

To Deputy Minister of Finance, Theodoros Skylakakis

CC:

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis
Minister of Finance, Christos Staikouras
The European Commission Recovery and Resilience Task Force (RECOVER)

Athens, Tuesday 23rd March 2021

Open letter about the Greek Recovery and Resilience Plan: opacity and lack of participation

Dear Mr. Minister,

The signatory Civil Society Organisations would like to express our concerns about the opacity in the design and adoption of the Greek Recovery and Resilience Plan. The EU recovery plan is a huge opportunity for member states to address the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and to create greener and fairer societies that are resilient to future challenges. At this critical time when the pandemic is affecting millions of lives and especially the most vulnerable populations, it is very important that such an opportunity is not missed.

The absence of broad social participation in the formulation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan worries us intensely. We recall that under Article 18.4 (q) of the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation, member states must include "a summary of the consultation process carried out with local and regional authorities, social partners, civil society organisations, youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders for the preparation and implementation of the plan and information on how the input of stakeholders is reflected in the plan."

So far however, planning procedures for the Recovery and Resilience Plan have starkly contrasted the spirit of this regulation. More specifically:

1. The virtual public consultation on the "Strategic Directions of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan" posted by the Ministry of Finance on 25 November 2020 consisted only of a general text with unclear terms and lacked a roadmap for implementation. As such, it is impossible for interested parties to thoroughly evaluate the proposal since the complete draft submitted by Greece to the European Commission has not been made publicly available.
2. Greece sent the draft Recovery and Resilience Plan to the European Commission before the end of the public consultation period, thus it excluded the feedback submitted by civil society during the consultation process.
3. The public consultation report has not been published and we have not received any information on if and how the proposals we submitted were taken into account in revising the plan, when the revisions will be complete, or what the next steps will be.
4. We remain in the dark regarding procedures for submitting the final draft to the EU as well as whether stakeholders will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the final text, which will outline how resources will be allocated. We are concerned that

submitting the final plan for public consultation only at the end of the revision process will exclude Greek society from substantially contributing to the plan's development.

For all the above reasons, we respectfully insist on **full transparency regarding the development of sustainable recovery policies, both for the sake of monitoring and accountability and in order to keep the citizenry informed, which are essential for their successful implementation.**

Mr. Minister, the recent crises (economic, refugee, pandemic) have deepened social inequalities in our country and require us to make radical changes to mitigate their effects on society. Greece should prioritise social inclusion by targeting typically overlooked populations such as impoverished households, the homeless, migrants, and refugees. The country also needs to invest in stronger social and labour policies and in public health with an emphasis on prevention, education and culture. The digital transition is an essential tool for achieving these goals. At the same time, measures must be taken to protect the environment and reduce the effects of climate change in order to prevent future crises and ensure a swift transition to a green and just economy.

To do this, the Greek government must:

- **Invite broader swaths of society, and in particular civil society** with relevant knowledge and experience, **to submit proposals** that will be integrated into the “Strategic Directions of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan”
- Prepare a **detailed action plan** outlining proposed programmes, objectives, beneficiaries and expected impact, which includes valid environmental, social and economic indicators to assess the projects' progress based on the stated priorities. All programmes and objectives must meet the following criteria:
 - Ensure a sustainable future
 - Contribute to social justice
 - Safeguard our fundamental rights
- Ensure a **meaningful participation** of all stakeholders, including civil society organisations, in the design, implementation and monitoring of the Recovery and Resilience Plan. This process must take place before the government submits its plan at the end of April 2021
- Improve **clarity and transparency** around the Recovery and Resilience Plan. This includes publicising available funding instruments and outlining priorities at both the EU and national levels. Regular information exchange sessions with stakeholders and citizen information campaigns are also necessary, among other things.

We consider the above measures necessary not only for the proper use of available public resources but also in order to garner citizen support for the initiative. Finally, we emphasise that for the Recovery and Resilience Plan to have a positive effect, it should not be seen as a stand-alone initiative. Rather, it should constitute part of a horizontal and coordinated effort to strengthen public policies that, combined with other initiatives and funding opportunities, will lead us to a better and more sustainable future. Policies and programmes that do not align with the plan but lead us astray from strategic objectives agreed upon by the EU, must be ruled out or redesigned in a manner that supports a green and fair recovery.

We remain at your disposal for any discussion and contribution to the formulation of a national recovery plan that reflects Greece's real needs for a sustainable and socially just future.

Yours sincerely,

The undersigned organisations

1. ActionAid Hellas
2. Lesvos Solidarity
3. NPCP "Me Alla Matia"
4. Άνεμος Ανανέωσης
5. ANTIGONE-Information and Documentation Centre on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence
6. ΑΡΙΩΝ-Ερευνητικό Κέντρο Διάσωσης και Περίθαλψης Κητωδών
7. ARSIS-Association for the Social Support Youth
8. Better Days Greece
9. Doctors of the World Greece
10. Changemakers Lab
11. Common Ground Greece
12. Network for Children's Rights
13. Δίκτυο Μέλισσα
14. Action for Wildlife
15. ECHO100PLUS
16. Ecocity
17. Greek Housing Network
18. Ελληνικό Δίκτυο ΦΙΛΟΙ της ΦΥΣΗΣ
19. Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)
20. Greek Forum of Migrants
21. Greek Forum of Refugees
22. ELIX
23. Emfasis Foundation
24. Fenix-Humanitarian Legal Aid
25. Food On
26. Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality and Diversity
27. GIVMED
28. Greenpeace Greece
29. HIAS
30. HIGGS
31. HumanRights360
32. Thalassa of Solidarity
33. Ithaca
34. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
35. Irida Women's Center
36. Centre for Research on Women's Issues "Diotima"
37. MEDASSET
38. Μεσογειακό Ινστιτούτο για την Φύση και τον Άνθρωπο-MedINA
39. METAdrasi-Action for Migration and Development
40. Mobile Info Team (MIT)
41. Boroume
42. Odyssea

43. Οικολογική Εταιρεία Ανακύκλωσης
44. Οικολογική Κίνηση Δράμας
45. Ecological Movement of Thessaloniki
46. Organization Earth
47. SOS Children's Villages
48. Πανελλήνιο Δίκτυο Οικολογικών Οργανώσεων (ΠΑΝΔΟΙΚΟ)
49. Schedia Street Magazine
50. People Behind
51. Praxis
52. Promitheas
53. Refugee Rights Europe
54. Samos Volunteers
55. SolidarityNow
56. Steps
57. Σύλλογος Ασθενών Ήπατος Ελλάδος "Προμηθέας"
58. Society for the Care of Minors and Youth
59. Greek Association of People Living with HIV "Positive Voice",
60. Σύλλογος Τουλίπα Γουλιμή
61. Symbiosis-School of Political Studies in Greece, affiliated to the Council of Europe Network of Schools
62. Association of Social Responsibility for Children and Youth -Skep
63. Syn-eirmos NGO of Social Solidarity
64. Terre des hommes Hellas
65. The Bee Camp
66. The Green Tank
67. Friends of Monte
68. Velos Youth
69. We are Solomon
70. WWF Greece

