

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. Action for Wildlife
3. ANTIGONE - Information and Documentation Centre on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence
4. Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation
5. Arion – Cetacean Rescue and Rehabilitation Research Center
6. ARSIS - Association for the Social Support Youth
7. Association of Social Responsibility for Children and Youth -Skep
8. Attica Bike Community – Podilattiki Koinotita
9. Better Days Greece
10. Boroume
11. Callisto
12. Centre for Research on Women's Issues "Diotima"
13. Changemakers Lab
14. Common Ground Greece
15. Doctors of the World Greece
16. DRC Greece
17. ECHO100PLUS
18. Ecocity
19. Ecological Movement of Drama
20. Ecological Movement of Patras
21. Ecological Movement of Thessaloniki
22. Ecological Recycling Society
23. ELIX
24. Emfasis Foundation
25. Ethelon
26. European Expression
27. Fenix - Humanitarian Legal Aid
28. Food On
29. Friends of Monte
30. Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality and Diversity
31. GIVMED
32. Greek Association of People Living with HIV "Positive Voice"
33. Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)
34. Greek Forum of Migrants
35. Greek Forum of Refugees
36. Greek Housing Network
37. Greenpeace Greece
38. Hellenic Liver Patient Association "Prometheus"
39. HIAS
40. HIGGS
41. HumanRights360

42. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
43. Irida Women's Center
44. iSEA
45. Ithaca
46. Ithaca Laundry
47. Lesvos Solidarity
48. MEDASSET
49. Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos – MedINA
50. Melissa Network
51. METAdrasi - Action for Migration and Development
52. Mobile Info Team (MIT)
53. Nature Friends Greece
54. Network for Children's Rights
55. NPCP "Me Alla Matia"
56. Odyssea
57. Organization Earth
58. Organization Tulipa Gulimi
59. Pan-hellenic Network of Ecological Organizations
60. People Behind
61. Praxis
62. Promitheas
63. Refugee Rights Europe
64. Samos Volunteers
65. Schedia Street Magazine
66. Social Action and Innovation Center
67. Society for the Care of Minors and Youth
68. SolidarityNow
69. SOS Children's Villages
70. Steps
71. Symbiosis-School of Political Studies in Greece, affiliated to the Council of Europe Network of Schools
72. Syn-eirmos NGO of Social Solidarity
73. Terre des hommes Hellas
74. Thalassa of Solidarity
75. The Bee Camp
76. The Good House
77. The Green Tank
78. The HOME Project
79. Union for the Protection of the Environment of the Corinthian-Patra Gulf - O Nireas
80. Velos Youth
81. We are Solomon
82. Wind of Renewal
83. WWF Greece

