's expert offer to introduce ABBYY FlexiCapture into the project has allowed the Technical Chamber of Greece to significantly simplify and accelerate ballots processing and almost immediately publish the results (in 1 week compared to previous 6 months); to establish the modern electronic format of election process and, of course, to reach one of the most important goals — minimize the probability of misrepresentation of the voters' choice.

About ABBYY

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