



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

VOLUNTARY  
NATIONAL REVIEW  
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE 2030 AGENDA  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



GREECE  
JULY 2018













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# Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



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ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



**GREECE**  
JULY 2018

Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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## OPENING STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an action plan, a road map, and a beacon that paves the way to a future we strive for. It is unprecedented in scope and reach. What is more, it is a holistic approach to mankind's pressing problems and it has agreed upon by the international community.

I want to stress that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development lies at the core of our aspirations as a country. We want sustainable and fair growth, equal opportunities for all in education, full employment and decent working conditions, as well as transparent and accountable governmental institutions.

Greece, having been stricken hard by the economic crisis over the past eight years, sees in the Agenda a roadmap towards a future that will heal the wounds austerity left in the country. I believe that as Greece ushers itself into a new era, the Sustainable Development goals will serve, not only as a constant reminder of our priorities within the country, but also as a blueprint of the values we want to promote as an international community.

To that end, we have worked to promote social and solidarity economy alongside promoting cohesion. We have tried to upgrade and modernise our social security system, to ensure a minimum income for all and we have managed to



implement universal healthcare. At the same time we have made efforts towards a circular economy, in order to minimise our carbon footprint and we have applied the Integrated Water Resources Management principles. E-governance, anti-corruption measures and a continuing fight to promote human rights have also been a bedrock of our efforts.

Our report shows that Greece is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda. It is fully committed not because the goals therein have been imposed by some outside forces. It is fully committed because the Sustainable Development Goals coincide with our vision for the future, with our vision for our heritage to the next generations.

[Alexis Tsipras](#)  
Prime Minister of Greece



## HIGHLIGHTS

Greece is strongly committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as they provide an ambitious, visionary and transformative framework for a new, equitable and sustainable development path. Ensuring that “*no one is left behind*” is a high political priority for Greece, as the country is now exiting a period of prolonged economic crisis.

Greece’s utmost objective is to reap the full benefits that the SDGs provide in order to reframe the country’s development perspectives. The “SDGs lens” can shape policies to achieve balance between economic development, social cohesion and protection of the environment and of natural resources.

Fulfilling the vision for a fair, equitable and sustainable development for all, for present and for future generations, along with achieving the SDGs, necessitate the adoption of strategic priorities and streamlined policies in all sectors, tailored to the specific national context and needs.

Greece endorsed in 2017 at the highest political level and through a wide social dialogue, a set of eight (8) overarching National Priorities for the SDGs, which are also in line with the new National Growth Strategy adopted by the Greek government in 2018. The Strategy aims at reinvigorating the Greek economy, promoting social well-being and justice without exclusions, ensuring environmental protection and safeguarding the country’s unique ecological wealth.

The eight Greek National Priorities for the SDGs encompass all 17 SDGs, and reflect, in a balanced and integrated manner, the three dimensions of sustainable development. They include:

- Fostering a competitive, innovative and sustainable economic growth (linked to SDGs 9, 8)
- Promoting full employment and decent work for all (linked to SDG 8)
- Addressing poverty and social exclusion, and providing universal access to quality health care services (linked to SDGs 1, 2, 3)
- Reducing social and regional inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities for all (linked to SDGs 5, 10)
- Providing high-quality and inclusive education (linked to SDG 4)
- Strengthening the protection and sustainable management of natural capital as a base for social prosperity and transition to a low-carbon economy (linked to SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)
- Building effective, accountable and transparent institutions (linked to SDGs 16, 17)
- Enhancing open, participatory, democratic processes and promoting partnerships (linked to SDGs 16, 17)

The vision of sustainable development for Greece is not a recent endeavour. The effort was initiated with the country’s first National Strategy for Sustainable Development, in 2002. However, it is now that Greece has adopted a truly strategic approach, where sustainable development issues are anchored at the highest political level. In turn, this ensures collective political ownership and commitment to the successful achievement of the SDGs. Policy coherence is pursued both “horizontally” across policy sectors, including the agricultural, tourism and cultural sector,

and “vertically” at all levels of governance, from national to local. Based on the fact that the implementation of the SDGs goes beyond the responsibilities of the central government, Greece has adopted a “whole-of-society” approach, giving particular attention to ensuring strong stakeholder engagement from the stock-taking to policy design and implementation stages, and to awareness raising at all levels.

Among Greece’s key successes with regard to the implementation of the SDGs at the national level, is the set-up of a robust long-term institutional mechanism encompassing a “whole-of-government” approach. This includes, *inter alia*, an active operational Inter-ministerial Coordination Network, steered by the General Secretariat of the Government, a key centre-of-government entity, appointed to lead and coordinate national efforts for the achievement of the SDGs with a long-term perspective.

In order to define the national starting point and measure the distance for achieving the various SDG targets, Greece undertook for the first time an in-depth stock-taking exercise to track and evaluate the current state as well as progress. In this framework, a detailed mapping of all national policies and of the corresponding legal frameworks relevant to the SDGs has been carried out. Since many policies are already implemented in Greece through the EU *aquis*, the mapping focused on identifying missing policy instruments, areas of insufficient action and areas for cross-sectoral co-operation to ensure policy coherence and spread good practice, both domestically and through the country’s bilateral and international partnerships. To enhance transparency, partnerships and accountability, actions and activities have been carried out with a wide array of non-state actors. These have all been recorded and included in the present VNR Report, highlighting the role of key stakeholders in the implementation of the SDGs.

The results of this mapping exercise, detailed in the present VNR Report, underline that the unprecedented economic crisis that Greece faced in recent years forced a shift of focus in political priorities, with the predominant economic policies often creating divergence rather than contributing to the accomplishment of the totality of the SDGs.

Therefore, it has been essential for Greece to focus on the *social pillar* of sustainable development, with measures to address the short-term difficulties of the different affected groups. Priorities included the fight against unemployment particularly for youth and women, the reduction of social inequalities, progress in gender equality and the promotion of social inclusion for immigrants and other vulnerable population groups. The above have been implemented through a robust social solidarity system, establishment of a minimum guaranteed income for all, universal access to quality health care services, fight against energy poverty for vulnerable citizen groups through a reduced social residential electricity tariff, support for “energy communities” and free access to quality education to everyone at all education levels. Social pillar policies have been implemented with a particular outlook to regional cohesion, placing emphasis on the less advantaged geographic regions of the country, such as remote islands and mountainous areas.

Regarding the *economic pillar* of sustainable development, Greece attached, over the last years, particular importance to policies and measures for competitive, innovative and sustainable economic growth. Good examples encompass measures for improving the business environment, promoting social and solidarity economy and encouraging domestic and foreign direct investment, for highlighting the role of human capital as a key driver for economic growth, for



supporting research, technological development and innovation, for sustainability in agricultural and rural development, for efficient and effective tourism products and services, and for developing reliable and sustainable infrastructure and transport systems.

With regard to the *environmental pillar* of sustainable development, important progress has been made in recent years, in all related SDGs. Key national priorities are the shift towards circular economy and sustainable consumption and production patterns, as a means for creating new jobs, reducing, reusing and recycling waste and increasing resource efficiency. A National Action Plan on Circular Economy was endorsed by Greece in April 2018. With regard to the transition towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy, Greece remains firmly committed to the Paris Agreement objectives, and is already in a good place to meet its national GHG emissions reduction targets earlier than 2030. Successes also include the full application of Integrated Water Resources Management principles considering both social aspects and ecosystem needs and the significant increase in the penetration of renewable energy sources. The completion of flagship projects, such as the interconnection of many non-connected islands to the electricity grid of the mainland by 2030 will facilitate the achievement of climate change mitigation goals and support the reduction of air emissions. Finally, important progress is achieved towards the full digitalization of land-uses across the Greek territory (in land and sea), *inter alia* through the National Cadastre and the development of forest maps, which by 2020 will ensure the full protection status of the ecological wealth of the country, facilitate investments and control urbanisation. In parallel, sustainable urban mobility is promoted as a priority, in Greek cities, to improve quality of life, increase energy efficiency and decrease GHGs.

For building effective, accountable and transparent institutions and enhancing open, participatory and democratic processes, Greece promotes specific structural and institutional reforms, especially in the public administration, with the view to achieve broader systemic transformations. The reforms aim at boosting employment and enhanced transparency, competitiveness, innovation, and more efficient service provision to citizens. Measures include the expansion of e-governance tools, the fight against corruption, the protection of human rights and the enhancement of strong partnerships within borders, between all stakeholders, as well as beyond borders by promoting international cooperation bilaterally, regionally and globally.

Immediate next steps will capitalise on the experience of the VNR. A National Implementation Plan for the SDGs will be elaborated in 2019, engaging all stakeholders at all stages, from the design and implementation of actions to monitoring, evaluation and review. The Plan, apart from enhancing consistency with the National Growth Strategy and mobilizing resources for implementation, will also focus on identifying key cross-cutting priorities to be pursued through new cross-sectoral and vertical integration tools and arrangements that will produce a special added value for the implementation of the SDGs in Greece. The Hellenic Parliament will play an instrumental role in this overall follow-up process through joint parliamentary committees meetings to review progress, provide guidance to fine-tune line actions and ensure the mainstreaming of the SDGs in all legislative and policy frameworks.

*“The SDGs offer a new vision for sustainable development for Greece, reinvigorating the principles of democracy and of open, responsive and accountable governance. They will support inclusive institutions, ensure the spread of prosperity and the protection of the most vulnerable, and foster economic growth founded on a sound environmental basis”.*



# 1 | INTRODUCTION

Greece, a member state of the United Nations and the European Union, has been pursuing sustainable development and equitable growth in accordance with international and European policies and strategies for decades. At the international level, Greece had been a devoted member of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) for 20 years, from 1992 to 2012. Greece was an active participant at the UN Rio Summit (1992), at the UN Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10, 2002) and at the UN Rio+20 Summit (2012). Subsequent to the Rio+20 Summit, the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the UNGA Open-Working Group (OWG) were established. Their purpose was to propose a set of global sustainable development goals. Greece participated constructively in the post-2012 negotiation process leading in September 2015 to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Greece's core priorities included the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights, and the democratic and transparent decision-making processes. Particular emphasis was placed on specific themes, including employment, and in particular youth employment, education, health, water and marine resources, migration, culture and sustainable tourism.

The first National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) of Greece was elaborated in 2002, just before the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development, with a strong environmental focus, while the second NSSD was prepared in 2007 by an inter-ministerial committee, aligned with the Renewed 2006 EU Strategy for Sustainable Development, also including four additional national priorities (culture, tourism, agriculture and spatial planning). In 2009, the country's priorities shifted to "Green Growth", as a response to the onset of the financial crisis and the need for more emphasis on climate change mitigation and adaptation. To this end, a "Programme of Development Interventions for the Real Economy" was elaborated in 2010, aligned with the EU Europe 2020 Strategy, with a focus on resource efficiency and the shift to a low carbon economy, which served, until 2013, as the country's strategic reference for sustainable development, but not as an NSSD.

Greece regards the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as an ambitious and transformative framework which leaves considerable leeway for the transition to a new, fair and sustainable development path, ensuring that no one is left behind. Greece's objective is to benefit from the opportunity that the SDGs provide, in order to revisit the country's overall development perspectives, through an "SDGs lens", aiming at boosting the economy, stimulating decent employment, strengthening social protection and inclusion, and protecting the environment and natural capital.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Greece and the setting of national priorities for the SDGs coincide with the completion of the macroeconomic adjustment programme and the MoU agreed by Greece and the Institutions (European Commission, European Central Bank, International Monetary Fund). It is within this context that the SDGs can contribute to healing the

wounds of an unprecedented humanitarian crisis triggered by the prolonged recession and the imposition of harsh austerity measures, and creating the necessary impetus for the implementation of an inclusive and sustainable growth model.

The international economic and fiscal crisis of 2008 had profound negative effects on Greece. A combination of exterior and interior causes, led the country into an unprecedented shrinkage of its national product and income and a rapid increase of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. However, after seven years of recession, the Greek economy, has been showing since 2016 significant signs of recovery, and in 2017 grew at a rate of 1.4% of GDP. In August 2018, Greece, having completed an extensive list of reforms, will exit the economic adjustment programme and more growth is foreseen for 2018 and the years ahead. Nonetheless, it is commonly understood that the forthcoming growth path must not repeat past mistakes and failures. The new economic model for the country that will sustain long-term and balanced growth is now being structured around the country's significant comparative advantages, such as the human and natural capital, in sectors such as industry, agricultural and rural development, tourism, culture, education, information and communication technologies, commerce, shipping, logistics, transportation, energy, networks, infrastructure and construction.

In order to boost the reconstruction of the production base of the Greek economy that will lead into a fair and sustainable development, the Greek government adopted in 2018, after a long period of public consultation in each one of the 13 Regions of the country, a new National Growth Strategy. This strategy is fully compatible and aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and promotes the transition into a new holistic growth model, with a balance between economic development, social well-being and justice without exclusions, and the protection of the environment and the natural capital of the country.

The National Growth Strategy's overarching goals are interlinked with the eight national priorities for the SDGs set by Greece (see chapter 4), and include among others: the reduction of unemployment and restoring conditions for full employment; the reversal of the trend of population aging and population decline; the reversal of the brain drain trend; the active policy for attracting investments and improving the business environment; the reduction of social and regional inequalities; and the ecological re-design of the economy by promoting a circular economy model. These goals reflect the needs and priorities of a country that strives to exit from a serious protracted economic crisis, targeting the revitalisation of its economy without neglecting its environmental wealth.

Hence, the National Growth Strategy and the national priorities for the SDGs as presented in this VNR Report and subsequently in the forthcoming National Implementation Plan for the SDGs, coincide on most elements, although they vary on the emphasis they place on some aspects of sustainable development, according to their distinctive characteristics. The National Growth Strategy focuses on the basic domestic economic growth aspects of sustainable development, while the VNR Report and the forthcoming National Implementation Plan for the SDGs focus more on the internationally agreed aspects of the 2030 Agenda. The implementation of the National Growth Strategy contributes decisively to the achievement of the SDGs and, vice-versa, the implementation of the SDGs at national level constitutes a catalyst and precondition, contributing significantly to the achievement of the new growth model for a fair and sustainable development.

This VNR Report aims to: (i) present the institutional mechanism put in place in Greece which ensures the collective political ownership and commitment to accomplish successfully the SDGs and to foster a whole-of-government approach; (ii) highlight the national policy and legal framework which incorporates the SDGs, focusing on the eight national priorities for the SDGs; (iii) showcase the role played by key stakeholders in the implementation of the SDGs through the adoption of a whole-of-society approach; (iv) provide some key means of implementation which ensure the comprehensive and integrated achievement of the SDGs at all governance levels (national, regional, international); and (v) present the main steps to be taken with regard to the follow up and review process of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.



## 2 | METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS FOR PREPARATION OF THE REVIEW

The Office of Coordination, Institutional, International and European Affairs (OCIIEA) of the General Secretariat of the Government, after taking up the task of coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the SDGs at national level (see chapter 3.1), has undertaken initiatives, through the setting up of an Inter-ministerial Coordination Network (chapter 3.2), which consists of focal points from all the ministries, and the development of a framework for dialogue between government, public administration, the social partners and all stakeholders, for the purpose of exchanging views and proposals concerning the planning, development and implementation of a National Implementation Plan for the SDGs, a process which as a first step would require the drafting of the Voluntary National Report for the HLPF 2018.

In this context, (i) all line ministries proceeded to a detailed mapping, gap analysis and prioritisation of the SDGs, and (ii) representatives of the social partners and basic stakeholders<sup>1</sup> presented their views concerning the national prioritisation of the SDGs.

The ministries identified which goals and targets they are covering and by which means. These means vary from national and EU legislation to sectoral or thematic policies, strategies, action plans and international agreements. The mapping exercise resulted in compiling all relevant policies and measures that are still missing, indicating the state-of-play and budgetary status, and analysing areas of insufficient action or potential for cross-sectoral cooperation. Moreover, all ministries had to rank and prioritise all SDG targets under their competences according to their existing priorities and on-going work, from 0 (low priority target) to 3 (high priority target).

At the same time, other major stakeholders, including the Economic and Social Committee of Greece (ESC), which is the constitutionally recognised institution responsible for the conduct of social dialogue, and in which the social partners and other major stakeholders are represented, contributed their input as to the specific thematic SDGs Greece will have to focus on in order to help overcome the persisting crisis, thus creating positive spill-over effects for all the other SDGs.

It is worth noting that in these initial deliberations, both the government and non-governmental actors insisted that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda should not be seen as a mere formal commitment of the country but as a vital part of a new development strategy for the restart of the Greek economy and the successful exit from the crisis.

Thus, by taking into account the thematic priorities of the ministries, the views of basic stakeholders and social partners, and the wider European and international context, the OCIIEA, focusing as well on the need to ensure the coherence of implemented public policies and their

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1 Such as the Economic and Social Committee of Greece (ESC), the Business Council for Sustainable Development of the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEVBCSD), the Hellenic Network for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR Hellas), the Federation of Industries of Northern Greece (FING), the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants (GSEVEE), the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE), the Association of Greek Regions (ENPE).

interconnections with the SDGs, made its proposals, and the political leadership of the country adopted a framework of national priorities (see chapter 4), which are aligned with practically all the SDGs, and for which a set of corresponding actions, policies and regulations have been or will be adopted.

The ministries, as well as other stakeholders (Economic and Social Committee of Greece, local and regional authorities, academia and research institutes, the private sector, civil society organisations), have substantively contributed to the drafting of this report, by providing information on the challenges faced in each thematic priority, the main priorities, activities and policies developed as well as good practice examples to meet these challenges.

The drafting of the VNR itself was an application in practice of [SDGs 16](#) and [17](#), as extended cooperation was developed both within the public sector services (different departments of the same ministry and/or between the ministries), and among the public, private and social sector. And this was done with an open, participatory, whole-of-government, whole-of-society and bottom-up approach. In this process, the awareness for and ownership of the SDGs grew up, political commitment was strengthened and made concrete, and coordination of this multi-level and cross-sectoral project was achieved (and it will continue to improve), a fact that, to a certain extent, has a positive impact on the country's overall system of governance.



# 3 | INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS ENSURING OWNERSHIP AND POLICY COHERENCE

## 3.1 The centre of government

Institutional mechanisms and processes established by governments, at the highest political level, are of paramount importance for the integrated and coherent implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all governance levels (national, regional, local). They generate the necessary collective political ownership, leadership and commitment to accomplish successfully the SDGs and to foster the adoption of a whole-of-government approach.

### **The General Secretariat of the Government (GSG)**

Due to the importance accorded to the planning and coordination of the SDGs at the highest political level, the Greek government decided in December 2016 (by law 4440/2016, art. 43), to assign the task of monitoring and coordinating the national implementation of the SDGs to one of the main entities belonging to the centre of government, the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG) and in particular its Office of Coordination, Institutional, International and European Affairs (OCIIEA).

The GSG, as a permanent structure standing close to the political leadership and the public administration of the country supporting the Prime minister and the government in the performance of their duties, particularly as regards the support and coordination of the legislative work of the government, plays a key role in ensuring a whole-of-government approach and the commitment, at the highest political level, for planning and implementing the SDGs with a long-term perspective. It is also uniquely positioned to cooperate and work closely with the Hellenic Parliament, other central government bodies, including the General Secretariat for Coordination and the Vice-Presidency, and line ministries on legislative and regulatory issues.

In particular, the OCIIEA has the core responsibility for leading the work of the Inter-ministerial Coordination Network for the SDGs, established in December 2016 with a view to better coordinating line ministries in implementing the SDGs (see chapter 3.2). Within this framework, the OCIIEA plays an instrumental role in promoting and internalising the ownership of the SDGs in public administration and ensuring that existing or new national priorities, legislation, policies and strategies are closely aligned and consistent with the SDGs, taking due account of the particular national needs and circumstances. It also works jointly and constructively with all line ministries towards the promotion of an integrated approach to the elaboration and drafting of SDGs-related legislation and policies, the reduction of silos across thematic policies and the advancement of best practices on policy coherence and interlinkages across governance levels and sectors. Moreover, the OCIIEA is entrusted with the identification of sustainability challenges and possible institutional adaptations needed to effectively achieve the implementation of the SDGs. Equally important, it contributes significantly to facilitating and monitoring, in close cooperation with line ministries, the dialogue and consultation processes with a wide range of stakeholders actively engaged in the SDGs implementation.

### **The General Secretariat for Coordination (GSC)**

The GSC is responsible for planning, organising and monitoring the implementation of the government's work, and for coordinating the ministries, assisting in the resolution of disputes that may arise due to co-responsibility. It also seeks to ensure consistency and continuity of the government's actions and to monitor their implementation in accordance with the decisions taken by the governmental bodies.

The GSC brings together the annual action plans per ministry, monitors their implementation and provides, where appropriate, technical assistance, in the preparatory and implementing process of legislation. Emphasis is placed on the implementation of the governmental programme, by field of action or per ministry, and its compliance with the agreed timelines, ensuring that any overlaps will not hinder or delay policy implementation. The GSC also provides support for governmental priority actions, upon request.

Moreover the GSC participates in the formulation and implementation of the broader strategy for the modernisation and efficient operation of the public administration, which is linked to [SDG 16](#), in a way compatible with the country's specific needs and prospects in the European Union, through the creation of a more efficient model of inter-ministerial coordination and modern governance. For this purpose, the development of an integrated system of instruments is planned, both at the level of infrastructure, such as the creation of information systems, and at the level of human resources, with the support of specialised staff of the public administration.

On the basis of the monitoring of the ministries' action plans, the GSC recognises, highlights and contributes to the acceleration of the implementation of the SDGs. It also ensures their consistency and complementarity with the main aspects of the government's work. Due to its horizontal role, the GSC is constructively involved in the coordination and monitoring of all the thematic actions related to the implementation of SDGs at national level, thus contributing substantially to the achievement of the national priorities for the SDGs (see chapter 4).

### **The Vice Presidency**

The Vice President of the Government oversees the coordination of the government's economic and social policy, as well as the monitoring of the financial system. Within this area of responsibility, the Vice-President of the Government presides over two collective governmental bodies, the Governmental Economic Policy Council (KYSOIP) and the Governmental Social Policy Council (KYSKOIP). Ministers whose portfolios fall under economic policy (for KYSOIP) and social policy (for KYSKOIP) participate in those two governmental bodies.

These two Councils, as the main governmental bodies responsible for formulating and coordinating the government's economic and social policy, contribute substantially to the comprehensive implementation of the SDGs at national level. This is achieved mainly through ensuring the coherence, meaningful interaction and complementarity of key government policies and programmes related to the SDGs. In this regard, the procedures followed by these two collective governmental bodies comply with the principles and objectives of the 2030 Agenda and, above all, with the national priorities set by the Greek government for implementing the SDGs at national level (see chapter 4).

The decisions of the KYSOIP and KYSKOIP, which are taken on the basis of detailed indicators, comparative data and good practices, are consistent with the SDGs in terms of designing and implementing relevant public policies, at a guiding-principles as well as at a procedural level, aiming at enhancing the overall quality of governance. Within this framework, the KYSOIP and KYSKOIP have examined and approved so far key thematic actions which are directly related to the successful implementation of the SDGs. These include among others:

- The new National Growth Strategy which relates to the overall SDGs.
- A set of policy measures aiming at: the expansion of social goods, the protection of vulnerable social groups, the strengthening of social cohesion and social solidarity, the creation of new local and regional public services, the improvement of the educational system, tackling undeclared/under-declared/unpaid work as well as infringement of labour law, improving the sustainability of the social security system, implementing universal access to healthcare, measures against the humanitarian crisis, promotion and protection of mental health, prevention of addictions and strengthening the rights of people with disabilities (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16).
- Action plans for essential public policy areas including: social economy, the cooperation between the agro-alimentary and the tourism industry, circular economy, energy strategy, start-ups, supply chain, the pharmaceutical industry, public procurement, insularity and shipping industry, youth and the knowledge economy (SDGs 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.14, 17.17).
- Initiatives and policies for the support of the banking system and the recovery of the economy, the strengthening of the financial system's transparency and its role regarding economic development (SDGs 1.4, 2.3, 5a, 8.3, 8.10, 9.3, 10.5).

### 3.2 The Inter-ministerial Coordination Network for the SDGs

The work of the GSG/OCIIEA on coordinating the national implementation of the SDGs is substantially supported and facilitated by the Inter-ministerial Coordination Network for the SDGs established in December 2016. This Inter-ministerial Coordination Network for SDGs brings together representatives from all line ministries, acting as focal points in charge of working on SDGs-related issues within their respective ministries and mainstreaming them in thematic legislation, policies and initiatives. It also comprises representatives from other governmental bodies belonging to the centre of government, including the Vice-Presidency and the GSC, and the Hellenic Statistical Authority. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is responsible for the external dimension of SDGs, informs the Inter-ministerial Network on SDGs-related developments taking place in the context of the United Nations, the European Union and other international organisations and fora. In addition, the Ministry of Environment and Energy contributes significantly to the work of the Inter-ministerial Network, since it is thematically/technically responsible for the implementation of 7 out of the overall 17 SDGs (i.e. SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, partly 14 and 15).

The Inter-ministerial Coordination Network for the SDGs, which is led by the GSG/OCIIEA, has been primarily established for the purpose of better coordinating line ministries and enhancing their shared commitment and responsibility in implementing the SDGs. It is responsible for the joint preparation and drafting of the national voluntary reviews on SDGs, which are due to be presented at the United Nations High-level Political Forum, and the National Implementation

Plan for the SDGs scheduled for 2019. In doing so, it discusses, among other, the roadmap for achieving the SDGs at national level, and elaborates on existing and new national policies, legislation, strategies, action plans and programmes which aim to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental, economic). It also identifies and assesses gaps and challenges encountered by different ministries in the process of planning and implementing the 2030 Agenda, and seeks to ensure that the national priorities for the SDGs and activities are tailored to the particular national context and circumstances. It also works on the identification and promotion of cross-sectoral actions and practices that foster policy coherence and boost synergies and interlinkages in the implementation of the SDGs.

### **3.3 The Hellenic Parliament**

National parliaments, as the supreme democratic institutions representing the citizens through the elected body of Members of Parliament (MPs), play a crucial role in the successful integration of the SDGs into the national context. They support the transparent, participatory, representative and value-based United Nations decision making process on the SDGs. They also contribute decisively to raising citizens' and social partners' awareness of the importance of mainstreaming the economic, social and environmental dimension of sustainable development in national legislative and policy frameworks.

In the Hellenic Parliament, there are a number of parliamentary committees which are responsible for elaborating and examining draft laws that fall within the various thematic areas of the SDGs, including poverty reduction, employment, healthcare and social protection, economic development, research and innovation, environmental protection and climate change. The draft laws are then debated and adopted in Plenary. Through this process, the Hellenic Parliament contributes substantially to the comprehensive implementation of the SDGs framework and the promotion of the legislative and policy coherence for sustainable development.

Currently, the GSG is working with the Parliament the specifics of the joint meetings of parliamentary committees through which the overall implementation process of the SDGs will be discussed and reviewed. These joint meetings will provide the Parliament with the opportunity to discuss in depth and to track progress, on a regular basis, on the legislative and policy framework developed, with a view to promoting all the dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental economic).

### **3.4. The national multi-stakeholder consultation and engagement mechanism**

The integrated implementation of the SDGs at national, regional and local level requires the existence of an inclusive, transparent and participatory consultation and engagement mechanism bringing together a wide range of stakeholders actively engaged in the field of sustainable development (i.e. civil society and social partners, the private sector, regional and local authorities). This kind of mechanism contributes substantially, among others, to providing the centre of government with sound advice and recommendations on SDGs-related policies, to promoting the shared responsibility of all social partners in implementing the SDGs, to developing national implementation plans on SDGs. It is also instrumental in fostering cooperative actions among different societal sectors, identifying sustainability challenges and proposing durable solutions, and facilitating the sharing of experiences and best practices on achieving the SDGs in a balanced and coherent manner.

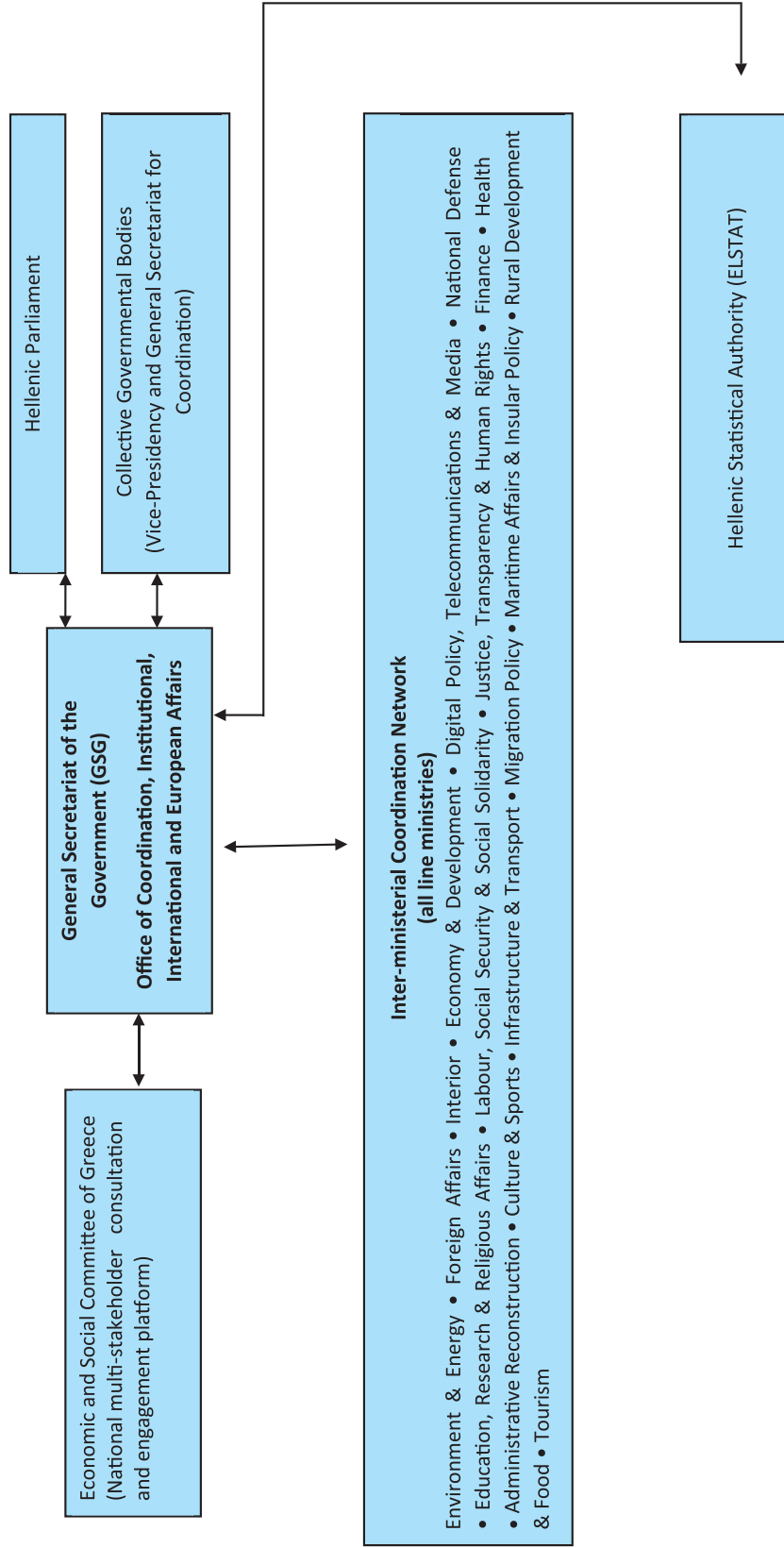
The Economic and Social Committee of Greece (ESC), the constitutionally established institution responsible for conducting the social dialogue on the country’s general policy and in particular on economic and social issues, has assumed an important role towards promoting the systematic and structured consultation and dialogue on the effective implementation of SDGs at different levels and sectors. The ESC is working, following the model of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), on the basis of a tripartite structure representing the interests of three main groups involved, directly and indirectly, in achieving the SDGs at different levels: (i) one of employers-entrepreneurs; (ii) one of public and private sector employees; and (iii) one including other categories of interests groups such as farmers, self-employed people, professionals, consumers, environmental agencies, disabled people’s confederation, gender equality, multi-child parents associations, and regional and local government.

Economic and Social Committee of Greece (ESC)		
Group A (Employers)	Group B (Employees)	Group C (Other Categories)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV)</li> <li>▪ Hellenic Confederation of Professionals Craftsmen and Merchants (GSEVEE)</li> <li>▪ Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (ESEE)</li> <li>▪ Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (SETE)</li> <li>▪ Hellenic Bank Association (EET)</li> <li>▪ Union of the Greek Shipowners (EEE)</li> <li>▪ Association of Greek Contracting Companies (SATE)</li> <li>▪ Hellenic Federation of Real Estate Developers (OMKOE)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE)</li> <li>▪ Supreme Administration of Greek Civil Servants’ Trade Unions (ADEDY)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Panhellenic Confederation of Unions of Agricultural Cooperatives (PASEGES)</li> <li>▪ General Confederation of Greek Agrarian Associations (GESASE)</li> <li>▪ Lawyers Steering Committee</li> <li>▪ Panhellenic Greek Medical Association</li> <li>▪ Union of Hellenic Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>▪ Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE)</li> <li>▪ Economic Chamber of Greece (OEE)</li> <li>▪ Geotechnical Chamber of Greece (GEOTEE)</li> <li>▪ Consumers</li> <li>▪ Environmental protection organisations</li> <li>▪ National Confederation of Disabled People (ESAEA)</li> <li>▪ Organisations for gender equality issues</li> <li>▪ Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE)</li> <li>▪ Union of Greek Regions (ENPE)</li> <li>▪ Supreme Confederation of Multi-Child Parents of Greece (ASPE)</li> </ul>

Based on a structured and extensive consultation process, involving various thematic working groups, an Executive Committee and a General Assembly, the ESC elaborates and delivers policy proposals and opinions on a broad range of SDGs-related issues, including economic growth, employment and labour market, social inclusion, migration and refugee flow, sustainable agriculture, business environment, and democratisation of governance. Within this context, the ESC issued, upon request of the General Secretariat of the Government, its opinion no 317, *UN 2030 Agenda - Priority Objectives for Greece*. In this opinion, the ESC presented its views on the national prioritisation of the SDGs and submitted a comprehensive set of proposals regarding the effective implementation of key economic, social and environmental aspects of the SDGs at different levels and sectors (i.e. economic growth, employment and social protection, sustainable energy, industrialisation and innovation).

Furthermore, in its effort to enhance the value of social dialogue on SDGs and to raise public awareness of key aspects of the 2030 Agenda, the ESC organises and participates in various conferences, workshops and events. It is within this context that in February 2018, ESC organised a conference that brought together social partners, civil society organisations, members of the Hellenic Parliament and the Government, for an in depth discussion on the prospects of the Greek economy and the need for a new strategic plan for sustainable growth being in line with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. During this conference, the ESC presented a Joint Declaration of the social partners and the organised civil society, acknowledging the need for social and political consensus towards the adoption of a National Growth Strategy which ensures social cohesion, sustained economic growth, social justice and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources.

# Governance and Inter-Ministerial Coordination Scheme







# 4 | THE INCORPORATION OF THE SDGs IN THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK: THE NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR THE SDGs

The incorporation of the 2030 Agenda into the national framework is taking place through a set of National Priorities, which were decided on by the political leadership of the country, according to the process discussed in chapter 2, and for the achievement of which a vast array of policies and measures is initiated and implemented. Eight National Priorities have been established, which are aligned with all 17 SDGs:

## *Outcome-oriented priorities*





















1. Fostering a competitive, innovative and sustainable economic growth.
2. Promoting full employment and decent work for all.
3. Addressing poverty and social exclusion, and providing universal access to quality health care services.
4. Reducing social and regional inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities for all.
5. Providing high-quality and inclusive education.
6. Strengthening the protection and sustainable management of natural capital as a base for social prosperity and transition to a low-carbon economy.

## *Process-oriented priorities*

7. Building effective, accountable and transparent institutions.
8. Enhancing open, participatory, democratic processes and promoting partnerships.

For the adoption of the National Priorities, the following factors were taken into account: (i) the basic thematic priorities of the ministries, which reflect, inter alia, the relevant EU and international obligations of each entity; (ii) the views of basic stakeholders and social partners; (iii) the main goals of the National Growth Strategy (initiated by the Ministry of Economy and Development); (iv) the deliberations with the Hellenic Statistical Authority concerning the availability of specific SDGs indicators; (v) the three sustainable development dimensions (social, economic, environmental) and the five thematic pillars of the 2030 Agenda (People – Planet – Prosperity – Peace – Partnership); (vi) the five headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy (employment, innovation & research, education, fighting poverty & social exclusion, climate change & energy), as well as other European frameworks and strategies, including the Rome Declaration of the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2017 adopted by the Leaders of 27 EU Member States and of EU Institutions.

This chapter touches upon some of the challenges facing the government and public administration in the context of the national priorities, and reports on the main policies and measures that are developed by the line ministries in order to fulfil the national priorities and the respective SDGs.

<b>Outcome-oriented National Priorities</b>	<p><b>People</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Addressing Poverty and Social Exclusion and providing universal access to quality health care services</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">    </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing high-quality and inclusive education</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center;">  </div>
	<p><b>Prosperity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reducing social and regional inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities for all</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fostering a competitive, innovative and sustainable economic growth</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting full employment and decent work for all</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center;">  </div>
	<p><b>Planet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening the protection and sustainable management of natural capital as a base for social prosperity and transition to a low-carbon economy</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; text-align: center;">        </div>
<b>Process-oriented National Priorities</b>	<p><b>Peace</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building effective, accountable and transparent institutions</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
	<p><b>Partnership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhancing open, participatory, democratic processes and promoting partnerships</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>

#### **4.1 Fostering a competitive, innovative and sustainable economic growth (SDGs 8, 9)**

Taking into due account the comparative advantages of the country (geopolitical position, cultural heritage, tourism, shipping, agriculture, climate conditions, etc.), Greece attaches great importance to four strategic pillars that contribute significantly to achieving a competitive, innovative and sustainable economic growth.

The first strategic pillar places emphasis on the orientation towards a new production model of high value-added and knowledge-intensive goods and services, and the creation of new dynamic advantages which will be founded upon: (i) the enhancement of the technological content of products and services, especially through the adoption of innovative procedures; (ii) the shift to internationally competitive higher value-added goods and services; and (iii) the effective employment of the abundant highly skilled workforce, all of which will improve productivity.

The second strategic pillar is aimed at enhancing the outward-oriented profile of the Greek enterprises, which is an absolutely necessary objective due to the persistent-over-time deficit in trade balance. Export orientation can be enhanced through coordinated policies, with actions taken by the state services involving the reinforcement of existing services and structures (Enterprise Greece, commercial attachés etc.), the closer collaboration between them, and the immediate promotion of transnational financial collaborations even with non-EU countries with significant growth potential (such as the BRICS group of countries), other countries belonging to the Group of 20 (G-20), etc.

The third strategic pillar, which is in line with the EU competition framework, focuses on supporting the domestic production capacity, contrary to previous policies advocating a perception of growth based on consumption demand for imports.

The fourth strategic pillar seeks to encourage the collaborations and synergies among companies through the creation of internal value chains and clusters, so as to turn the small size of the Greek enterprises into an advantage and to reach a critical mass which will facilitate their access to the global marketplace, while improving the country's positioning in the international division of labour.

In its effort to implement the main guidelines of the aforementioned strategic pillars, the Greek government has put forward policies and measures focusing on issues which constitute key drivers for sustainable economic growth in Greece.

#### **Main policies and measures**

##### **Improving the business environment and encouraging both domestic and foreign direct investment (SDG 8.2, 8.3)**

With a view to stimulating private investments and boosting regional and economic growth, the Greek government adopted a new Investment law 4399/2016. The ultimate objective of this legislative framework is to promote the balanced and sustainable development of Greece with a particular emphasis on regional convergence, improving the competitiveness in high value-added and knowledge-intensive sectors, promoting the industrial redevelopment of the country, fostering innovation and technological advances in businesses and attracting foreign direct investments (see chapter 6.3). In this connection, the simplification of the licensing process

for pursuing an economic activity will incorporate by July 2018 most economic sectors, including manufacturing, logistics, tourism, environmental industries. In addition, at the beginning of 2018, the legal framework on inspections was reformed horizontally setting common rules for all economic activities falling under its scope and therefore allowing, for the first time, better coordination of inspections per sector and economic activity and implementation of a common policy, as well as rationalisation of resources. In this connection, a concrete action plan has been put in place in order to ensure implementation of the new law on inspections in a timely and effective manner. Moreover, the whole reform and business environment project will be supported by the Integrated Licensing and Inspections Management System, which will host electronically the licensing and inspections business profiles and will provide a mechanism for the prioritisation of controls using risk based criteria to render the whole system more rational and cost-effective. In parallel, the Greek government pursues measures and actions designed to ameliorate the legal framework on Business Parks and to simplify and widen the range of services provided through one-stop-shops for businesses to cover the whole life-cycle of a business, also taking into account the principles of circular economy (see chapter 4.6). Furthermore, priority is given to the development of an Entrepreneurship Observatory that will collect, process and analyse data of business economy and will allow for a more systematic and effective control of the market, as well as the assessment of proposed and applied legislative and non-legislative interventions, in order to achieve the required coordination among services of different ministries.

#### **Approaching human capital as a key driver for economic growth (SDG 8.3, 8.5)**

It is common place that human capital plays a leading role in economic growth. The new National Growth Strategy gives priority on utilising knowledge, innovation and human talent in combating unemployment. The difficulty in landing a job, forces the employment seekers -notably the young and highly skilled ones- to migrate abroad and prevents those deciding to stay in the country from creating families, thus worsening the falling birth rates which were already low even before the recession. The policies now pursued are aiming to fight a vicious circle of: protracted unemployment, low-quality and low-wage jobs, falling birth rates, mass migration and brain drain, downgrading of the country's growth potential, less active demand, failure to meet debt obligations, sociopolitical crisis. If the targets of withholding migration and raising birth rates are not met, depopulation and demographic problems would compromise the country's growth, undermine the social security system and exacerbate the unbalanced debt to active workforce ratio.

In spite of the evidence that the economy is recovering, unemployment rates, according to the forecasts under the 2017-2021 Medium Term Fiscal Strategy (MTFS), are expected to still be high (17.5%) by the end of this period. Thus, a bridge programme aimed at reducing unemployment against the MTFS forecasts for the next 3-4 years is being designed (see also chapter 4.2) based on the projections that from 2021 onwards the economy will be on a fully growing track and unemployment rates will be significantly lower without the need to adopt further ad-hoc measures, following the implementation of structural reforms, the debt restructuring agreements and the fiscal and external stabilisation.

Over the short term, designing the way out of the vicious cycle of unemployment, underemployment, falling birth rates and migration, should be based, in line with the priorities set by [SDG 8](#),

on the activation of programmes for the unemployed, and a major mobilisation of resources beyond any previous attempts through the adoption of new organisational potentials, engaging the participation of the public, private and social sector, so as to generate increased investment and employment beyond the MTFs (2017-2021) forecasts. The ultimate goal of these interventions is to prevent mostly young unemployed people from migrating and consequently to reverse falling birth rates within the next years. From that point onwards, stability will be secured and the other interventions in the economy and society will start bearing fruits.

The planning also provides for the employment of the high-caliber Greek university graduates, worldwide acknowledged as one of the most important competitive advantages of the country. This competitive advantage, paired with the strategic priority areas, is already supported by central government policies and has been embodied in tools that have already been launched. Illustrative examples include the new Investment law adopted in 2016 which promotes, among others, the creation of new jobs with emphasis on the employment of qualified human resources, and the Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework (PA) 2014-2020, which constitutes the main strategic plan for growth in Greece. The aforementioned policy priorities and tools foster a positive climate for investments oriented to healthy and high value-added entrepreneurship which will improve the country's positioning in the international division of labour.

### **Promoting sustainable economic growth through research and innovation (SDGs 8.2, 8.3, 9.5)**

For Greece, research, technological development and innovation (RTDI) lie at the core of the process of implementing the SDGs at national and regional level. Science and research has an essential function for the sustainable design of the economy and society. Research projects communicate new approaches and solutions to society. Economic research shows that sustainable economic growth in developed economies is mainly based on technological progress and innovation. The Greek research community and its institutional landscape seem to fulfill many of the requirements for a productive knowledge base for a sustainable economic growth.

RTDI actions for 2014-2020 programming period have been initiated and coordinated by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT) through the National Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) adopted in 2015. RIS3 strategies were drafted both at national and regional level and direct the interventions and programmes that will be funded through the European Structural and Investment Funds. In the context of the national RIS3 strategy and the underlying entrepreneurial discovery process, the programme aims to meet the needs of enterprises and enhance their competitiveness in the global market by modernising, diversifying and exploiting new opportunities in the Greek economy.

The 2030 Agenda and the shift to a low carbon economy through climate change mitigation policies and measures (see chapter 4.6) require a transformational agenda, where civil society, businesses and, indeed, all individuals have a central role to play. For this reason, special actions are planned by the National RIS3<sup>2</sup>. One of the key actions entitled “RESEARCH - CREATE - INNOVATE”

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2 These thematic sectors include: (i) Agrofood; (ii) Life Sciences & Health/Pharma; (iii) Information and Communication Technologies; (iv) Energy; (v) Environment and Sustainable Development; (vi) Transport and Logistics; (vii) Materials and Construction, and (viii) Culture - Creative Industries & Tourism.

addresses sustainable development issues under one of the 8 main thematic sectors of RIS3, namely the sector of “Environment and Sustainable Development”. The primary objectives of this action are to promote research activities in enterprises, to encourage collaboration between enterprises and public research organisations, to foster patenting of innovative products and services, to create linkages with European and international partners and last but not least to increase competitiveness, productivity and exports to international markets, increasing prospects for applying the principles of a circular economy model in practice.

Some examples of selected SDGs’ related intervention areas identified within the “Environment and Sustainable Development” sector all fully in line with the policies and measures presented under national priority 6 (chapter 4.6) related to [SDGs 6](#) and [12](#), include the development of innovative rural waste management technologies, the reuse of treated wastewater, the development of innovative clean water production technologies for agricultural use and the development of urban and industrial effluent treatment systems. Moreover emphasis will be given to the development of innovative, cheap and energy-efficient soil and groundwater decontamination technologies with a pilot application for the restoration of degraded areas. Furthermore, RTDI are planned for the mitigation and adaptation to climate change and natural disasters, such as mitigation actions on the carbon footprint of a business, desalination for arid islands and actions to protect coastal areas from sea level rise as well as protection of biodiversity in areas important for tourism and agricultural food production. Apart from the “Environment and Sustainable Development” sector, many other intervention areas found in the rest of the 8 main thematic sectors RIS3 serve also the SDGs, including the energy sector (e.g. reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of energy intensive industries either with CO<sub>2</sub> capture systems or by process intensification as well as measures to avoid carbon leakage).

Furthermore, at the national level, a Multiannual Budgeting Plan for Research Infrastructure (RI) has been adopted in order to shape a Greek R&D ecosystem around nuclei of excellence with considerable capacity and the need for conducting applied research in a competitive, state-of-the-art, internationalised environment. Several RIs of the Multi-Annual Budgeting Plan serve to achieve many of the SDGs, such as in the sector of environment and sustainable development as well as in the health and pharmaceutical sector.

#### **Enhancing sustainability in agricultural and rural development (SDGs 8.2, 8.3, 9.1, 9.4)**

With a view to achieving integrated development and sustainable competitiveness of rural areas, Greece has adopted the national strategy for sustainable rural development which is implemented through the National Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020. The national strategy for sustainable rural development seeks to fulfil three interdependent and complementary strategic objectives which contribute to mitigating the effects of the long-term recession due to current economic crisis and the country’s overall commitments to fiscal consolidation and sustainable development. The first strategic objective aims to create a strong, competitive and sustainable agri-food system, through entrepreneurship, innovation, the creation and maintenance of jobs, and the mitigation of structural problems. In particular, this objective is to be achieved through the implementation of measures designed to enhance the agri-food system competitiveness and the value of the agri-food chain, to upgrade human capital and to strengthen the entrepreneurial culture. The second strategic objective seeks to promote sustainability

of the agri-food system and rural areas, through the protection and integrated management of natural resources and the environment in rural areas, including the sustainable development and management of forestry systems and the mitigation to climate change. The third strategic objective aims at creating sustainable & multi-functional rural areas, by ensuring basic services and quality of life, through developing relevant infrastructure, diversifying rural economy with synergies between sectors and enhancing the social fabric in rural areas with actions promoting social inclusion and reducing poverty, such as job creation and provision of basic services, especially for vulnerable groups of the rural population (see chapter 6.2). Furthermore, the National Operational Programme for Fisheries and the Sea (OPFS) 2014-2020 is also an important development lever for the country. The main priority is to promote an environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fishery sector, with a view to reducing the impact on the marine environment, protecting and restoring marine biodiversity and ecosystems.

### **Fostering entrepreneurship and growth in the tourism sector (SDGs 8.3, 8.9, 9.1)**

Greece favours the adoption of policies and measures which improve the level and quality of investment in the tourism industry, with a particular emphasis on the promotion of efficient and effective tourism products and services. Within this framework, one of the key priorities of the Greek government is to identify and implement innovative and effective investment mechanisms, instruments, strategies and actions which stimulate tourism growth and development, maximise the economic and social returns, and promote good investment practices at national, regional and local level. In this regard, Greece has put forward the Alternative Tourism Initiative (ATI), an act planned within the Operational Programme “Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation” (2014-2020) under the Partnership Agreement (PA) 2014-2020. The primary objective of this initiative was to help enterprises improving their competitiveness and growth through extroversion and especially to boost tourism SMEs levels of competency and performance by offering goods and services of high added value and excellent quality. It covers all tourism services that are driven by the special needs, motives, and tourists’ preferences. In particular, the ATI aims to finance many investment projects which enhance the diversification and enrichment of Greek tourism product through the development of alternative forms of tourism (e.g. sport, sea, rural, gastronomic, medical and wellness tourism), and highlight the natural and cultural resources of the country, thus contributing to generating revenue for the local economies, combatting seasonality and amplifying tourism demand. In addition, in the context of this initiative, Greece has set as a core priority the transformation of the traditional “sun & beach” tourist product into a number of specific and higher-value tourism products which contribute to the sustainable economic growth of the country, including nautical tourism, city break tourism, cultural and religious tourism, medical tourism, and meetings and incentives (MICE) tourism (see chapter 6.2).

Moreover, in the context of implementing horizontal cross-sector insular policies, the General Secretariat of the Aegean and Insular Policy (GSAIP) of the Ministry of the Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy (MMAIP), contributes to the promotion of thematic/alternative tourism, such as cultural tourism, and therefore strengthens the sustainable economic growth of the islands, through the preservation of the local cultural and architectural heritage, and the financing of archaeological excavations or the shaping of archaeological sites of the Aegean Archipelago.



### **Investing in sustainable infrastructure and transport (SDGs 8.2, 8.3, 9.1, 9.4)**

Greece places great emphasis on creating quality, resilient, reliable and sustainable infrastructure which contributes substantially to economic development, social prosperity, and affordable and accessible services for all. To this end, the Greek government has taken initiatives and measures towards the development of a National Strategic Transport Plan (NTPG). The primary objective of the NTPG, which was launched in May 2017, is to serve as a basis for Greece's sustainable development on transport infrastructure and services, with a medium (2027) and long-term (2037) view. This contributes to enhancing competitiveness and economic growth on the country's transport sector. Transport integration implies horizontal measures across transport modes (road, rail, air, maritime) which are governed by different departments and public authorities as well as vertical measures across levels of government. The elaboration of the NTPG, as the backbone of the national transport policy (in terms of planning and implementation), plays an important role in integrating different sectors through close cooperation among them. The NTPG aligns with international commitments and links to other national strategies and priorities. It is also one of the main pillars of the national efforts towards sustainable development by way of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. Therefore, the NTPG achieves reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure planning and has a positive impact on the solicitation of funds for implementing projects, while it strengthens the economy by creating new jobs.

Furthermore, Greece attaches importance to enhancing its logistics sector which contributes significantly to sustained economic growth. The main objective of Greek Logistics is to provide effective, reliable, fully integrated and sustainable logistics services, which best meet the needs of customers by improving levels of service at a competitive cost. In this regard, the National Action Plan for Logistics, which is to be completed by 2020, supports government strategies for Greece to become a leading logistics hub at European level that contributes to fostering economic and social development, and enhancing sector competitiveness. Achieving this objective leads to more than just increasing international freight flows. It also gives emphasis on transit freight (and not transshipment) and especially on added value services, as this takes into account the country's current needs for development and increase of employment. In order to implement the above-mentioned policies, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport promotes, among other actions, the facilitation of transit freight handling procedures and added value services provision, the enhancement of the information flow related to logistics, the measurement of carbon footprint and publication of the results, and the development of City Logistics practices.

In addition, the Greek government implements development-oriented policies which promote the efficient operation of international shipping and maritime markets and the provision of maritime transport services through mainly the conclusion of relevant international agreements and Free Trade Agreements between the EU and third countries (EU FTAs). In parallel, through the revision of the National Ports Strategy (2013-2018), the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy aims at boosting the technological upgrade of port services in order Greek ports to be innovative and competitive and to contribute to sustainable economic development in the context of blue growth. In this connection, Greece plans also to adopt measures and actions designed to further enhance port security based on the provisions of relevant international and national legal instruments. Maritime transport is also vital for the territorial cohesion of the islands and thus it is directly related to their economic growth. In this regard, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and



Insular Policy aims at establishing the concept of Transport Equivalence, in order to upgrade the potential of commuting and/or communication between the islands and the mainland, especially in cases such as small and/or segregated islands with few inhabitants.

Moreover, Greece attributes importance to the role played by advanced information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the digital transformation of the Greek infrastructure and economy. In this regard, the Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media elaborates and implements infrastructure development policies which aim to enhance accessibility to information and to remote communication, to strengthen the economy and the competitiveness of the country, and to promote economic and social cohesion in the areas of its competencies. Emphasis is also placed on the development of high-quality communication and digital policy as well as telecommunications and postal services under conditions of healthy competition. These overarching objectives are reflected in the National Digital Strategy (NDS) adopted in December 2016 with a view to creating the road map and framework for the country's digital development. The NDS focuses on seven areas of intervention with specific priorities for each area, which contribute to fostering an innovative and sustainable economic growth, including the: (i) development of new generation connectivity infrastructures; (ii) acceleration of the digitisation of the economy; (iii) stimulation of the ICT industry in order to develop the digital economy and employment; (iv) empowerment of human resources with digital skills; (v) radical reconsideration of the way digital public services are provided; (vi) removal of exclusions and the diffusion of the benefits of the digital economy; and (vii) strengthening of security and trust.

#### **4.2 Promoting full employment and decent work for all (SDG 8)**

Enhancing social cohesion and strengthening employment are among the first priorities of the Greek government. Employment remains a challenge since prolonged recession from 2010 onwards has led to a contraction of the GDP by 25%, the shutting down of enterprises and an increased unemployment rate. The situation in the labour market, which is characterised by high unemployment rates, especially in terms of youth and long-term unemployment, still represents a great challenge, despite signs of stabilisation and encouraging trends over the last three years. Unemployment reached its peak in 2013 (27.8%), but since then it has been on an improving trend. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2017, it has fallen to 20.2%; however this continues to be a high rate considering the fact that at the same quarter 75.7% of the unemployed are long-term unemployed.

The financial crisis has not only contributed in shooting up the unemployment rate, but also in changing the employment structure and the quality of jobs. Proportionally more jobs were lost in construction and processing compared to other sectors; as a result, their share in the overall employment was reduced in favour of services. Part-time employment among salaried workers has increased rapidly (from 4.8% in 2008 to 10.7% in 2017), both because of the increased preference shown by employers when recruiting and due to the conversion of a large number of full-time contracts to part-time or rotation work contracts. In recent years, a general deregulation of industrial relations has taken place in Greece in an attempt to forcefully change the employment model. The sole objective was the prevalence of underpaid and over-flexible employment relationship lacking dignity and guaranteed fundamental trade union rights. The main objective of the policies and measures pursued focus on reversing the deregulation of the labour market

that has taken place in our country from 2010 onwards and reintroducing the key principles of the European Social Model.

### **Main policies and measures**

#### **Achieving full employment and decent work for all, including for the most vulnerable and the youth (SDG 8.5, 8.6)**

##### **Addressing undeclared work**

Undeclared work reduces social wellbeing, undermines fair competition, causes distortions in markets and has an impact on tax and pension funds revenues. The goals set in order to address undeclared work are: (i) its inclusion in formal economy; (ii) creating equal terms of competition; (iii) addressing tax and contributions' evasion; and (iv) avoiding adverse effects on enterprises due to high costs of compliance.

With a view to implementing the International Labour Organization (ILO) Recommendation (No. 204) concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy, adopted in June 2015, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity has proceeded to undertake certain initiatives in the area of undeclared work, in the framework of technical assistance provided by the International Labour Office and funded by the European Commission. More specifically, Greece in close collaboration with the social partners and the ILO, as part of a project funded by the European Commission, on "Supporting the transition from the informal to the formal economy and addressing undeclared work in Greece", produced, through a participative and consultative process, a report on the Diagnosis of Undeclared Work in Greece. The Diagnostic Report, endorsed by the Greek government and the social partners in July 2016, provides a set of 25 policy recommendations that reflect the constituents' commitment to the ILO's vision of a balanced approach combining incentives with compliance measures, as enshrined in the above-mentioned ILO Recommendation No. 204.

Reaching a tripartite agreement on the main characteristics and drivers of informality in Greece led to the design and finally, through tripartite social dialogue, the endorsement of a 3-year Roadmap for addressing undeclared work, in October 2016. This Roadmap aims to contain a balanced regulatory and policy framework for preventive and appropriate corrective measures that will facilitate the transition to the formal economy and tackle undeclared work. The Roadmap contains action tables with concrete timelines, grouped in five different sections: institutional reforms and actions; data interoperability; policy measures; information and awareness campaigns; and miscellaneous actions.

By virtue of article 15, law 4468/2017, a special tripartite Division for tackling undeclared work, under Greece's tripartite Supreme Labour Council, was established for the implementation of the planning of the various actions included in the Roadmap under these sections. This tripartite body is responsible for implementing the holistic integrated strategic approach towards tackling undeclared work, including the monitoring of the roadmap. The ratification of the International Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (C129) is included in the policy measures with a maximum implementation timeframe of 24 months, that is, until 31st December 2018. The ratification of this Convention will contribute to further identifying and addressing racial discrimination phenomena that may be encountered among undeclared rural migrant workers.

In the context of the aforementioned 3-year Roadmap, actions are underway on: (i) changing the institutional framework of fines for undeclared work; (ii) regulating the system of labour voucher (social security coverage for farm workers); (iii) issuing legislative regulations to combat bogus self-employment (work contracts hiding dependent working relationships); (iv) upgrading the geographical scope of competence and the institutional support to the Labour Inspectorate body (SEPE), with the view to stepping up the fight against delinquent practices relating to labour; (v) developing pilot programmes of targeted inspections, with a view to introducing innovative practices to be followed by SEPE, and (vi) promoting an awareness-raising campaign in schools on undeclared work.

### **Implementing Active Employment Policies**

In 2015, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, in order to better correspond to the needs of the unemployed and rationalise the management of public and EU resources, re-designed the employment programmes, so that they be targeted at dynamic sectors of the Greek economy, provide targeted training and counseling to the unemployed or new entrepreneurs, refer to local interventions in regions with high unemployment rates and lead to knowledge certification and upgrading of skills, based on the labour market needs. The Labour Market Needs Identification Mechanism makes an essential contribution to the effectiveness of employment and training programmes, by providing employment and vocational training policy planning bodies with the required information and data on dynamic sectors and occupations (law 4368/2016). The implementation of the abovementioned policies has already shown some positive results that are observed in the statistical annex. The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity aims at accelerating the rate of net increase in employment through the creation of quality and sustainable jobs. The Strategic Framework for Redesigning Active Employment Policies drafted by the said Ministry is under consultation with the social partners and specifies the directions to be followed in order to tackle this dual challenge in the years to come, by balancing the effective support to the unemployed with the gradual modernisation in the implementation of programmes.

### **Employment promotion programmes**

Given that the private sector cannot create an adequate number of jobs that will substantially reduce the unemployment rate, the provision of guaranteed employment through support programmes for the unemployed is part of the policy implemented in order to boost demand in the labour market. In this context, the following are included: (i) provision of guaranteed employment to the unemployed in the public sector (through public work); and (ii) subsidising private enterprises in order to boost employment in the private sector.

### **Public Work Schemes**

Public Work Schemes play an important role in the overall strategy of the Greek government for active employment policies aiming at combating the unemployment of high risk long-term unemployed persons and reintegrating them into the labour market through the acquisition of work experience and new skills. The new public work scheme was launched as a pilot programme in 17, at first, and then 34 municipalities, identified as high unemployment areas and with the highest long-term unemployment rates and was later implemented in the remaining 274 municipalities of Greece. Regarding the first phase of the 17 pilot municipalities, the aim, i.e. to assist

the long-term unemployed to return to the labour market, was achieved, since the vast majority of beneficiaries were persons that had remained unemployed for 3-5 years. The International Labour Organisation provided technical assistance in designing and implementing the above mentioned programmes:

#### **Job guarantee programme in the private sector**

The new job guarantee programmes in the private sector aim at creating new jobs and providing incentives to enterprises, in order to hire unemployed persons by subsidising their wage and non-wage costs. In designing employment and experience acquisition programmes in 2016, important innovations were introduced concerning the implementation of active employment policies by the Hellenic Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED). For example, the programmes are now targeted at special groups of unemployed persons (the long-term unemployed, unemployed over 50, young unemployed up to 29, unemployed aged 30-49), they are more flexible and the employers have access -through online services- to the OAED register of the unemployed and to their CVs, but not to their personal data or other information that may constitute grounds for discrimination (sex, age, disability). The employment programmes that are co-financed by the Partnership Agreement (PA) 2014-2020 are implemented through the State Aid Information System (PSKE), where certified procedures are put in place ensuring single management, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

#### **National Action Plan on Youth Guarantee**

In the framework of Council Recommendation on Youth Guarantee (2013/C120/01/22-04-2013), the National Action Plan on Youth Guarantee is put in place, the programmes of which are co-financed by the EU Youth Employment Initiative. The main challenge is the young persons' smooth transition from school to employment and halting the brain drain, which is a consequence of unemployment. Migration due to unemployment deprives the country of its growth potential to a large extent and creates an impediment to the country's upgrading in the international division of labour, with evident anti-growth results. The actions for young people refer to employment promotion, acquisition of work experience, apprenticeships and support for entrepreneurship. In the current social and economic climate, self-employment and entrepreneurship are highly important alternatives to salaried work. In this context, programmes for the promotion of entrepreneurship offer support and guidance to unemployed young persons in order to develop by themselves a sustainable business plan and implement it at the first stage after the establishment of the enterprise.

Measures and actions for the substantial reduction of the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET), which pertains to [SDG 8.5](#), are also being implemented through: (i) the European Globalisation Fund (EGF), supporting workers who are made redundant due to structural changes and the global economic crisis; and (ii) NEETs on Board, a project within the framework of the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), aimed to support the workforce through jobs relating to the development of European coasts, seas and oceans.

#### **Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)**

The development of the SSE constitutes a horizontal strategic priority for the Government, as it contributes to economic development, combating unemployment and social exclusion, and

deepening democracy in production and work. By law 4430/2016, a new institutional framework was developed that expands “doing business with social value” beyond the so far known Social Cooperative Enterprises, setting rules and developing a conducive environment for a Social Economy addressing all citizens and all productive activities. The law aims at the clear institutional reconstruction and the renewal of the ecosystem of the SSE with the emphasis on the creation of collective and social benefits by the SSE entities, the dissemination of the SSE’s practices in all possible sectors of economic activity and the support of self-managed productive projects and collective social enterprises. The law provides for the establishment of the Special Secretariat for the SSE, as the first distinct administrative unit in the Greek administration for the sector. First major task of this unit was the mapping of the SSE entities based on both administrative data, as registered with the Social and Solidarity Economy Registry of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, and real data, collected through field research. Taking into account the analysis resulting from the two sources of data, the “Action Plan for the development of the SSE ecosystem 2017-2023”, mainly financed by the PA 2014-2020, has been developed and can be summarised by the following Actions: (i) Support Structures for the SSE entities; (ii) Direct Subsidies for the SSE entities; (iii) Financial Instruments for the SSE entities; (iv) Systemic Interventions for the development of the SSE Sector; (v) Actions under the Technical Assistance of the European Commission.

### **Protecting labour rights (SDG 8.8, 8.3, 8.7)**

#### **Health and Safety at Work**

Achieving a safe and healthy working environment constitutes a key feature of socio-economic welfare and progress in a modern and well-organised society. It also contributes to the promotion of economic development and employment by ensuring quality and productivity at work. As an outcome of tripartite agreement, a Ministerial Decision on the adoption of the National Strategy for Health and Safety at Work 2016-2020 was issued in 2017 (O.G.3757/B/25.10.2017). The establishment of the National Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) System will take place next, as this is provided by the Strategy. The development of a digitally encoded guide of the institutional framework in force, as a user friendly tool for businesses to comply with national and EU OSH law, is also anticipated.

#### **Upgrading the skills of workers in precarious jobs through the certification of vocational qualifications**

The “Action Plan for the structural adjustment of workers and enterprises to changes” has been approved by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, in October 2016. Through the establishment and codification of current policies, measures and tools, the aim is to introduce a comprehensive package of measures, for the programming period 2014-2020, that will apply to workers of the private sector employed in enterprises in economic downturn for whom an upgrading of skills is considered necessary, in accordance with the Labour Market Needs Identification Mechanism, in dynamic branches and occupations and sectors of the National Strategy for Smart Specialisation. To achieve this goal, the Plan is based on the broad, horizontal cooperation of the competent public services and bodies and on the development of partnerships with representatives of the social partners. To this end, the adoption of a holistic approach is required for the prevention and management of restructuring, which, with the active involvement of all

parties, shall be based on clear and transparent synergies between political, institutional, legal and financial mechanisms. In response to and complementing all the above, a “holistic” programme was prepared, regarding the structural adjustment of workers and enterprises that will not only contribute to retaining current jobs, but will also increase their number in the next three years. The Action Plan attempts to address the above mentioned problems by horizontal support measures and vertical and targeted interventions in branches, individual undertakings and workers. The Action Plan has been approved by the European Commission.

### **Protecting migrants’ employment rights**

The Immigration and Social Integration Code (law 4251/2014) ensures that third country citizen employees, including seasonal workers, enjoy equal treatment. Moreover, special care is taken for granting residence permit to those third country citizens who have been employed under particularly exploitative working conditions or as minors, as well as to third country citizens employed as domestic workers or as minors’ and elderly companions. Mapping and registering the professional and educational background and skills of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection, is being planned and going to be undertaken soon. The project aims at developing a specific procedure for identifying the skills and professional/academic profile of applicants and beneficiaries of international protection. To this end, the “toolkit of skills and qualifications” developed by the European Commission will be used. At the same time, the Code aims to address the needs of the national labour market by regulating, for example, matters related to the granting of residence permit to high-skilled employees or to workforce urgently needed in the agricultural sector. It also contributes to developing an investment-friendly institutional environment, by regulating matters in relation to the residence permit of third country investors and real estate owners.

### **Unemployment protection**

Under the new legislative provisions (law 4461/2017, article 92), unemployed persons registered with the OAED, who have worked occasionally, may be certified as being in continued unemployment and thus maintain their entitlement to unemployment benefit.

### **Ratification of the Protocol to the International Labour Convention No. 29 on Forced Labour**

In June 2014, the International Labour Conference adopted the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention (1930), in order to compliment the ILC 29 (adopted in 1930), with regard to the prevention of human trafficking for the purpose of forced or compulsory labour, as well as protection and compensation to victims. In September 2015, the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention (1930) and the International Labour Recommendation No 203 on “Supplementary measures for the effective suppression of forced labour” were submitted to the Hellenic Parliament, along with a proposal in favour of the ratification of the Protocol. Taking into account the importance both Greece and the EU place on the ratification of this fundamental standard setting ILO instrument, and pursuant to ILC144 on prior tripartite consultation, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity convened on 29 January 2018 a meeting of the competent Supreme Labour Council’s Division, so that the tripartite body deliver an opinion on the possibility of ratifying the Protocol. Following a tripartite unanimous decision on pursuing the ratification of the ILO legal instrument, the Ministry is initiating the relevant submission procedure for ratification by the Parliament.



### **Upgrading the institutional framework of vocational training (SDG 4.4)**

Currently, Greece faces a dual challenge; first to provide effective support to a large number of long-term unemployed persons in order to enhance their employability and offer opportunities for work experience, and second to modernise the design and implementation of active labour market policies. This is an important challenge since the needs of the unemployed and young NEETS are great and complex, while resources are limited. Actions are currently under way in order to upgrade the institutional framework of vocational training aiming mainly at a profound reform. The goals and key principles of the new system's organisation shall be the following: (i) linking training programmes to the country's growth potentials through the mechanism to identify labour market needs; (ii) exploring the possibility of increasing the training institutions involved, i.e. by including universities etc.; and (iii) ensuring quality for the entire system (trainers, curricula, training material, infrastructure, assessment and certification processes).

A number of legislative means have been adopted, such as law 4430/2016 on improving the methods for the integration of the unemployed into the labour market, which provides (article 56, as amended by article 11 of law 4455/2017) that the unemployed persons registered with the OAED, who intend to participate in educational or vocational training programmes, shall remain registered with the OAED as unemployed and the time spent for their education or vocational training shall be considered as period of unemployment, provided that they meet the conditions of the same article.

### **4.3 Addressing poverty and social exclusion, and providing universal access to quality health care services (SDGs 1, 2, 3)**

This national priority is linked to [SDGs 1, 2](#) and [3](#), and also to the goals of a fair and sustainable development promoted by the National Growth Strategy, as the latter aims at the productive reconstruction of the economy, by creating an inclusive and competitive labour market, and having as an urgent task to reduce unemployment and protect labour rights. Reforms and policies in the field of social protection, which have been implemented in recent years, aim at fighting poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, phenomena that have increased sharply since 2008, due to the economic crisis and budgetary constraints. In 2015, the proportion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion was 35.7%, when the EU28 average was 23.7%, but a gradual improvement of the social situation in the coming years is expected due to rising employment and social security system reforms.

It is worth noting that Greece addresses the issue of social sustainability in the context of the EU initiative «European pillar of social rights». Taking into account the importance of enhancing social rights in times of crisis, the Greek government gives priority to the promotion and consolidation of the European Pillar of Social Rights with a view to realising the rights and principles of the Pillar at national and community level, in order to establish a stable legal framework for the protection of work, collective bargaining, social dialogue and fair working conditions.

#### **Main policies and measures**

### **Social Solidarity Income and other reforms and interventions (SDGs 1, 2)**

The most notable recent reform is the Social Solidarity Income (SSI) scheme which was fully implemented in February 2017. For many years, Greece was one of the few EU countries without

a guaranteed minimum income system. Now, Greece is in compliance with Council Recommendation 92/441 on common criteria concerning sufficient resources and social assistance in social protection systems. The SSI is a welfare programme that is addressed to households living in extreme poverty and complements the policies to combat poverty and social exclusion. In order to be eligible for the programme, households must simultaneously meet all income, assets and residency conditions laid down by law 4445/2016. As far as the residence criteria are concerned, homeless people are also taken into consideration. The SSI Programme includes three pillars: (i) income support, defined as the difference between the guaranteed amount and the household income. The guaranteed amount is determined according to the number and age of the members of the beneficiary unit and may vary from EUR 200 to 900 monthly guaranteed amount; (ii) access and interconnection to supplementary social benefits and services, as the case may be and according to the needs of the beneficiaries; and (iii) activation and promotion services for the beneficiaries of the Programme, such as accepting a job offer, participating in vocational training programmes and returning to the education system.

Due to the fact that budgetary targets were over-achieved during the years 2016 and 2017, a part of revenues was redistributed to selected vulnerable population groups. In 2017, law 4501/2017 established the distribution of a total of EUR 720 million, to almost all households at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion (3.4 million people approximately), based on income or other criteria. Similarly, in 2016, by virtue of law 4445/2016, the total amount of EUR 617 million was distributed among a large number of pensioners based on the criteria of low monthly pension amount (for pensions up to EUR 850), covering almost 1,600,000 cases. The creation of a single body for the award and payment of welfare benefits, and the modernisation, through electronic procedures, of the award and payment of social solidarity income, as well as of other services involving citizens' transaction with welfare structures at central or local level, is envisaged. Moreover, Greece has developed a food and meals distribution system through the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) and the National School Meals Programme. All these contribute to the fight against poverty, deep poverty and social exclusion and the rationalisation of the social protection system. In addition, it is stressed that, in order to protect vulnerable groups from inadequate housing, or lack thereof, legislation has been introduced which aims at defining the framework of minimum standards for the homeless accommodation structures and the setting of the terms and conditions for the implementation of the programmes, with a view to provide the necessary social care and primary health care services to the homeless.

Apart from these reforms and interventions, Greece has implemented a large number of other social policy reforms in the areas of pensions, health and family allowances, including the creation of new registries in the context of a mechanism for the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of social inclusion policies that is developed for the first time. This national mechanism was established by law 4445/2016 and aims to identify the social needs of citizens, coordinate the formulation of policies for social inclusion and cohesion, monitor and evaluate their implementation, identify the priorities of social solidarity based on emergencies, contribute to strengthening information, transparency, efficiency and the effectiveness of the social protection system, and specify policies and actions based on the characteristics of those at risk of poverty, extreme poverty and social exclusion. It is organised on two levels: central government and regional/local government. At central level, it consists mainly of



the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity and other competent ministries, where its Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion Directorate contributes to the reconstruction and modernisation of social policies (mandatory reporting, coordinating and monitoring social inclusion policies, setting up registries of beneficiaries, bodies and programmes, carrying out social inclusion surveys and co-operating with experts). At the subnational level, the main actors are the Social Welfare Directorates of the Regions, the Social Services of the Municipalities and the Community Centres, the latter having as a role to further support the municipalities in the implementation of social protection policies and to combat social exclusion, as well as to develop a local reference point for the reception and provision of welfare services. As the first reception area, the Community Centres contribute to the work of the municipalities' social services.

### **Ensuring universal access to quality health care services (SDG 3)**

Closely linked to tackling poverty and social exclusion, is the access to quality health services, because, as the World Health Organisation underlines, poverty and social exclusion are the main determinants of health, which, in its turn, then affects the above causal factors. In this direction, Greece has combined in one national priority the fight against poverty and social exclusion with universal access to quality health services. At the same time, the formation of health policies based on the perception of health as a social good and right, is in line with the 2030 Agenda and the National Growth Strategy, whereby investing in health, is a basic requirement for safeguarding human dignity, combating poverty and inequalities, ensuring social cohesion and advancing economic development. Improving population's health leads to increased productivity and reduced healthcare and rehabilitation costs. In view of the above, it should be noted that the Ministry of Health has already developed policies that contribute to the effective implementation of SDGs and has taken important initiatives on new legislation, strategies and innovative programmes, such as those mentioned below.

Special attention is also given to gender equality in health care, as is evident in the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020 (NAPGE), prepared by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE), Ministry of Interior, where one of the strategic objectives set for the period 2016-2020 is the elimination of gender inequalities in health, including the integration of a gender perspective in health care policies and the elimination of gender stereotypes in health services for special population groups.

### **Free access to the public health care system and healthcare for uninsured citizens (SDG 3.8)**

With the adoption of law 4368/2016 and a Joint Ministerial Decision, free access to the public health system is allowed for the uninsured citizens and vulnerable social groups, in terms of nursing and medical care. Free access is ensured by minimising bureaucracy. As regards the contribution in pharmaceutical spending, a new system of income criteria is introduced in order to relieve the vulnerable social groups. Also, through a healthcare card issued by the hospitals, refugees, irrespective of their legal status, who need systematic medical care and live in the country, are covered.

Achieving universal access to quality health care services requires, inter alia, the development throughout the territory of an upgraded and modernised primary health care network.

The Ministry of Health introduced law 4486/2017, which ensures the organisation and operation of the Decentralised Regional Health Units, providing integrated primary health care services, to all age groups of the population. These units do not restrict their services only in the management of diseases, but extend them to health promotion, prevention, systematic monitoring of patients' health, physical rehabilitation and social reintegration, taking into account that, from an integrated health care perspective, the disease is not just a biological phenomenon, as it has serious social implications. With a view to the unhindered access of patients with serious diseases to all high-cost and innovative therapies, an integrated mechanism for the evaluation and compensation of pharmaceutical products, which ensures scientifically sound, cost-effective and equitable access to safe, effective and innovative medicines, as well as the sustainability of the National Health System, law 4512/2018 was adopted. In the context of dealing with refugee and migratory flows, the Ministry of Health cooperates with other competent ministries and bodies for the protection of human rights and the optimal treatment of extraordinary circumstances. In this direction, it has given priority to protecting the health of refugees, migrants and the entire population of the country, through organising mass vaccinations, exceeding 30,000, with the help of UNICEF, WHO, the EU and various NGOs, and in line with the recommendations of the National Immunisation Committee.

#### **Promotion of mental health and well-being (SDG 3.4)**

The psychiatric reform is implemented through the "PSYCHARGOS" Programme, which aims at shifting the provision of health services from an "asylum treatment" to a "community care" perspective. Law 4461/2017 initiated the administrative reform of the mental health system, placing emphasis on decentralisation, democratic functioning, and strengthening the human resources of the system. In order to achieve the improvement of the quality of mental health services, a Quality Assessment Body for mental health units has been set up, and staff training actions are being implemented.

With law 4316/2014, the National Observatory for Dementia and Alzheimer's disease was established, in order to support the national policy of combating the disease and protecting the rights of patients and their families. Within the scope of this Observatory, a National Action Plan on Dementia-Alzheimer has been developed.

It is worth mentioning that among the actions aimed at the social reintegration of people with chronic mental disorders, the Social Mental Health Cooperatives were introduced, an innovative form of social entrepreneurship, in which people with mental health problems as well as healthy people are engaged in professional activities. These Cooperatives have been assessed as a best practice for socio-economic reintegration at European level.

#### **Increase in health financing and recruitment of health workforce (SDG 3.c)**

The share of public health expenditure was increased from 4.7% of GDP in 2015 to 5.1% in 2016 and 2017. Medical and care staff was recruited at health institutions in which a significant shortage had been found. In order to address the issue of inequalities of access to and provision of health services, articles 39, 40 and 41 of law 4368/2016 regulate issues related to the mobility of doctors in the National Health System (NHS), while incentives are set for doctors who offer their services in the arid and insular regions of the country.

### **Reducing maternal and child mortality (SDG 3.1, 3.2)**

According to the latest available data of the Hellenic Statistical Authority (2015), the ratio of neonatal mortality in Greece is 2.83 per 1,000 live births, the deaths of children up to 4 years is 4.5 per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality index is 3 per 100,000 live births. Hence, **SDG 3.1** and **3.2** have already been reached.

Considering the above, the Greek government, and especially the Ministry of Health, must overcome important challenges, related mainly to budgetary constraints. In this direction and in order to achieve **SDG 3** and its targets, policies will be pursued with a view to: (i) ensuring and improving the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of health services, with particular emphasis on primary health care services; (ii) using statistical data for the implementation of evidence-based policies tackling the most important diseases (cancer, diabetes, childhood obesity, hypertension, coronary artery disease, diabetes mellitus); (iii) cooperating with the EU Member States to reach affordable and socially acceptable prices for innovative medicines; (iv) ensuring transparency in the healthcare procurement system, aimed at rational allocation of available financial resources.

### **4.4 Reducing social and regional inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities for all (SDGs 10, 5)**

A declared cornerstone of the 2030 Agenda is to end poverty and hunger everywhere, to combat inequalities within and among countries, to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, to protect human rights and to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In this respect, universal access to health care, education and social protection, is a prime objective for Greece. This national priority relates to **SDGs 10** and **5** for the implementation of which concrete policies and measures and important legislation that secure access of the most vulnerable social groups to public services and goods have been established. At the same time special attention is given to the elimination of gender inequalities, the smooth integration of immigrants and other population groups into Greek society and the reduction of regional disparities.

#### **Main policies and measures**

#### **Combating regional disparities (SDG 10.2, 10.3)**

In the last decade, since the onset of the economic crisis, Greeks are facing lower living standards, and social and income inequalities seem to be increasing. On top of that, Greece faces the problem of regional disparities, as its territory includes a large number of mountainous and insular areas, which lack resources and infrastructures and face different developmental challenges. This peculiarity differentiates the development process, mainly from the point of view of unequal concentration of population and the diversification of the productive base, thus hindering the development of a polycentric growth model.

Greece, as a marine and an insular country itself, comprising thousands of islands of different sizes and geographies, attributes importance to the issue of insularity and its promotion at European level. For Greece, addressing the issues of geographical dispersion and segregation, coupled with the lack of resources and infrastructure, especially of very small islands, necessitates the adoption of integrated policies, measures and actions which counterbalance the disparities of insularity and boost regional development. Insular policies, can strongly benefit from the 2030 Agenda, which provides overall developmental perspectives through the SDGs, and may thus

be used as an insular-policy agenda. It goes without saying that insular policies contribute significantly to reducing inequalities, strengthening the territorial, fiscal and social cohesion of the islands, and developing smart, sustainable islands and resilient island societies. It is within this context that the General Secretariat of the Aegean and Insular Policy (GSAIP), of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular policy (MMAIP), has been developing an integrated insular strategy making reference to most of the SDGs. The objectives of the insular policies pursued by GSAIP are threefold: (i) to introduce institutional instruments and measures, such as the Council of Insular Policy, the insular observatory, and “insular clause”, according to which all legislative provisions should make special reference to insularity measures; (ii) to promote standard responsibilities and measures in the vital sectors of infrastructures, water sufficiency, energy and protection of the natural and built environment of all the islands; and (iii) to put forward ad hoc actions which support financially or technically small-island communities, (e.g. donations of medical equipment, fire-brigades, books for school libraries, awards and scholarships to pupils), with a view to introducing an integrated development plan for very small islands.

In this connection, it should be stressed that in the context of the inner-connectivity between islands, the role of Greek ports is becoming increasingly important. Greek ports’ role is not only to assist in international trade, but also in meeting the needs of local communities, including the reduction of inequalities, while ensuring coherence of national and European environment. Insular ports, in combination with marine transport network contribute to territorial cohesion. The participation of Greek Port-Cities in the main and extensive European Transport Network (5 ports at Core Network & 20 ports at Comprehensive Network) as well as the gradual implementation of projects contribute to the mitigation of social and regional disparities. Furthermore, the completion of the country’s main motorway network and the development of other infrastructure projects facilitate also the access to the most difficult regions. The free broadband connection to residents of the remote islands of the country offers great opportunities for the islands’ better accessibility and lift of isolation. Furthermore, the pilot implementation of the electronic version of the consignment note e-CMR (European Convention on Inland Transport) as well as the development of the National Strategic Transport Plan (NTPG) and the Action Plan for Logistics, are expected to help lift the islands’ isolation.

With the aim of reducing inequalities in the countryside, the National Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 which promotes, among others, local development in rural areas, provides support for areas with natural or other specific handicaps such as mountainous and less-favoured areas which account for 61% of the country’s total area and 64% of rural areas. These areas are characterised by limited land use potential and high production costs. For this reason, support (i.e. compensatory allowance) is foreseen to offset additional costs and/or income foregone caused by agricultural activity under such adverse conditions. In addition, within this framework, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food is also promoting development via local communities’ initiatives. The design and implementation of integrated development strategies, involving local partners, civil society, local economic and social actors, is effectively addressing the economic, social, environmental and demographic challenges faced by rural areas. These interventions aim at achieving integrated, long-term and sustainable rural development, addressing poverty, regional disparities and social exclusion in rural areas, creating jobs and improving the quality of life.

**Box 1: Bridging the digital divide: The Hellenic Rural Broadband Project**

The core vision of the Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media is to ensure that “no one is left behind” by means of bridging the digital divide and promoting digital cohesion through improving connectivity across the country and offering broadband services to rural areas, thus contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. The General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post is the competent national authority for the preparation and implementation of the National Broadband Plan, which encompasses various activities/projects that reflect to this vision, financed by national resources and by the European structural and investment funds (ESIF). The Rural Broadband Project was awarded in the framework of the European Broadband Awards 2017, in Category 3: “Territorial cohesion in rural and remote areas”. The Rural Broadband is a nationwide, large scale project, supported by ESIF and implemented via a public-private partnership scheme. It provides broadband infrastructure coverage and affordable connectivity services to the citizens of remote, disadvantageous areas of Greece, previously deprived of the benefits of broadband. With this project, high-capacity networks reached remote areas where private players would not invest due to low commercial value. A mix of technologies (i.e. fibre and wireless backhauling, wireless and VDSL access) has been used to provide broadband infrastructure availability to NGA-white areas all over the country. The geographical span of the infrastructure covers almost 45% of the Greek territory and provides broadband connectivity to 5,077 villages/settlements and 525,287 inhabitants of rural and insular areas of the country.

**Social inclusion for immigrants and other population groups (SDG 10.2, 10.7)**

Facilitating safe, organised and regular migration and developing efficient migration policies (SDG 10.7) is a principal objective of the Ministry for Migration Policy, which was established in 2016, in order to enhance coordination, supervision and cohesion of the policies for third country citizens’ first reception, asylum, immigration and social inclusion. Among the numerous policy and legislative initiatives already undertaken, the Immigration and Social Inclusion Code (law 4251/2014) needs to be mentioned, which was drafted in line with the principles of good regulation and with the aim to reduce the operational and administrative workload and costs, improve the services offered to interested citizens and facilitate the operation of the competent services, through in particular the simplification of procedures and the operation of one-stop-shops for migrants. At present, 57 one-stop-shops for migrants operate in Greece and they assist third country citizens throughout all the stages of the procedure.

The Code regulates the obligations and rights of third country citizens residing in Greece. It facilitates the access of third country citizens who fulfill the relevant requirements to long-term resident status, which is associated with increased rights. Furthermore, the Code aims at ensuring the legal residence of third country citizens and facilitating migrants in vulnerable situation in maintaining or regaining legal status of residence, which is crucial when it comes to protecting their rights and lifting exclusion regarding their access to social goods and services (education, labour market, public health services). In parallel, the Code aims to address the needs of the national labour market by regulating, for example, matters related to the granting of residence permit to high-skilled employees or to workforce urgently needed in the agricultural sector. It also contributes to developing an investment-friendly institutional environment,

by regulating matters in relation to the residence permit of third country investors and real estate owners.

Social inclusion and equal treatment of groups with cultural particularities, such as the Roma population, represents a special challenge, in the sense that it should ensure both harmonious integration within the broader social fabric, as well as respect for the personality. The establishment of the Special Secretariat for the Social Inclusion of the Roma (law 4430/2016) in the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity and the development of a national strategy for the social inclusion of this population group, which includes interventions in the areas of housing, education, health and employment, illustrates a central concern for this social issue. The strategic goal, as defined in the National Strategic Framework for ROMA is “to lift the conditions of social exclusion and create the conditions for the social inclusion of the ROMA legally living in the country”. Important tools for the achievement of this strategic goal, are the online geographic and population database, in order to update the mapping of all ROMA settlements in the country, and the operation of an online consultation platform.

### **Achieving Gender Equality (SDG 5.1, 5.2, 5.5)**

Achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG 5) constitutes one of the main priorities for Greece. This overarching priority is pursued by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE)/Ministry of Interior which is the competent governmental agency responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring the implementation of policies on equality between women and men in all sectors. The issue of gender equality is comprehensively addressed by the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020 (NAPGE), prepared by the GSGE after being consulted by representatives of civil society, academia, and public administration. The NAPGE, which is aligned with the main priorities of the European Union and the United Nations on gender equality, sets for the period 2016-2020 a number of strategic objectives. These include social inclusion and equal treatment of women facing multiple discrimination, combating violence against women in family, in the workplace and in society, support women’s participation in the labour market, promotion of equal opportunities in education, media, culture and sports, elimination of gender inequalities in health, and equal participation of women in decision-making positions.

In particular, emphasis is placed on designing targeted policies for women who suffer multiple discrimination, and enhance the collection and diffusion of gender disaggregated data. A multi-sectoral support of women who are victims of gender violence and/or multiple discrimination (e.g. immigrants, refugees, women with disabilities, Roma, single mothers), awareness campaigns among the overall population, and networking development are also covered by the NAPGE. Furthermore, the NAPGE encourages women’s participation in the labour market through promoting female entrepreneurship and the principle of equality in enterprises, collecting and providing data on gender differences in the labour market outcomes, improving the status of women in the agricultural sector, and reconciling work and family life. Equally important, emphasis is put on ensuring equal participation of women in decision-making positions through accelerating the equal participation of women in all areas of public and professional life, particularly in decision-making positions in parliament and in local/regional government, and strengthening and developing the capacity and skills of women to actively participate in processes and decision-making and in leadership positions.



It is worth mentioning that the policies and actions of the GSGE on gender equality have been recognised on a European and international level, with both the EU and the United Nations selecting them as national best practices. A particular example is the report of the 61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW61) of the United Nations, which underlines the efforts undertaken by Greece on gender equality, among 35 other selected countries from all UN geographic regions. In particular, the Report reaffirms that the SDGs constitute a key priority at the national level, with Greece having completed all necessary steps for adapting its national policies and frameworks to the 2030 Agenda as well as that national gender equality frameworks are fully aligned with the Beijing Platform for Action and with the SDGs.

Furthermore, apart from the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, the Ministry for Migration Policy systematically collaborates with all relevant ministries in order to combat human trafficking and the protection of victims, while it has already implemented and intends to continue to carry out awareness-raising campaigns against trafficking, victims of which are often women and girls. At the legislative level and in line with relevant EU legislation, special care is taken for the granting of residence permit to third country citizens who have been characterised as victims of trafficking in human beings or migrants' smuggling, as well as to victims of domestic violence.

Moreover, with a view to combating all forms of violence, including trafficking and exploitation (SDGs 5.2, 8.7, 16.2), the Public Security Directorate and the Directorate of Prosecution of Cyber-crimes of the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and the competent ministries, have been implementing, based on the relevant national and international legislation, an Anti-crime Policy Programme. Through this programme, the above mentioned Directorates develop and operate a central system of collection, elaboration and analysis of cyber-crimes related information, carry out special investigative procedures in compliance with the procedural guarantees in force, and train police officers on the fight against trafficking in human beings and domestic violence. They also investigate cases of exploitation of minors and child pornography and sexual offences committed via the internet or by the use of information and communication technologies.

It is also worth mentioning that on March 2018 the Hellenic Parliament ratified the Council of Europe Convention of 2011 on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and enacted measures to fully address gender biased violence in all its forms, protect its victims and prosecute the perpetrators.

#### Box 2: Law 4491/2017 on legal gender recognition

This law establishes a simple as possible procedure to amend the registered sex of transgender persons. It concerns individuals for whom the inherent and personal way in which they experience their gender does not correspond to the gender registered at birth on the basis of their biological characteristics, which results in the feeling of "gender dysphoria". Moreover, transgender persons are often discriminated against in various aspects of their lives, as in their personal relationships, in work, in education or in medical care. The law provides for an expeditious, simple and low-cost procedure. Specifically, the registered gender is amended by a court order of the First Instance District Court (Irinodikeio), and there is no need for the person to undergo a surgery. The law provisions contribute to the effective safeguarding of the fundamental rights of transgender persons and their protection against discrimination, racism and legal uncertainty.

#### **4.5 Providing high-quality and inclusive education (SDG 4)**

Education and training at all levels is an essential prerequisite for promoting the effective achievement of all the SDGs. For any country aiming to develop sustainably its economy, to ensure high quality employment and to improve its social cohesion and wellbeing, the investment in knowledge, education and training is of paramount importance. The fundamental rights to quality education and to sustainable development are inextricably linked. This, in turn, means that every country should place education for sustainable development at the heart of its strategic policy priorities, ensuring that all citizens have equal opportunities and access to quality, inclusive and affordable education systems.

The aforementioned principles have shaped the general framework for education in Greece. Public policies and actions are planned and pursued in consistency with the Global Education 2030 Agenda led by UNESCO at global level and aim at generating knowledge within the context of a new fair and sustainable development model. The educational programmes of Greece are focusing on key priority areas, including, among others, the improvement of educational outcomes, the reduction of inequalities, the creative assimilation of new knowledge and the transition of skilled graduates to the labour market. These priority areas corresponding to [SDG 4](#) are linked to the elaboration and implementation of policies in the field of education based on the overarching principles and priorities set by the SDGs. At the core of these policies lies the Strategic Framework for Reducing Early School-leaving, the Strategic Plan for Higher Education, and the National Strategic Framework for Upgrading Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeship.

##### **Main policies and measures**

#### **Ensuring equal and quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education (SDG 4.1, 4.2)**

The purpose of primary and secondary education is to contribute to the universal, harmonious and balanced development of physical and mental capacities of students. To this end, the Greek government established by law in 2016 the Unified Type of All-Day Primary School which provides each student with the possibility to enjoy educational goods and services, thus implementing in education the principles of equality and justice. The Unified Type of All-Day Primary School combines social and pedagogical protection of students, broadens their horizon enriching their curriculum with new subjects, while at the same time promoting inclusive education. The establishment of the Unified Type of All-Day Pre-Primary School is pursuing the same objectives. In parallel, in its effort to reduce the early school leaving rate, Greece set up in 2013 the Observatory for Early School Leaving. This Observatory is charged with registering and processing data and monitoring indexes for tracing predisposing factors aiming at reducing the early school leaving rate. Special attention is also paid to the digital educational material, which contributes significantly to integrating Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the education system. In this regard, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs has developed central web services with a view to providing access to educational material for primary and secondary education (Interactive School Books, Digital Educational Platform). In parallel, in lower secondary schools, two weeks intensive remedial courses are offered to students who fail in summative examinations in June, so as to improve their knowledge and pass these examinations. In addition, during the school year, remedial courses are also offered to low achieving students in mathematics, ancient Greek, Greek and English language, physics and chemistry with a view to improving their performance.



Moreover, Greece attributes particular importance to the promotion of Intercultural Education which aims to integrate effectively all students in the mainstream educational system, regardless of educational, social, cultural or other differences. In this context, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs has established the institution of the Educational Priority Zones. This policy initiative aims at improving educational outcomes in regions with low educational and socio-economic indicators. Furthermore, it is worth noting that pursuant to article 16 of the Greek Constitution and relevant international conventions, providing refugee children with equal access to education services is an obligation of the State. It is within this context that, since the school year 2016-2017, Greece has established Reception School Annexes for Refugee Education (RSARE), where children residing in Refugee Accommodation Centers are provided with introductory classes in Greek and English language, computer skills, math, physical education and art education.

**Box 3: Achieving the integration of refugee children into the Greek educational system**

The RSARE operates within public primary and secondary education establishments. As far as preschool education is concerned, children aged 4-5 years residing in Accommodation centers can attend Annexes for Refugee Preschool Education operating within the centers. Following a diagnostic test, refugee children that are deemed to be able to participate in mainstream education classes, are attending the standard education programme. Children in need of further educational support, are being taught various disciplines with their classmates (Math, I.T., Physical Education, Foreign Languages, Music, Visual Arts), while they attend additionally, tutorial classes of Greek language, in order for their integration in the morning mainstream programmes to be facilitated and accelerated. For the current school year, apart from the RERS, morning Reception Classes operate within the Educational Priority Zones, integrating most refugee children in the mainstream school system, while offering them additionally, intensive tutorial classes focused on the Greek language during the first two hours of their timetable. For the facilitation of the implementation of the education plan for refugee children, 62 Refugee Education Coordinators were appointed for the school year 2016-2017, and 68 for the school year 2017-2018.

With a view to reducing social disparities in the education system, which is also linked to **SDG 10**, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs launched, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, an ambitious food distribution scheme, entitled “Brunch at school”, targeting primary schools throughout the country. Additionally, from the school year 2016-2017 up to the current one, a similar school feeding programme entitled “School Lunch” is in place. The objective of this programme is to reduce social inequalities and exclusion and to improve educational outcomes by covering the dietary needs of students of the participating primary schools, within the context of the healthy Mediterranean diet (inscribed to UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity).

**Promoting equal access to and enhancement of higher education (SDG 4.3)**

In accordance with the provisions of the Greek legislation governing the access to Tertiary Education, the Greek government attaches great importance to ensuring that specific categories of applicants, including people with serious diseases, refugees and foreign nationals, have equal access to education opportunities and professional development.

Greece provides open access to university education to all citizens, given that the enrollment in first-cycle and third-cycle higher education does not require tuition fees. In line with the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (2016-2020), and taking into account the important role played by higher education in transforming the productive base of the economy and strengthening the social fabric, Greece pursues, for the period 2016-2020, two key objectives: (i) improving the quality of curricula and teaching in higher education; and (ii) reinforcing the effectiveness of higher education in the country's sustainable development process. In parallel, in its effort to increase the internationalisation of Greek universities and to establish external educational partnerships, the Greek government supports and facilitates the collaboration and synergies among universities as well as the mobility of students, researchers and professors.

In accordance with the new law adopted in 2017, which governs the organisation and operation of higher education, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs will establish, based on a proposal approved by the Academic Senate, a Training and Lifelong Education Centre in all Greek higher education institutions. The Training and Lifelong Education Center, which will be part of the Higher Education Institution, will contribute substantially to promoting lifelong learning opportunities in higher education system through ensuring the coordination and multi-disciplinary cooperation in the elaboration of training and lifelong education programmes.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the Military Schools (MS) in Greece attach importance to the application of the principle of gender equality in their enrollment procedures. In addition, they offer a large number of fellowships in their effort to help foreign students attend the MS. Equally important, the MS have incorporated different SDGs-related issues in their syllabuses, while relevant training and educational courses are performed in cooperation with certified training institutions.

**Box 4: A special qualification assessment scheme is in the process of being developed**

As far as refugee's access to higher education is concerned, a special qualification assessment scheme is in the process of being developed. The Council of Europe has launched the Pilot project "European Qualifications Passport for Refugees" in which the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs is a key partner. This project aims to support refugees by promoting a methodology to assess refugees' qualifications in absence of full documentation. The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees is a document providing an assessment of the higher education qualifications based on available documentation and a structured interview. It also presents information on the applicant's work experience and language proficiency. In addition, the document provides reliable information for integration and progression towards employment and admission to further studies. It does not guarantee admission to studies or employment. Neither is it a formal recognition act. The applicants are interviewed by credential evaluators, members of the European Network of Information Centres in the European Region and the National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union.

**Developing skills for employment and decent jobs (SDG 4.4)**

For Greece, vocational education and training (VET) forms an integral part of Greek education system and constitutes an important education policy priority. In this respect, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs adopted in 2016 the National Strategic Framework for

Upgrading Vocational Education, Training and Apprenticeship with a view to upgrading and improving VET based on the estimation of real socio-economic needs and systemic weaknesses, the European *acquis* and relevant best practices.

In addition, the Greek government has established the institution of the Second Chance Schools for people aged between 18 and 30. This initiative seeks to develop knowledge and skills of the general population and special social groups (inmates, Roma population and immigrants) and to promote education in penal institutions, including primary education, thus contributing to the elimination of social exclusion and the reduction of inequalities. In parallel, regarding remedial education within rehabilitation centers, special courses are offered to persons who follow programmes of rehabilitation from addictive substances. These courses provide the persons concerned with the opportunity to continue their studies and to participate in the summative examinations taking place at the nearest school.

**Box 5: A holistic strategy to upgrade vocational education and training**

The main objective of the strategy is to establish a close link between higher education and labor market. In particular, it aims to establish statutory professional skills based upon professional qualifications and skill requirements relevant to the needs of the labor market, to enhance the attractiveness of vocational education and training among young students, and to upgrade VET through the promotion of the apprenticeship scheme. A set of actions co-funded by the European Union is being implemented in the 1st grade of Professional High-School, including the cooperation of schools with the local society, the learning and psychological support of students, with a view to reversing their low level of personal expectations and the support of teachers. To ensure the attainment of these objectives, a set of quality characteristics have been integrated to the scheme of apprenticeship in enterprises. Among the core principles and objectives of the apprenticeship scheme of particular importance is the assimilation of professional knowledge and skills and the readiness to respond to the requirements of this style of learning. Special attention is paid to the reinforcement of graduates' mobility.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy pursues the continuous upgrading of educational infrastructure, professional qualifications and working conditions for seafarers, also as part of the efforts to attract young people to the maritime profession, which has excellent career prospects, in view of the size of the Greek and Greek owned fleet and the current shortage of skilled officers at global level."

**Fostering the implementation of inclusive education and training at all levels (SDG 4.5)**

With a view to achieving the equitable inclusion of vulnerable groups in the education system, Greece introduced in primary schools in 2010 the institution of the Educational Priority Zones (ZEP). The main objective of this initiative is to eliminate early school leaving among students coming from vulnerable social groups and different religious and cultural traditions through the provision of Greek language instruction and individualised aid in several disciplines and the improvement of learning outcomes particularly in terms of literacy and numeracy. Furthermore, since the beginning of the current school year 2017-2018, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs implements a pilot information programme targeting the Roma population and children aged 16-21 years belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace.

In parallel, in line with Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Greek education policy fully supports the right of all students to equal access to educational advantages, including children with disabilities and special education needs, taking measures and adopting legislative initiatives designed to combat imbalances and discriminations. In such a context, the promotion of inclusion policies favoring students with disabilities constitutes a key component of the national education strategy. The institutional framework being in place uses the integration of students with disabilities in mainstream education structures (attendance in mainstream education classes with parallel programmes of individualised support to students with disabilities and/or special educational needs) as a springboard to enable inclusion.

**Box 6: Access of students with disabilities and/or special educational needs to the available educational material, software and infrastructure**

In compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Greece has implemented specific actions with a view to enabling the access of students to the available educational material, software and infrastructure and to formulating support structures and services regardless of hearing or visual impairment, reduced mobility or other learning difficulty. One of these actions is the “development of accessible educational and support material for children with disabilities and/or special educational needs”. Additionally, general education textbooks were further enriched and turned into accessible forms for First and Second Grade Students in 2016. Moreover, according to Article 49 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the text of the Convention was made available in all accessible formats with the contribution of people with special needs. All formats of Braille script, the aural format as well as the production in the Greek Sign Language, were made by the Panhellenic Association of the Blind and Deaf. The educational material produced during this action was published on the web site of the Institute of Pedagogical Policy.

**Developing the knowledge base and skills needed for sustainable development and global citizenship (SDG 4.7)**

The Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs has planned actions aimed at integrating basic principles of sustainable development at all levels of education, supported by a number of legislative initiatives and Ministerial Decisions. In this connection, it has promoted the adoption, at all education levels, of measures and policies which seek to mainstream the core principles of sustainable development in the general Greek education policy. This is illustrated by the fact that the new education policy under reform and the new educational curricula are formulated in line with [SDG 4.7](#) which aims to integrate in educational systems knowledge and skills for sustainable development. In addition, Greece is in the process of developing a National Strategy for the introduction and promotion of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the formal education sector and reforming the Greek educational system both at administrative and structural level. This education reform process is significantly supported and facilitated by an extensive consultation with key stakeholders engaged in the field of education. Meanwhile, at all levels of education, schools are supported by School Activities Coordinators, allocated in every Directorate of Education, tasked with implementing programmes falling within the scope of the 17 SDGs. For instance, for the school year 2016-2017, the central theme of one of these programmes was linked to the interconnection between education, health and well-being. It is also

worth noting that since school year 2016-2017, high schools have carried out the Thematic Week entitled “Body and Identity”. The Thematic Week aims to inform and raise awareness among students on issues, such as nutrition and quality of life, prevention of addictions and gender identities. At the same time, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs supports actions and initiatives designed to inform parents and teachers on key pressing topics such as domestic violence, sexual orientation, homophobia and transphobia both in society and in school. Additionally, during the current school year, the subject of “Road Safety Education” has been added to the thematic week, as well as in the educational curricula of all grades of primary school.

#### Box 7: Centers of Education for Sustainability

Greece has established a network of 57 Centers for Environmental Education responsible for organising environmental programmes available for teachers and students of all sectors of formal education. These Centers are also tasked with facilitating teachers who choose to run a programme and further setting activities that promote co-operation among schools through the network. They also seek to promote and enhance community-based training for groups of professionals and create a hub for communication and consultation between local authorities, governmental and non-governmental organisations and educational institutions. In view of disseminating and implementing the SDGs in schools, these Centers are going to be transformed into Centers of Education for Sustainability which are expected to approach education in a holistic and systemic way as envisaged by SDG 4.7. To date, the Environmental Education Centers have been carried out, on yearly basis, actions which are consistent with all 17 SDG Goals, targeting students, teachers and the local community. Moreover, there will be a School Advisor for Sustainability, allocated in every Prefecture, whose role will be to offer scientific guidance and supervision on issues related to education for sustainable development

#### Ensuring quality education and lifelong learning for all youth (SDG 4.4, 4.6)

Lifelong Learning (LLL) is considered a policy priority at European as well as international level. It is strongly linked to a person’s employment, prosperity and full participation in society. The challenges placed today by the ageing population, the skills and competences deficit of the workforce and the global competition are further enhanced by the ongoing financial crisis, thus highlighting the crucial role of Lifelong Learning in addressing these issues. The respective law on Lifelong Learning that was voted by the Greek Parliament in September 2010, sets the basis for the planning and implementation of a national holistic strategy on lifelong learning and for the creation of the National Network of Lifelong Learning (NNLL), which encompasses all LLL governing bodies and service providers operating under the auspices of different ministries.

Within this framework, the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning (GSLL) of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, acting as the executive authority for Lifelong Learning in Greece, conducted for the first time, at national policy level, an initial registration of all Lifelong Learning activities organised and implemented by state agents and major social partners. The process of mapping these actions and consulting youth organisations will lead to the adoption by the GSLL of the National Youth Strategy. In particular, the Youth Strategy will be developed with the practical involvement of young people, civil society and all stakeholders from the public and private sectors on the basis of the philosophy “from young people, with young people, to young

people". The National Youth Strategy will constitute the main policy framework addressing youth empowerment in Greece based on a clear vision, strategic objectives and overarching principles. It will place emphasis on pressing thematic areas affecting all youth, including quality education and skills development, decent work and employment opportunities, entrepreneurial development of young people, good health and well-being of young people, young people's participation in democratic life, reduction of inequalities among young people, promoting young people's autonomy and facilitating their transition to adulthood.

#### **4.6 Strengthening the protection and sustainable management of natural capital as a base for social prosperity and transition to a low-carbon economy (SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)**

Greece hosts a unique ecological treasury and is one of the European Union's most important member states in terms of ecological wealth. Greece has been one of the first countries worldwide to endorse a framework law on the protection of the environment (law 1650/1986), while the principles of environmental protection are embedded in the Constitution. The country's rich ecological capital has been subject to several threats also due to the economic crisis of the last decade that forced a shift of focus in political priorities. The SDGs offer a new vision for sustainable development for the country, reinvigorating the principles of democracy and of open and good governance, harnessing inclusive institutions, ensuring the spread of prosperity and the protection of the most vulnerable and fostering economic stability founded on a sound ecological basis.

This national priority corresponding to the implementation of the "environmental" SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, is based on the notion that the natural environment of Greece constitutes not only the identity of the country but also a key asset for development. Environmental protection is, hence, regarded as the basis for ensuring sustainable economic growth, e.g. through quality tourism and the production of quality agricultural products and food, as these two sectors constitute the back-bone of the Greek economy and rely a lot on the quality of natural environment. It is also the basis for social wellbeing by safeguarding human health and access to high quality environmental and ecosystem services to citizens.

##### **Main policies and measures**

#### **Transition to a circular economy model for sustainable production and consumption patterns (SDGs 12, 8, 9)**

The shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12) and to a circular economy constitutes a key priority for Greece and an integral part of the country's National Growth Strategy.

The sustainable management and the efficient use of natural resources (SDG 12.2) is an objective that has been already horizontally embedded, as a cross-cutting priority, in the country's current strategic planning. The ongoing Partnership Agreement (PA) 2014-2020 has integrated the principles of sustainable development by focusing on environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and disaster resilience, risk prevention and management. Apart from the overall PA, the specific Operational Programme for Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development 2014-2020, with approximately half of its budget for its environment component (i.e. around



EUR 2.4 billion), is structured around four thematic objectives: (i) support the shift towards a low carbon economy in all sectors; (ii) ensure adaptation to climate change, risk prevention and management; (iii) preserve and protect the natural environment, the ecosystem services and green infrastructure, and promote resource efficiency (with a total budget of around EUR 2.05 billion); and (iv) promote sustainable urban development, energy efficiency projects in public buildings and broader diffusion of teleheating.

“Greening” the economy with positive impacts on creating new decent jobs for all, especially for youth and women, for a long-term equitable and inclusive growth, based on resource efficiency, promotion of small and medium size entrepreneurship, innovation and investment in new technologies, expansion of the knowledge-base and strengthening of the “social economy” potential, has been a key quest for Greece particularly in recent years.

A National Action Plan on Circular Economy, detailing short-term priority interventions for the long-term promotion of circular economy in the country, and responding to the measures included in the related EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy (December 2015), has been endorsed, in the beginning of 2018, by the Governmental Economic Policy Council (KYSOIP). In order to speed up delivery of concrete actions and improve the involvement of all related line ministries and stakeholders (local authorities, businesses, civil society), a dedicated Inter-ministerial Working Group has been set up to coordinate planning and implementation of the National Action Plan, steered by the Ministry of Environment and Energy and composed by representatives from the Ministries of Economy and Development, Interior, Finance, Infrastructure and Transport, Education, Research and Religious Affairs, Maritime and Insular Policy, and Rural Development and Food.

The strategic long-term goals for 2030 of the National Action Plan on Circular Economy focus on:

- further applying a hierarchy approach in waste management, focusing on the prevention of waste production and recycling rather than on the final disposal of waste, «closing the loop» of product life-cycles;
- supporting circular entrepreneurship by promoting “industrial symbiosis” and clustering of businesses, the secondary use of by-products and waste in new production processes as raw primary materials as well as the improvement of energy efficiency in industry;
- supporting circular consumption patterns of re-using, re-storing and re-pairing rather than buying new products, especially for electrical and electronic devices, thus creating a new market and jobs in repairing services, as well as education and information of consumers so as to make more sustainable and responsible choices regarding appliances’ energy efficiency and reparability potential;
- enhancing partnerships, synergies and communication between the various involved actors like businesses and industry, the scientific community and the civil society; and
- monitoring of progress in shifting from the linear to the circular economic model through SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) indicators.

Priority actions envisaged by the National Action Plan on Circular Economy to be implemented in 2018, relate to:

- (i) regulatory and legislative interventions to lift bureaucratic constrains for widely applying circular economy principles, such as:

- elaborating new legal definitions for wastes, by-products and re-use materials after first use intended for re-use, declassification of waste and quality standards for secondary raw materials as envisaged by [SDG 12.8](#);
  - minimising food waste, inter alia, by enabling food donations and their use in fertilisers' production and organic compost ([SDG 12.3](#));
  - promoting of green public procurement (GPP) ([SDG 12.7](#));
  - increasing the potential of re-utilisation of construction and demolition waste by setting and applying concrete standards to enable construction components' recoverability, adequate re-use (e.g. in road construction) and environmentally friendly decommissioning of old sites ([SDG 12.5](#));
  - revisiting the existing specifications for the re-use of treated wastewater as irrigational water and in energy production ([SDG 6.4](#));
  - integrating criteria for ecological design and life-cycle analysis of products, avoiding the use of chemical additives in products' production processes, thus increasing the potential of their reparability and adaptive re-use, and expanding their life-cycles ([SDG 12.4](#));
  - integrating circular economy considerations and criteria in the Environmental Impact Assessment and the Strategic Impact Assessment requirements for sites and projects as well as in the environmental permitting process;
  - introducing the role of "brokers" or "mediators" between waste producers and the secondary material market to boost new entrepreneurship;
  - endorsing measurable indicators to track progress, linked to material flows, to data related to material inputs and production outputs as well as to other electronic applications like the "Electronic Waste Registry";
  - endorsing a regulatory framework that will enable the production of green gas from organic waste and its introduction into the natural gas pipeline grid with lower feed-in tariffs than biogas or its use as a vehicle fuel.
- (ii) earmarking of existing funds from various sources<sup>3</sup> for financing the above regulatory interventions and for demo projects as well as increasing fiscal and financial incentives for businesses using secondary materials;
- (iii) further enhancing knowledge, understanding, education, awareness and communication between producers and scientists and among consumers and the general public by means of extended public awareness campaigns particularly on the benefits of reducing food waste and on cooperative ventures as well as the elaboration of Codes, Guides and Standards for increasing energy efficiency in industrial processes;

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3 E.g. the budget of the Operational Programmes for "Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation" and for "Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development" under the PA 2014-2020, the various Regional Operational Programmes for the Greek Regions, the Green Fund operating under the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy, national funds from the budget of the new Investment Law (law 4399/2016), actions for promoting innovation under the National RIS3 as presented in chapter 5.2.1, other funds from EU research projects such as INTERREG and HORIZON etc.



(iv) improving governance structures to enable the shift to a production and consumption model which is more efficient and with a smaller environmental footprint, by setting up mechanisms such as an programme Executive Secretariat for the Circular Economy and a national Observatory to track progress, results and gaps on the economic, environmental and social dimension.

With regard to [SDG 12.4](#) and [12.5](#) on waste management, which constitutes a longstanding priority and challenge for Greece, the National Plan for Waste Management and its accompanying National Strategic Plan for Waste Prevention (Ministerial Council Act 49/2015) already in implementation, the 13 Regional Waste Management Plans already endorsed with many of their corresponding projects already funded, as well as the National Plan for Hazardous Waste Management endorsed in 2016, provide the overall legislative framework in Greece to promote, in practice, the provisions of circular economy, with a special focus on waste management.

Additionally, a new Law on Recycling (law 4496/2017), has been endorsed in November 2017 to fully align previously existing legislation (i.e. law 2939/2001) with the circular economy principles. Law 4496/2017 aims at ensuring the optimum operation of the recycling systems which are based on the Extended Producer Responsibility, guaranteeing that all arising financial resources are channeled into improving the quality and quantity of recycling. The new law is also expected to stimulate the use of innovative technologies, the creation of a secondary materials' market and the boosting of new employment opportunities for high-skilled personnel, bringing about obvious interlinkages with the implementation of [SDGs 8](#) and [9](#).

Today, 22 approved Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes are in operation in Greece for: packaging material; batteries; accumulators; waste of electrical and electronic equipment; waste tyres; end-of-life vehicles; oils and lubricant waste; and demolition and construction waste. For these waste streams, concrete quantitative recycling and recovery targets are set out in EU and in national legislation. All producers or importers of such waste are obliged to individually set up or participate collectively to a relevant EPR scheme. All schemes are assessed, approved and audited by the Hellenic Recycling Agency (EOAN).

In parallel, Greece has taken measures to drastically reduce the consumption of single-use lightweight plastic bags, as plastics and microplastics are the key source of pollution into the seas, through a Joint Ministerial Decision issued in August 2017, specifying fees and consumers'/merchants' responsibilities. The measure of paying for the use of plastic bags by consumers, effective since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018, has been very positively received by the general public, already resulting in a radical reduction of plastic bags consumption and awareness raising for consumers' behavioral change, as per [SDG 12.8](#).

In figures, with the abovementioned intertwined National Plans together with the new law on Recycling, Greece aims, by 2020, to tentatively: (i) achieve a radical reduction of the per capita produced waste; (ii) increase reuse and recycling of wastes, with a separate collection of recyclable waste and of bio-waste, to reach 50% of total municipal solid waste produced from a 25% where it stands today; (iii) reach a 74% recovery and less than 30% disposal of total municipal solid waste produced from the current 82% disposal; and (iv) create around 15,900 new jobs and the increase of the annual turnover of the waste management related businesses.

Regarding the adoption of sustainable practices by large companies ([SDG 12.6](#)), Greece actively promotes the EU Eco-label for products and services that have a reduced environmental impact

throughout their life-cycle. In late 2017, 12 paints and varnishes manufacturers with 274 products, 2 detergent producers with 21 products and 12 hotels were awarded the EU Eco-label in Greece. Moreover, the Ministry of Environment and Energy supports the application of Environmental Management Systems in business, and in particular of the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme – EMAS. At the moment, 35 organisations with 1,334 sites are registered in the national EMAS registry. Financial and licensing incentives are granted to businesses that operate under the EMAS principles.

Finally, with regard to the promotion of public procurement practices that are sustainable (SDG 12.7), Greece has to speed up related processes and actions to catch up with other EU member states. To this end, the National Committee on Green Public Procurement (originally set up under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment and Energy in 2010) has been re-established, in June 2017, to operate now onwards under the General Secretariat of Commerce and Consumer Protection of the Ministry of Economy and Development. The Committee, composed by representatives from various line ministries, is currently launching: (i) the compilation of a National Action Plan for Green Public Procurement, in line with the national strategic objectives for procurements laid out by the Hellenic Single Public Procurement Authority; (ii) the elaboration of “green” selection criteria for products and services to be incorporated in the technical specifications of public procurements; and (iii) the selection of products, services and projects where “environmental” criteria can be applied as minimum compulsory requirements or as additional voluntary performance criteria.

### **Elaboration of an integrated environmental framework to support economic development and investment, while safeguarding and protecting natural capital and biodiversity (SDGs 6, 11, 14, 15)**

#### **Sustainable water resources management**

With regard to water resources and the implementation of SDG 6, the state of Greece’s fresh-water bodies is good and water quality is fit for all key water uses (drinking water, irrigation, industry), while the price structure for urban water services in Greece generally encourages the prudent use of water, and price levels allow a greater degree of cost recovery, taking into account social considerations. Universal and equitable access to high quality drinking water to all, i.e. SDG 6.1, is already achieved in Greece, as an issue addressed not only under the provisions of the water related legislation but most importantly as an issue of public health. SDG 6.2 on access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, is also already being met, since more than 90% of the total population in Greece is already served by urban wastewater treatment network facilities, while the remaining 10% is served by individual septic tanks, where wastewater is collected and transported to central treatment stations. With regard to SDG 6.3 which is of key importance for Greece, already through the appropriate environmental permitting and audits’ control system of industrial activities, the elimination of dumping and the minimisation of release of chemicals into freshwaters is ensured, while, in particular for nitrate pollution from agriculture, action plans have been put in place in all vulnerable areas and the use of agricultural inputs of nitrogenous fertilisers and pesticides has been drastically reduced over recent years, thus ensuring achievement of SDG 6.3.

Water resources management in Greece, as a multidimensional issue, is faced with political, administrative and legal challenges that can sometimes hinder integrated and effective river basin

management. Under the coordination of the Special Secretariat for Water (SSW) of the Ministry of Environment and Energy, being the key national Agency for water related policies and measures, an ongoing priority for the country is the full implementation of the provisions of the EU Water Framework Directive 60/2000 (transposed with law 3199/2003 and Presidential Decree 51/2007), that links directly to the implementation of [SDG 6.4](#) and [6.5](#), aiming to reconcile competitive uses and increasing water demand due to intense urbanisation, tourist development in arid islands and increase in irrigated land, as well as challenges related to spot-pollution, climate change and extreme weather phenomena.

A key means to manage supply and demand, taking into consideration human requirements, with water as a common environmental good, as well as ecosystem needs, is the elaboration and implementation of Integrated River Basin Management Plans for all 14 Water Districts of the country (corresponding to areas larger than single catchment areas) aiming to achieve water bodies at a “good” status. Each River Basin Management Plan is accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment describing the environmental impacts of the measures that need to be implemented in order to apply the River Basin Management Plans on the ground.

At the moment, all original River Basin Management Plans have been revised. In order to update the River Basin Management Plans and to complete the drafting of the Flood Risk Management Plans currently under finalisation, a public debate and open multi-stakeholder consultation meetings in all Water Districts have been held. In this process, special emphasis has been given on ensuring an active and meaningful public participation in the planning and implementation of the water policy in Greece. Parallel to the public consultations, the SSW uploads all related studies and reports on relevant well-designed websites, makes available to the general public all information and data gathered from the more than 2,000 monitoring points of the National Monitoring Network and offers all produced geospatial data sets through a special geolink developed for this purpose, using open source standards.

With regard to water savings ([SDG 6.4](#)), Greece, as a vulnerable country to the effects of droughts, has given emphasis on appropriately legislative rules for the cost and pricing structure of water services for all water uses (drinking water, irrigation and industrial water), taking into account social considerations and the need to protect vulnerable groups. Moreover, emphasis is placed on the completion of the legislative framework to allow further re-use of water and adequately treated wastewater re-use in the context of circular economy. In parallel, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food is implementing several projects promoting the reduction of losses and the application of high efficiency irrigation methods in agriculture. Along the same lines, and when all other water supply options are exhausted, the promotion of non-conventional water resources including the construction of desalination plants in extremely arid islands, according to the provisions of the respective River Basin Management Plans, is also foreseen. Finally, a National Water Abstraction Points Registry is currently set up in order to enable the monitoring of the status of surface and groundwater bodies by continuously recording abstractions from specific authorised water abstraction points.

Greece, as a downstream country, fully implements the UNECE Helsinki Convention on transboundary watercourses and lakes (with law 2425/1996) and has a special interest and major challenge with respect to cross-bounder water management as four transboundary rivers from upstream countries provide approximately one-fourth of the total mean surface runoff of

Greece's mainland rivers. Thus, one of the country's longstanding priorities is the achievement of the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive at transboundary river basin level as well as of flood control and water quality issues, closely cooperating with all the riparian state through related MoUs and joint technical committees.

### **Inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities**

With regard to **SDG 11**, Greece is firmly committed to continuously enhancing inclusive and sustainable urbanisation as well as participatory, integrated and sustainable urban planning and management in the country by 2030, also in line with the UN HABITAT III Agenda.

Urbanisation has been a strong driver of land use change in Greece for more than 5 decades now and about three-quarters of the Greek population live in urban areas, with about 80% of the urban population living in the 11 largest cities of the country, 60% of which resident in the country's two metropolitan areas of Athens and Thessaloniki. The construction of tourist facilities and secondary residences has been a strong driving force for continued urbanisation. In this context, key challenges faced today with regard to building sustainable cities in Greece, include: the extension of urban activities beyond designated urban zones, the building and housing construction in certain cases without prior adequate planning and building permits especially in coastal areas as well as the need to increase communal and green spaces in city centers.

#### **Box 8: A standard for sustainable and smart cities**

The SDGs provide an opportunity to re-address the building blocks for creating “smart and sustainable cities” in Greece to the benefit of current and future communities. Based on existing International Standards for the sustainable development of communities (such as ISO 37120:2014 on the performance of city services and quality of life and ISO 37101:2016 for establishing requirements for a management system for sustainable development in communities), the Hellenic Standardisation Organisation (ELOT S.A.) has launched, in April 2017, a Working Group on “Sustainable and Smart Cities” aiming to develop and officially adopt a National Standard for Sustainable Cities in Greece, based on related international practices and experience but adapted to Greek specificities and needs. At the moment, a wide interdisciplinary pool of experts has been formulated to technically work on the Standard's various thematic components (18 “requirements” have been identified from energy efficiency and spatial planning, to financial viability and quality of health services) that should be finalised, through an extended public consultation process, by June 2018.

In response to the above, Greece, through the Ministry of Environment and Energy which is responsible for city and spatial planning, has already established a spatial planning framework system (i.e. National Framework for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development and 12 Regional Frameworks for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development) setting the strategic guidelines for compact cities, with municipalities having to deliver updated urban plans for their areas of jurisdiction in order to cover the whole land territory of the country in the coming years. Another key priority relates to combating unauthorised construction and uncontrolled urban sprawl, inter alia, by separating the permitting process from the control and inspection process, by establishing Observatories for closely tracking any change to the built environment at regional level and by introducing an “electronic identity” for each new private and existing public building. A key

means to achieve these policy priorities is the completion of the National Cadastre to cover the whole land territory of the country by 2020. Moreover, the Office for Demolition of Illegal Constructions operating under the Hellenic Inspectorate as well as the Hellenic Energy Inspectorate responsible to monitor implementation of energy saving policies, together with the Registry of Energy Auditors responsible for issuing energy certificates for each house and building, all operating under the Ministry of Environment and Energy, are additional important tools to assist achievement of these key policy priorities for the country.

Other important priorities that are currently being pursued in Greece through related legislative measures and actions, include: (i) protecting and preserving the cultural and natural heritage which constitute the “identity” and wealth of each Region of the country through the protection of the natural as well as of the built environment, i.e. traditional settlements and listed buildings; (ii) integrating new energy-efficiency and sustainability design requirements into building regulations; (iii) ensuring the accessibility of all citizens without discrimination to green and public spaces (SDG 11.3 and 11.7); (iv) supporting positive, economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning (SDG 11.a); and (v) increasing the resilience of Greek cities and societies to disasters, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 through integrated policies and plans for preparedness and risk management (with emphasis on earthquakes, floods and industrial accidents) at the local level (SDG 11.b), in line with the XENOCRATIS project elaborated by the General Secretariat of Civil Protection of Ministry of Interior. In this context, particular emphasis is given to the Aegean and Ionian islands that are situated in seismogenic regions and, in the last years, islands of the eastern Aegean (in particular Kos and Lesbos), in addition to the constant load of migration waves, have experienced catastrophic earthquakes that destroying listed buildings and traditional villages.

With regard to improving road safety, as captured by [SDG 11.2](#), a series of activities are implemented in Greece by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport in order to reduce the number of road accidents, deaths and injuries and the improvement of safety measures for vehicles, including the implementation and monitoring of a “Strategic Plan for the improvement of road safety in Greece, 2011-2020”, that gives particular emphasis on educating children and youth: an e-learning platform called “E-Drive Academy” has already been launched and a road safety course is already introduced in the primary school curricula. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport is also promoting the development of a central system for surveillance and monitoring of the technical inspections of all vehicle categories carried out by the Vehicle Technical Inspection Centres (KTEO) operating throughout the country as well as of the technical roadside inspections of the roadworthiness of all commercial vehicles in circulation.

Finally, with regard to [SDG 11.6](#), the issue of waste management (municipal solid waste and wastewater) constitutes a longstanding challenge for Greek cities, aiming to shift from obsolete practices like landfilling to reuse and recycle with sorting at source even at domestic level. In parallel, with regard to combating air pollution in city centers, there is a considerable experience in successfully combating air pollution in the city of Athens and other major cities in Greece, not only with regard to emissions’ reduction measures (i.e. expansion of use of alternative fuels for vehicles through the development of appropriate station facilities, development of efficient and reliable combined public transport systems with freight centers, transport and fuel pricing

structure, retrofit of LPG and CNG for both dual fuel and bi-fuel vehicles, incentives for fleet renewal and restricted use of passenger cars in central Athens) but also with regard to emissions' monitoring and early warning, especially targeting vulnerable social groups in cases that air spot pollution including ozone and PM10 exceeds thresholds. This experience is being transferred to other partner countries through technical bilateral cooperation schemes.

#### Box 9: Sustainable Urban Mobility – linking SDGs 7, 11, 13

The transport sector in Europe is responsible for the 25% of GHG emissions, and road transport, in particular, corresponds to a 70% of total emissions from transport, hence the European Commission systematically promotes the concept of Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning and encourages EU member states to ensure the right legislative and support conditions for their local authorities. In this regard, the Hellenic Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport established in 2017 a Division for Sustainable Urban Mobility with main responsibilities the monitoring of the development of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) in Greece and the preparation of a Strategic Plan to promote Sustainable Urban Mobility throughout the country. In order to establish a common framework for the development of SUMPs by Greek local authorities, a technical inter-ministerial Working Group has been set up by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport with experts from the Ministries of Environment and Energy and of Interior to elaborate general guidelines for SUMPs, ensuring the participation of all local stakeholders from transport agencies to citizens' groups (e.g. cyclists, people with disabilities etc), that will be shortly officially adopted by law. Additionally, the Greek Government is providing financial support to 162 municipalities with a population higher than 25,000 inhabitants for the elaboration of their SUMPs, through the Green Fund (operating under the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy), with a total budget of EUR 9 million. These SUMPs address transport issues such as urban road safety, urban logistics, mobility management and intelligent transport systems, with emphasis on sustainable mobility means e.g. public transport, walking and cycling, but could also have a wider scope, entailing wider urban renewal, restoration and landscape planning projects (e.g. to increase public open green spaces and address urban "thermal/heat island" effects), thus considerably improving the quality of life for all citizens in large Greek settlements. In terms of awareness raising, participation of Greek municipalities implementing sustainable urban mobility interventions in the European Mobility Week has increased remarkably over the past years, growing from 8 municipalities in 2013 to 86 in 2016, with many of them also ranking in the list of the 10 finalist European cities to receive a Sustainable Urban Mobility Award. Moreover, dedicated training courses are being organised for the representatives of interested cities, on a repetitive basis, by the involved Ministries and the Institute of Training of the Greek Center of Public Administration and Local Government.

#### Sustainable use of seas and of marine resources

With regard to *SDG 14*, Greece, as a maritime nation and a coastal State, has important resource, environmental and economic interests in the sea and oceans: shipping, fishing, development of offshore energy sources, port and transportation facilities, recreation and tourism are vital economic activities and important for the well-being of coastal populations, especially island communities.

To tackle this multifaceted SDG, Greece is endorsing a holistic approach to all marine and sea related issues, that includes, in its core, the protection and conservation of marine ecosystems,



creating conditions for sustainable development and a blue economy with actions at all levels, from the local to the national.

In particular, with regard to [SDG 14.1](#) for preventing and reducing marine pollution, and in line with the requirements of law 3983/2011 and the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, an extensive framework of measures covering all aspects of marine pollution and degradation has been recently (January 2018) legally endorsed, to ensure maintaining the already good status of marine waters in Greece or its achievement, in cases of minor degradation where restoration action is required. These measures aim, inter alia, at: preserving the rich Greek marine biodiversity, protecting ecosystems from non-indigenous species introduced by human activities, maintaining populations of all commercially exploited fish and shellfish within safe biological limits, maintaining marine food webs, minimising human-induced eutrophication, preserving sea-bed integrity, minimising contaminants in marine waters and fish & seafood below thresholds, reducing marine litter especially plastics, and containing underwater noise.

Such measures promote the interlinkages between safeguarding marine and coastal ecosystems ([SDG 14.2](#)) and sustainable tourism practices, which is one of the key political priorities of the country, benefitting from a good environmental status in the marine environment. In this respect, Greece has a longstanding excellent record in keeping a very high quality of coastal bathing waters, ranking among the top countries worldwide for 30 years now that the global programme of Blue Flags, the most widely recognised ecological label for beaches, marinas and sustainable tourism crafts, is being implemented. In 2016, 430 Greek beaches were awarded a Blue Flag, thus Greece ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> among 47 countries globally.

With regard to [SDG 14.4](#), Greece has a longstanding tradition in fisheries and aquaculture, owing to its geographic features (large coastal and island regions) and rich biodiversity of its marine areas and is the only EU member state with a Special Spatial Plan particularly for Aquaculture (both in fresh and marine waters) aiming at environment and biodiversity protection. The basic priorities of the policies implemented in Greece, at the moment, focus on: (i) the sustainable management of fishery resources, though the implementation and monitoring of related management plans; (ii) the prevention, reduction and elimination of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; (iii) the control of areas where banning measures have been taken; (iv) the implementation of a fishery data collection programme; and (v) the facilitation of fishermen in efficiently and commercially organising their activities. In this regard, the Operational Programme for Fisheries and the Sea 2014-2020 offering funding opportunities, provides a major development lever for the country. Its key aim is to promote an environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fishery sector, with a view to reducing the impact on the marine environment, protecting and restoring marine biodiversity and ecosystems.

#### Box 10: Protection of marine ecosystems

Greece is firmly committed to the protection, conservation and restoration of its marine ecosystems. In order to safe-proof marine ecosystems, Greece has already expanded marine protected areas, as the national part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas, in its territorial waters from 6% to 19.6%, overshooting SDG target 14.5 by a safe double margin. This will result in preserving important habitats, such as the *Posidonia oceanica* underwater meadows, as well as important fish species and sea birds

Greece is determined to make full use of the opportunities that important tools such as Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) have to offer. In this respect, a National Maritime Spatial Planning Strategy (NMSPS) will be elaborated and adopted by 2021, providing an organised framework for all activities taking place in the sea in Greece, setting priorities and giving strategic guidance for further more elaborated maritime spatial plans, while in the context of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, Greece liaises with other Contracting Parties to jointly explore ways and means to enhance national capacities to facilitate implementation of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protocol to the Barcelona Convention.

For Greece, [SDG 14.c](#) is of paramount political, national and economic importance and is firmly committed to the rule of law and more specifically to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. UNCLOS provides a solid basis and the legal tools for effectively dealing with issues related to sustainable development and with new challenges raised in this field. Greece is firmly supporting its effective and full implementation as well as the implementation of relevant international and regional instruments, which supplement its provisions.

#### **Protection, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems**

Greece has an exceptionally rich biodiversity with a very high species and ecosystems diversity due to the great range of climatic and geomorphologic conditions, with a large number of endemic species due to the isolation of mountains and islands, and an almost pristine natural environment characterises wide areas of the country. Preserving and managing forests and natural environment as per [SDG 15](#) provide an important catalyst for achieving overall sustainable development objectives in Greece, such as ending poverty, hunger, gender equality and access to health and education. Ecosystem services also have a wider positive socio-economic effect on development and welfare by enabling sustainable tourism, maintaining food security, supporting physical and mental health and protecting cultural heritage values and traditional practices.

Greece has a longstanding conservation policy, with the legislation on nature conservation dating back to the 1930s regarding the protection of mainland national parks and forests. Greece has been one of the first countries worldwide to endorse a framework law (law 1650/1986) on the protection of the environment, while the principles of environmental protection are embedded in article 24 of the Greek Constitution.

In this context, the protection of forest areas is a key obligation and priority of the State as is the organisation and planning of the urban space that often clashes with forest protection. Thus, one of the highest priorities of Greece, currently, is the finalisation of the full digitalisation of the Greek territory in terms of land-use, protection status, type of industrial and other activities allowed etc.

To this direction and in line with [SDG 15.1](#) and [15.2](#), the elaboration and endorsement of Forest Maps has been a strenuous effort in the last years. Forest maps for the 37% of the country's territory have already been completed with maps corresponding to the 32% of the national territory already ratified. Another 17% are about to be completed, while the remaining 46% is under way aiming to cover the entire country's territory as soon as possible. The actual delineation of forest areas, together with the on-going finalisation of the National Cadastre, will facilitate the planning



and authorisation of new investments across the country while ensuring the protection and management of forest areas in a more sustainable and effective way against urban sprawl, forest fires and in line with the national climate change mitigation objectives.

Regarding the protection and conservation of biodiversity, in general, the existing framework law on biodiversity in Greece (law 3937/2011) sets out the key procedures for biodiversity conservation in the country. The consequent National Strategy for Biodiversity 2014-2029 and its accompanying 5-year Action Plan approved in 2014 in line with the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), set out the overall vision for the protection of biodiversity and of its ecosystem services, based on three pillars, namely halting biodiversity loss - promoting biodiversity as a national natural capital - intensifying the contribution of Greece to preventing the loss of global biodiversity”, aiming to prevent all destructive changes caused by the loss of biodiversity, by 2050.

Greece is home to the 35% of Europe’s biodiversity. It currently has 446 sites included in the EU’s Natura 2000 network of protected areas that correspond to 27.59% (terrestrial sites) and 19.60% (marine sites), overshooting [SDG 14.5](#). The official legal endorsement of all these sites has been recently completed and their total expanse is now fully covered by Management Bodies, with the expansion of the jurisdiction of the previously existing 28 Management Bodies in Greece and the creation of 8 new ones to, hence, cover the 100% of Natura 2000 sites in the country. Additionally, the Ministry of Environment and Energy, has already launched the elaboration of Special Environmental Studies, of Presidential Decrees and of Management Plans, of a total budget of EUR 17.5 million that, once completed, will be legally approved and enforced for the whole Natura 2000 network to ensure adequate protection, to regulate and define the conservation terms and to implement a judicial management of all Natura 2000 sites in Greece, by 2022. Moreover, the Ministry of Environment and Energy has been recently awarded a European Commission LIFE Integrated Project (LIFE IP) with a total budget of EUR 17 million that will run for the period 2018 – 2025. The project’s main objectives are the implementation of 10 Action Plans for habitats and species of Community interest listed in the Birds and Habitats EU Directives, the pilot implementation of Management Plans in Natura 2000 sites and the fine-scale mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services at national level. The successful implementation of the project will result in a substantial improvement of habitats’ and species’ favorable conservation status in the country.

In parallel, the Ministry of Environment and Energy is continuously monitoring the implementation of the conservation status and management of rare, threatened or endemic animal and plant species and of Sites of Community importance (SCI) in the areas of the National System of Protected Areas (as per law 3937/2011), while is operating a system for data production and collection on forests, species, flora and habitats, for the determination of biomarkers, the organisation of databases and of an online data acquisition system, in line with the National Environmental Information Network.

Desertification ([SDG 15.3](#)) constitutes an important challenge for Greece, particular in the arid island regions. Main national priorities to address it include updating the national action plan against desertification to reflect new challenges and the revised strategic and operational objectives of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), strengthening partnerships and joint planning with other Rio Conventions (CBD, UNFCCC), aiming to synergies for better resource efficiency and the promotion of “spatial” integrated approaches such as ICZM.

Halting biodiversity loss as envisaged by [SDG 15.5](#) is a main challenge to be dealt with also under the perspective of “environmental liability”. One of the main targets of environmental inspections in Greece is to avoid biodiversity loss through administrative fines and enforcing compliance for the responsible operators through obligatory preventive or remedial measures for any imminent or already caused environmental damage. Environmental inspections are continuously conducted in the country, under a National Plan monitored by the Environmental Inspectorate in cooperation with the competent regional authorities. This, together with law 4042/2012 for the protection of the environment through criminal law, constitutes an effective implementation of the “polluter pays” principle in practice.

To protect and prevent the extinction of species according to [SDG 15.5](#), Greece is developing a National Bank of Forest Genetic Material, while with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in agriculture, the very rich phytogenetic material of the country is preserved in specialised Gene Banks in Institutions, such as the Institute for Genetic Improvement of the Hellenic Agricultural Organisation “Dimitra” and the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (CIHEAM-MAIC) in Crete.

**Box 11: Sustainable tourism practices in mountainous areas (SDG target 15.4)**

According to recent legislation in 2017, concrete technical specifications have been set for planning, constructing and maintaining trekking routes and hiking trails in the mountainous areas of Greece, in order to promote sustainable tourism practices such as camping, trekking and hiking that respect the rich natural environment of the country, enhancing local livelihoods, enlarging the tourist season and diversifying the Greek tourism product that has been relying mainly on the “sea & sun” portfolio, while promoting cultural tourism and supporting local food and arts craft products. The Greek State is financially supporting the elaboration of proposals for creating integrated trails’ networks through the Green Fund, is setting up an electronic registry of trails and is working a national certification system of mountainous and other environmental routes. At the moment, 20 integrated trails’ networks are already in use while new ones are constantly being proposed, offering important opportunities for the creation of a “strong and diversified” tourism product in Greece.

It is worth stressing that Greece has traditionally placed high political attention to biosafety with the public opposing to imported and domestic foodstuffs containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs). It upholds a restriction on the cultivation of GMO maize MON810, under article 23 of EU Directive 2001/18, and is considered as a GMO free-zone.

Regarding [SDG 15.6](#), Greece is in the process of implementing the Nagoya Protocol under the CBD for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources, including though appropriate access to genetic resources and technology transfer. With regard to [SDG 15.7](#), in line with the CITES Convention and the EU Wildlife Action Plan 2016-2020, Greece has introduced additional implementing provisions for CITES including a licensing scheme to control international movements of threatened and endangered species and the General Police Directorate under the Ministry of Interior is cooperating with INTERPOL to tackle crime against wild life and forests. At the national level, every year a hunting regulatory order is issued and a forest protection programme together with an annual programme for the improvement and prevention of illegal timber logging are implemented.

### **Transition to a low carbon economy and the adaptation to the impacts of climate change (SDGs 7, 13)**

Concerning the energy policy and achievement of **SDG 7**, the main political priorities of Greece, include: (i) the liberalisation of the gas and electricity market; (ii) the adaptation of the domestic electricity market to the requirements of the European Target Model; (iii) the increase of competitiveness in the sector; (iv) the expansion and strengthening of domestic and trans-national electricity transmission systems; (v) the increase of energy production from renewable energy sources (RES) domestically aiming to reach the 18% target of final total energy consumption from renewables by 2020 (according to the 20-20-20 targets of the first EU 2009 Climate-Energy package, EU Directive 2009/28) also with the view to export electricity produced by RES while reducing energy production by conventional combustion technologies; and (vi) the increase of energy efficiency and energy saving particular in the building sector but also in the small and medium size enterprises and industrial sector, linked to the mitigation of GHG emissions and climate change.

With regard to the implementation of **SDG 7.1**, Greece has taken a number of measures to protect vulnerable citizens and tackle the humanitarian crisis by ensuring energy supply to all, by free-of-charge re-connection and electricity supply to people and families living in extreme poverty (law 4320/2015). Since 2010, a reduced Social Residential Tariff has been established for vulnerable social groups (i.e. people with low family income, long-term unemployed, families with three children, people with disabilities, people with a need for mechanical support), which has been restructured in early 2018 to double the reduction rates provided to the most vulnerable households. Provisions for favorable arrangements have also been laid out through the Electricity Supply Code (issued in 2013) defining criteria for integrating customers into the Vulnerable Electricity Customers' categories for electricity supply. Moreover, according to law 4508/2017 and Ministerial Decision 7408/1228/2018, an amount of EUR 10 million is available to support low-income citizens who have been disconnected from the electricity supply network due to overdue debts, to meet their energy needs.

In order to implement the legal provisions for completing the single European electricity market, the Ministry of Environment and Energy and the Greek Regulatory Authority for Energy (RAE) are proceeding with the restructuring of the electricity market and, in particular, with the design of the application of the EU Target Model on the Greek wholesale energy market. According to law 4425/2016, as amended by law 4512/2018, the electricity power market is restructured to ensure higher efficiency, better offset of risks and effective competition in both the wholesale and retail energy markets. In this context, transactions will be able to be conducted, hereinafter, in four markets: energy financial market (forward market), day-ahead market and intraday market operated by the Hellenic Energy Stock Exchange S.A. (where the Greek Operator of the Electricity Market, LAGIE S.A., is becoming a shareholder) and balancing market operated by the Independent Power Transmission Operator (ADMIE S.A.).

With regard to the implementation of **SDG 7.2**, even though the Greek energy mix is mainly defined by oil use in the heating and transport sectors and, until recently, by domestic lignite use in power generation, Greece has achieved an impressive increase in wind and solar photovoltaic (PV) power generation from 2010 and 2015, amounting to almost 300%, and the share

of renewable energy generation has been a little below 30% of the total energy generation in 2015 while Greece had the second-highest share of solar PVs in the total energy supply of all the IEA countries in 2016. Apart from the high feed-in-tariffs and the decreasing technology cost, measures to speed up and simplify the complex licensing and permitting processes have also contributed to the country's excellent record in achieving the penetration of renewable energy generation, providing its fair share in achieving SDG 7.2 globally. Recent law 4414/2016 revised the legal framework which governs the Renewable Energy Sources (RES) sector by introducing a new support scheme for power generation from RES and from High Efficiency Co-generation Heat and Power (HECHP) plants, through a market-based feed-in premium programme, in order to achieve the integration and participation of power stations in the electricity market in a more cost-benefit basis, relying less on high state feed-in-tariffs, to the benefit of the society. According to the guidelines on state aid support for RES and the guidelines for auctions for RES and CHP support in Greece approved by the EU, RAE has conducted, in 2016, an innovative, simplified and transparent on-line electronic pilot auctioning for PV stations, with important consumer benefits with price reduction due to increased competition.

Moreover, law 4513/2018 introduced recently the establishment and operation of the Energy Communities, with a view to promoting social and solidarity-based economy and innovation in the energy sector, tackling energy poverty, promoting energy sustainability, production, storage, self-consumption, distribution and supply, enhancing energy self-sufficiency and security in island municipalities, and improving energy end-use efficiency at local and regional level.

In parallel, to boost the RES market further and to stimulate the much needed investments for economic recovery, Greek authorities are aiming at a further simplification of the licensing processes and the review of the environmental impact assessment framework to provide certainty for investors in sustainable energy production. At the same time, the National Special Spatial Plan for RES defining where a RES project can be allocated and under which conditions, is being revised. Among the country's next steps is to further explore and deploy more other RES with a high potential in Greece (e.g. geothermal, biomass) beyond mainly solar and wind, and to increase their usage in the non-electricity sector as an integral part of the National Energy and Climate Plan for 2030 and beyond, currently under elaboration.

With regard to [SDG 7.3](#) on energy efficiency, even though important policies and measures to this end have been implemented with very positive results, especially since 2009, there is still room for further improvement in Greece regarding energy savings. An energy efficiency obligation programme has been implemented in January 2017 requiring energy suppliers to make savings against an annual target, based on the market share of the obligated entity, targeting oil suppliers and the transport sector. The recent implementation of an energy audit policy is also an important step forward for industrial energy efficiency in Greece, offering the opportunity for suppliers to cooperate with industry to undertake energy audits and jointly set up and implement an energy efficiency scheme. With regard to the building sector, where there is a huge potential to implement energy saving interventions due to the high rate of building ownership in Greece, and since after 2010 there is limited new construction, focus is given to the refurbishment and renovation of the existing building stock in line with new efficiency obligations, e.g. improvements in thermal insulation.

**Box 12: Energy efficiency and savings in the buildings sector**

One of the most resource consuming sectors is the building sector that accounts for approximately half of total energy consumption. In this respect, the Ministry of Environment and Energy has launched in March 2018, the implementation of the 2nd phase of the Programme “In-house saving (II)” that originally run between 2011-2014. This is a public-private venture, coupled with the State’s energy audit policy, with the active participation of the banking sector (10 banks are partners in its implementation, 5 of which being cooperative ones) and aluminum frame producers, for providing no or low interest loans to house and shop owners for replacing door & window frames, boiler & heating systems and external wall insulation to ensure best heating and cooling performance and insulation, thus, resulting in considerable energy savings. The Programme funded by the National Fund of Entrepreneurship and Development (ETEAN) will have a positive impact, as in its original phase, in decreasing the energy footprint of old buildings through adequate refurbishments, expected to result in annual energy savings of up to 1 billion kWh, boosting in parallel the related businesses and industry.

Along the same lines, within the framework of the Integrated Environmental Policy scheme of the Ministry of National Defence, the Armed Forces of Greece have been implementing several projects for reducing their environmental and carbon footprints, including, inter alia, the installation of hybrid systems of RES in isolated islands, energy renovation projects in buildings, implementation and certification of energy management systems as well as integrated chemical and bio-residual waste management schemes.

With regard to climate change mitigation and adaptation as captured by **SDG 13**, Greece has been one of the first EU countries to ratify the Paris Agreement, and is fully dedicated to meet its commitments towards the international community. Under the EU’s Emission Trading System (ETS) and according to the first EU 2009 Climate-Energy package, Greece has to reduce its GHG emissions by 4% below the 2005 level by 2020. Greece is already meeting the climate objectives for 2020 and its total GHG emissions excluding emissions and removals from land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) have decreased already even more than 4%, therefore already implementing **SDG 13.2**.

**Box 13: Energy efficiency and environmental protection in ships and ports**

Greece, as a shipping nation, through the Hellenic Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, seeks to implement SDG target 7.3 through a set of technical and operational measures adopted by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in order to increase the energy efficiency of ships, while preparing for the implementation of international and EU legislation on the monitoring, reporting and verification of GHG from maritime transport at national level (EU Regulation 2015/757, amendments to Annex VI of MARPOL 73/78) and ensuring the implementation of international and EU rules on the prevention of pollution from ships (linked to SDG target 14.1). To this end, environmental standards are implemented in ports (e.g. waste management of ships based on environmental friendly practices), alternative fuels (LNG) are promoted as marine fuel, “cold ironing” technology and practices are supported, energy production at ports from RES is implemented and the notion of Corporate Social Responsibility as well as the implementation of Environmental Management Systems (like the EU EMAS) are widely being promoted in ports.

GHG emissions in Greece have decreased at a higher rate than energy consumption. This decrease is attributed to the low-carbon policies and measures implemented in the country, that include: accelerating permitting procedures for RES and offering attractive feed-in tariffs for all RES technologies, aiming to increase the share of RES in final energy consumption to 18% by 2020; the decommissioning of old and inefficient fossil fuel power plants; the introduction of more climate friendly fuels (i.e. natural gas) in the energy mix, additionally to RES; energy conservation programmes in industrial units; and incentives for the creation of “green business parks”.

#### Box 14: Smart and energy sufficient islands

Greece is pursuing an ambitious project to interconnect many of the non interconnected islands to the electrical grid of the mainland, by 2030. To that end, the Greek Regulatory Authority for Energy (RAE) has established a Committee, since 2015, to assess the various alternative scenarios for the interconnection of all isolated systems to the mainland from an environmental, technical and economic view point to identify best possible solutions for the country's long-term energy planning. For the interconnection of the islands, Greece intends to use the specific fund earmarked for Greece that the EU Council proposes in the ETS review (revenues from the auctioning of the 25 million allowances for the moment). This will have multiple benefits as it will allow the decommissioning of the old heavily polluting diesel engines that are currently used in most Greek islands that highly rely, for their economic viability, on high-end tourism that builds, inter alia, on their unique natural and cultural environment. Through these efforts, it is expected to: further sharply decrease air pollution locally and considerably at national level; decrease the traffic of tankers and the management operations of the oil transport i.e. reducing the possibilities of accidental oil spills; sharply reduce the electricity production cost (now the extra cost for the non-connected islands is more than EUR 0.5 billion per year); further decrease GHG emissions; and allow for a greater penetration of RES in the electricity grid (for the grids that still remain isolated this is achieved through the installation and operation of innovative hybrid systems) thus benefitting from the comparative advantages for clean energy production that Greece has due to its high solar, wind, wave and geothermal potential. In this direction, the Greek Independent Power Transmission Operator (ADMIE S.A.) is now completing the interconnection of 4 Cyclades islands in the Aegean Sea and pursues the interconnection of Crete with Peloponnese in 2021, of Crete with Attica / Athens in 2024 and the interconnection of most of the remaining not yet connected islands by 2030. The overall technical specifications for the project have already been approved and now RAE and ADMIE S.A. are in the process of carrying out an open call for interested investors.

According to the second EU Climate-Energy package, Greece has to reduce its GHG emissions, under the ETS, by 16% below the 2005 level, by 2030, and Greece is already in a very good place to meet this target probably before its deadline date. With regard to the non-ETS sectors, for the sectors of buildings, transport, waste, agriculture and industry (i.e. the forthcoming EU ESR Regulation), Greece is obliged to cut down its emission also by 16% by 2030, whereas for the LU-LUCF sectors Greece has to maintain a neutral balance by 2030. As a result of the energy policy and other measures already implemented, as described above in previous chapters (including sustainable urban mobility interventions well as the improvement of efficiency in public and private buildings), Greece will be in a very good place to meet these targets earlier than 2030. Furthermore, the above-mentioned National Energy and Climate Plan for 2030 and beyond,



currently being elaborated, seeks to “decarbonise” the Greek society, in a way that further maximises energy efficiency, integrates untapped RES, incorporates climate objectives into integrated energy planning, while ensures energy security and meets the interests of local economies, so as to fully comply with the national and EU 2030 GHG targets.

With regard to adaptation to climate change (SDG 13.1), Greece has fully developed its legal and institutional framework for adapting to climate change impacts and challenges, i.e.: (i) a key adaptation to climate change law (law 4414/2016) has been endorsed; (ii) a National Adaptation Strategy (NAS) is already in place and implemented since mid-2016, covering priority sectors (i.e. natural ecosystems and biodiversity, agriculture and food security, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, water resources, coastal zones, tourism, human health, energy and industry, transport, the built environment, cultural heritage, insurance industry); and (iii) the 13 Regional Authorities are now preparing their Regional Adaptation Action Plans (RAAPs) to identify and prioritise measures to address regional vulnerabilities and expected climate change impacts based on the adaptation options included in the NAS (according to Ministerial Decision 11258/2017 on technical specifications for the content of RAAPs).

In line with the provisions of law 4414/2016, Greece has also formulated a National Climate Change Adaptation Committee coordinated by the Ministry of Environment and Energy, comprising the Secretary Generals of all line ministries. The objective of this Committee is to coordinate relevant policies and to overview the incorporation of climate change adaptation considerations in all sectoral policies affected, horizontally. It also includes representatives of local and regional authorities which foster (vertical) coordination among the levels of governance, and representatives of the main climate adaptation stakeholders (e.g. academia, businesses and NGOs) which allow for a participatory and transparent decision-making process. Greece is also currently promoting the development of a programme to address capacity needs, facilitate information and knowledge sharing and strengthen the existing monitoring and reviewing framework for climate adaptation.

In addition, 156 municipalities from Greece have joined the EU Covenant of Mayors, pledging action to support the EU GHG reduction targets by 2020 and 2030, and adopting a joint approach to tackle mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

#### **4.7 Building effective, accountable and transparent institutions (SDGs 16, 17)**

Institutional capacity and quality is of paramount importance for sustainable development and the ability of a nation to anticipate and prepare for future shocks and manage unfolding crises. Effective, inclusive and accountable institutions that function at all levels in an open, meritocratic and transparent manner can boost the government’s ability to implement effective anti-crisis measures that are at the same time legitimate in the eyes of the citizens. This is why Greece strongly adheres to the 16<sup>th</sup> SDG of promoting a peaceful and inclusive society, providing access to justice for all and building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

##### **Main policies and measures**

#### **Protecting human rights (SDGs 16.2, 16.3, 17.17)**

The mission of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights is to ensure the timely and effective administration of justice, the design and implementation of an effective anti-criminal

policy and the promotion of policies aimed at strengthening transparency and protecting human rights. Therefore, the Ministry's mission is mainly linked to some of the targets of [SDG 16](#), but also to [SDGs 10.2](#) and [17.17](#). In particular, priority has been given so as the national legal framework to be always in line with the respective one at EU and Council of Europe level.

Within this framework, Greece is planning to adopt a new Action Plan for the Child which will further contribute to the best protection of this vulnerable group ([SDG 16.2](#)). Furthermore, in order to promote the rule of law and the equal access to justice for all ([SDG 16.3](#)), actions of both institutional nature (related to the legal framework) as well as actions related to infrastructure, staffing and technological improvement of justice are being implemented or planned. These include: (i) the Action Plan on e-Justice and Administrative Upgrading, where specific measures are planned and are being implemented, which in their full development should contribute to reducing the timeframes in civil, criminal and administrative courts; (ii) utilisation of alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation and judicial mediation, which are expected to lead to a gradual reduction of the courts' workload and the consolidation of a culture of compromise; (iii) reform of the main Codes of legislation (Code of Civil Procedure, Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure), with a view to resolving problems of bad -or over- regulation; and (iv) continuing training and specialisation programmes for court officials and judges. Regarding [SDG 10.2](#), in the next Human Rights Action Plan emphasis will be placed on the principle of equal treatment, for the promotion and monitoring of which the Greek Ombudsman (independent authority) has a leading role. Priority has also been given to the combat of racism and xenophobia. Initiatives such as the establishment of the National Council against Racism and Intolerance or the Action Plan for Human Rights are expected to improve even more the implementation of anti-racist legislation and to result to effectively combat hate crimes in all aspects of public life.

In parallel, the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning (GSLL) of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs implements, among others, actions and programmes which seek to promote and protect the fundamental rights of minors. In this regards, the GSLL implements the "Legal Aid for Young People" programme designed to provide practical and immediate legal support to minors and young people belonging to vulnerable social groups who lack the resources and generally have not the opportunity to bear the financial costs and the responsibility of their representation, both before the court and out of court (linked to [SDGs 10, 16](#)). This programme runs in cooperation with the Bar Associations of the country, initially in Athens and Thessaloniki (up to date, 28 Programme Lawyers' Associations have been contracted and implement projects in the country), providing legal assistance to a large number of beneficiaries, mostly minors. The "Legal Aid for Young People" programme is complementary to another programme called "Provision of Legal Aid to Low-Income Policies and Other Provisions" which focuses on the protection of minors and special categories of youth up to 35 years of age linked to the institution "Providing Legal Assistance to Applicants for International Protection".

#### **Fighting corruption (SDGs 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 17.17)**

With a view to enhancing the fight against corruption and fraud, the Greek government established by law in 2015 the General Secretariat Against Corruption (GSAC). The GSAC works on the fight against corruption through the implementation of the multidisciplinary and multilevel National Strategic Plan Against Corruption drawn up on the basis of European and internation-



al standards and best practices. This Plan constitutes a top priority for the Greek government, which has been engaged to implement it according to schedule. [SDGs 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 17.17](#) are strongly related to the objectives of the Plan, making it an effective and useful tool in the context of the new National Growth Strategy.

In particular, the GSAC contributes to reducing illicit financial flows, recovering stolen assets and combating all forms of organised crime ([SDG 16.4](#)) through the following actions: (i) enhancement of the legal framework, by means of improving the mutual legal assistance arrangements (MLA), public procurements and asset recovery; (ii) enforcement of the institutional framework, by establishing the Coordination Operational Center for combating the smuggling of products and the establishment of a Complaints Office in GSAC under the supervision of a Prosecutor, which receives complaints for the management of EU and development law funds as well; (iii) enhancement of control, through the operation of the Bank Accounts Register and the interconnection of the relevant audit services; and (iv) active participation in the Strategy and Policies Committee for Countering Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism.

In this connection, the Directorate of Financial Police of the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the competent Ministry of Finance as well as other national authorities, European and international organisations (EUROPOL, INTERPOL, EUIPO), has been working systematically by carrying out controls related to the implementation of the tax legislation and the fight against tax evasion, and by investigating cases of non-transparent and illegal management of state funds and aids and community resources, financial offences, cases of illegal trade, smuggling and cross-border organised crime.

Furthermore, in order to combat corruption and bribery ([SDG 16.5](#)), a series of legislative initiatives have been taken, aiming at financial transparency and fighting corruption, such as the electronic submission of asset declarations and the financing of political parties. Other initiatives include the training programmes for civil servants in corruption issues, the establishment of the Central Electronic Registry of Public Procurements (KIMDIS) and the National System of Electronic Public Procurements (ESIDIS), as well as the issuing of directives and information material in issues of bribery of foreign officials by Greek nationals and the obligations of the companies.

In addition, in their effort to reduce corruption and fraud in all their forms, the Directorate of Prosecution of Cyber-crime, the Directorate of Financial Police and the Directorate of Home Affairs of the Ministry of Interior, cooperate closely with other departments responsible for checks and inspections under the competent ministries, the Coordinating Control and Inspection Body, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the OECD. They are investigating cases of corruption, fraud and misappropriation against the public sector and the EU.

The creation of the GSAC, the Decision of the Hellenic Parliament establishing, for the first time in Greece, a Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament (Gov. Gaz. A' 67/18-4-2016), and the coordination by the GSAC of audit and control bodies, can be mentioned here as initiatives pertinent to the fulfillment of effective, accountable and transparent institutions ([SDG 16.6](#)).

Other initiatives taken by the GSAC, which are related to promoting effective partnerships ([SDG 17.17](#)), include: (i) the public partnership with representatives of the private sector, business organisations, professional associations and companies, for information and corruption awareness;

(ii) developing best practice guidelines for promoting corporate compliance, effective internal audit and ethics in Greek enterprises; and (iii) organising conferences on issues related to the fight against corruption.

### **Building effective institutions and strengthening transparency (SDG 16.6, 16.7, 16.b)**

The achievement of the objectives outlined in the 2030 Agenda, presupposes the operation of a public administration capable to support such an effort. The Greek public administration is in the process of implementing a series of reforms, which serve the achievement of sustainable development. The design of the updated National Strategy for Administrative Reform 2017-2019 incorporates the basic aspects and priorities of the SDGs. In its introductory chapter, it is clearly stated that the Strategy aims at an independent and efficient public administration system that can meet society's needs and provide high-quality services to citizens and businesses, driven by the SDGs. The four pillars supporting the reform strategy cover a wide range of initiatives, which are directly linked to several SDGs and in particular the [SDG 16.6, 16.7, 16.b](#). These cover the following thematic areas: (i) Administrative Structures and Tools; (ii) Administrative Operations and Procedures; (iii) Human Resources; and (iv) Enhancement of Transparency, Accountability and Open Government.

In particular, the Transparency Programme initiative (Diavgeia) offers citizens the opportunity to have direct access, via a single government website ([diavgeia.gov.gr](http://diavgeia.gov.gr)), to all public administration decisions and acts, once they are issued. Based on law 3861/2010, the Transparency Programme contributes to safeguarding transparency of government actions, eliminating corruption, observing legality and good administration, reinforcing citizens' constitutional rights, enhancing and modernising existing publication systems of administrative acts and decisions, making all administrative acts and decisions available in formats that are easily accessible and understandable.

Emphasis is also given on the simplification of administrative procedures and the reduction of administrative burdens, especially as regards the facilitation of starting and running a business activity. In addition, the codification and legislation reform, which serves the goals of better legislation, is another key priority of the National Strategy for Administrative Reform (provided for in art. 40 of law 4369/2016). This priority is essential in the effort to build efficient, reliable and transparent institutions. Other important public administration reforms, which aim at the qualitative upgrading of public services, include the new assessment and goal-setting system, as well as the new executive and top management selection process (law 4369/2016), in which independent authorities and social partners are now actively involved, the new mobility scheme (law 4440/2016) and the social accountability of public administration (art. 24 of law 4369/2016), which provides the procedures of taking into account the opinion of citizens on the quality of public services and their proposals for improvements.

Another important institutional development is the establishment of an Independent Public Revenue Authority (law 4389/2016), which demonstrates in practice the will of the Greek state to ensure effectiveness and justice as regards tax collection, and to shield the independence and meritocratic functioning of this new institution. Such an institutional progress is a clear sign of the ongoing fight against corruption and inequality, as far as tax burden sharing is concerned, and of the effort to eliminate discriminatory policies and practices and achieve greater equality. [SDG 10.4](#) can be attained through the successful operation of this newly established institution, and

related to this is the work done by the Ministry of Finance, which, in cooperation with the Bank of Greece, can oversee and implement [SDGs 8.10](#) and [10.5](#).

Moreover, in order to achieve the environmental related SDGs as such, and to ensure a strong cross-cutting environmental dimension in all other SDGs, there is also need to promote open and transparent mechanisms and processes. Hence, Greece has adopted a “beyond government” approach by trying to meaningfully involve and engage in a close cooperation with all involved stakeholders, e.g. regions, local authorities, citizens, businesses, academia and NGOs, in order to tackle local environmental problems while improving accountability, transparency, social equity and credibility. Related tools that are being applied, include, indicatively: (i) “environmental liability” inspection mechanisms to ensure the application of the “polluter pays principle”, with law 4042/2012 for the protection of the environment through criminal law; (ii) the implementation of the Aarhus Convention (law 3422/2005) to facilitate access of citizens to environmental information and disclosure of environmental information to interested parties upon request; and (iii) recent and sophisticated electronic tools such as the “Electronic Waste Registry” kept by the Ministry of Environment and Energy to ensure a qualitative and quantitative inventory of any waste and its traceability, cross-check and facilitate environmental audits and monitor all involved in the production and waste management cycle.

#### **The Greek Ombudsman (SDGs 16.3, 16.6, 17.17)**

The Ombudsman is a constitutionally independent authority, whose aim, according to its founding law, is to protect citizens’ rights, combat maladministration, and ensure observance of the rule of law and the principle of good governance, thematic areas directly linked to the core vision of the 2030 Agenda for “a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination” (par. 8 of Resolution 70/1). Two of the institution’s basic characteristics are its extrajudicial and mediatory role. The Ombudsman’s mission as an intermediary has two fundamental, interconnected, but distinctly different goals. The first is to examine and perhaps resolve individual complaints made by citizens, thereby protecting their rights. Equally important, however, is the articulation of proposals to remedy the underlying causes of citizens’ rights infringements and improve the services offered to citizens. Effectively tackling maladministration depends on the balanced mix of the two above methods of intervention. In this sense, the Ombudsman’s scope can be defined in somewhat broader terms as a mechanism for monitoring, control, accountability and transparency aiming at improving the functioning of the public administration by promoting good practices. The Greek Ombudsman’s portfolio is organised in six thematic areas of investigation: Human Rights, Health and Social Welfare, Environment and Quality of Life, State-Citizen Relations, Children’s rights and Equal treatment.

In addition to the above fields of intervention, the Ombudsman has also recently been entrusted with other special mandates that relate to: (i) the external monitoring of procedures for the removal of third-country nationals; (ii) the National Torture Prevention Mechanism, in accordance with the UN’s Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT); (iii) the National Mechanism for the investigation of arbitrary behavior; (iv) the Framework for the Promotion of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; (v) the National Mechanism for the Development, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Rights of the Child Action Plans under

the auspices of the General Secretariat for Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice; and, most recently; (vi) under law 4509/2017, the Ombudsman has the competence to enter in the special treatment centers in order to control the possible violation of the rights of the patients.

With the aim of establishing the appropriate context and conditions to ensure a more substantial and effective intervention in the ever growing web of its competences, the Ombudsman seeks to strengthen and further consolidate mediation as a tool, in order to broaden its contribution to the functioning of public administration, tackling the various and complicated problems, with due respect for the principle of good administration and transparency, and, at the same time decongest the courts and relieve the judiciary, enabling its mission. The Greek Ombudsman is committed to the strategic objectives of safeguarding the respect for civil, political and social rights, of defending the fundamental constitutional guarantees, enhancing the rule of law and of strengthening the democratic governance principles and mechanisms.

From the above, it is clear that apart from [SDG 16.3](#) and [16.6](#), the portfolios of the Greek Ombudsman are directly related to key areas of the SDGs (e.g. human rights is directly related to [SDGs 1, 4, 10, 16, 17](#), environment and quality of life to [SDGs 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15](#), equal treatment to [SDGs 3, 4, 5, 16](#), etc.).

#### Box 15: The National Center for Environment and Sustainable Development (NCESD)

The NCESD, an independent legal entity, operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The main objective of the Center is to provide objective, reliable and comparable scientific information regarding the state of environment in Greece, so as to support, in an evidence-based way, the formulation of environmental policies and monitor the country's progress towards sustainable development, taking into account national commitments within the international and European framework. In addition, it provides technical assistance to public administration and policy advice to relevant state authorities. Its objectives also include the collection and processing of environmental data, the provision of reliable environmental information to public and private users as well as awareness raising, education and training of public officers and local/regional authorities' staff on environment and sustainable development related issues. It also serves as an important communication channel and hub with the research community and the NGO society in Greece on environment and sustainable development issues. In this context, on 15 March 2017 it organised an open discussion and dialogue between the Ministry of Environment and Energy, and the environmental NGOs of the country on the SDGs. In the dialogue all major Greek NGOs participated along with representatives from various line ministries and public entities involved in the adaptation and implementation of SDGs in Greece (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Secretariat of the Government, Ministry of Culture and Sports). The interactive discussion that has been extremely fruitful for both sides, focused on: the priorities and criteria that should guide the state-led efforts for the implementation of the SDGs at the national level (i.e. success stories and gaps regarding achievement of the Goals, particularly the environmental SDGs); how the active involvement of the civil society can strengthen the environmental pillar of the SDGs; and how the open dialogue between civil society stakeholders and the administration can become more systematic, in order to assist a "whole-of-society" approach in achieving the Goals. All NGOs emphasised the role of education in implementing the SDGs in the everyday life of the citizens and highlighted practical ways that the NGOs can contribute and serve as a means for public awareness raising campaigns.

#### **4.8 Enhancing open, participatory, democratic processes and promoting partnerships (SDGs 16, 17)**

The use of open, democratic and participatory processes in policy making contributes strongly to the formation of fairer and more effective public policies, as these can take into account the real needs of the interested parties and society at large, provide more forward and outward looking solutions, and ensure legitimacy of the implemented policies and legislation. In fact, this process leads to the enhancement of partnership, ownership and responsibility in implementation and an increased confidence in public institutions. The Greek government firmly upholds the extensive use of these processes that strengthen and deepen democracy. It truly believes in the added value of multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development (SDG 17.17).

##### **Main policies and measures**

#### **Adhering to the values of democratic and participatory governance (SDGs 16.6, 16.7, 17.17)**

The Greek public administration is a member of the Open Government Partnership, and therefore, recognises the value of open government principles as the cornerstone for integrity and transparency and a key enabler for citizen participation.

Public participation in decision making is ensured by the opengov site - the Greek Open Government Initiative. The site has been designed to serve the principles of transparency, deliberation, collaboration and accountability. It includes three main initiatives: (i) electronic deliberation: almost every piece of draft legislation or even policy initiative by the government is posted in the opengov online platform, prior to its submission to parliament. Citizens and organisations can post their comments, suggestions and criticisms. These are then taken into account by the competent ministry proposing the draft law and reflected into a Public Consultation Report, which accompanies the draft law upon submission to the parliament. (ii) Open calls for the recruitment of public administration officials: top and mid-level openings in the public sector are available on the internet. Applications are submitted online using a platform available on the opengov website. (iii) Labs OpenGov: an open innovation initiative that brings together ideas and proposals from citizens, the public and private sectors, which attempts to release the power of decentralised knowledge and explore new ways to tackle modern public administration problems.

Furthermore, Greece puts forward measures and initiatives which seek to enhance the democratic and participatory decision-making in specific policy fields. To this end, the Greek government adopted in 2016 a new legislative framework (law 4384/2016) aimed at modernising and strengthening agricultural co-operatives. This new framework provides for a simpler structure for agricultural cooperatives and the enhancement of co-operation and sustainable entrepreneurship. The objective is to strengthen collegiality and operation based on the principles of voluntary and free participation, as well as to provide for cooperatives open to people without any discrimination, with democratic administration, equal financial participation of members, autonomy and independence, and promotion of cooperation between cooperatives and interaction with local communities. Additionally, this law contains provisions regarding the establishment and the operation of women's cooperatives, targeting the empowerment of rural women's role in Greece. For the first time, women's cooperatives are supported and regulated,

providing a simplified administrative structure and specifying development measures, such as actions for information, networking and promotion, as well as exchanging of know-how and good practices.

Equally important, in its effort to promote participatory and inclusive decision-making, the Greek government has established the Migrants' Integration Councils, which constitute advisory bodies to the municipalities in the decision-making process at local level (law 3852/2010). The Migrants' Integration Councils, in which migrants can also participate, are tasked with: (i) identifying the problems that migrants who reside within the jurisdiction of a municipality face with regards to their integration in the local society and their contacts with public and local authorities; (ii) submitting proposals to the Municipal Board for the development of local actions aimed at promoting the smooth social integration of migrants; and (iii) organising, in cooperation with the competent municipality, events designed to raise awareness and reinforce social cohesion of local population.

### **Environmental governance and partnerships (SDG 17.14, 17.16, 17.17)**

The implementation of the interlinked SDGs, especially the environmental ones, require, above all, coherent policies and measures that take into account environmental, social and economic implications at the early stage of planning to address trade-offs and integrated approaches. Of particular importance for Greece has been the promotion of governance tools that ensure "policy coherence for sustainable development" (PCSD) in practice (SDG 17.14), such as spatial planning.

Articles 24, 79 and 106 of the Greek Constitution state that spatial planning, being the spatial depiction of the economic and social activities to ensure protection of the natural environment, optimal living conditions of the population and economic growth, should be carried out in such a way, and taking into account the rich geographic profile and diversity of the country, so as to safeguard economic and social cohesion, amend geographical imbalances and spatial inequalities, ensure sustainable management of natural and cultural resources as well as promote coherence and complementarity of activities (e.g. residential areas, production areas and free space in off-plan areas) in time and space, at all levels, i.e. local, regional and national.

Therefore, the promotion of an "Integrated Spatial Planning Strategy" in Greece constitutes the realisation of the principles of sustainable development in practice, based on three pillars, namely balance, protection and development. Analytically, it comprises: (i) a general-overarching "National Spatial Planning Strategic Document" providing the overall vision and strategic objectives of the country's spatial planning; (ii) twelve "Regional Spatial Planning Frameworks" covering the totality of the Greek administrative and geographic regions, which are evaluated and currently under revision; (iii) "Specific Spatial Planning Frameworks": at the moment, there are four Sector-specific Frameworks on Renewable energy, on Aquaculture, on Industry and on Tourism, setting out medium and long-term strategic objectives and guidelines. These Specific Spatial Planning Frameworks can also be established for certain critical and sensitive areas faced with environmental degradation, geographic exclusion and land-use conflicts on Mountainous, Coastal, Island and Inaccessible or degraded Areas; and (iv) Regulatory Plans for the Metropolitan Regions of Athens and Thessaloniki.



Greece is trying to build, domestically, strong partnerships with all involved stakeholders and civil society, in order to achieve its environmental obligations and the SDGs, by promoting ownership, stewardship and awareness raising. In this spirit Greece also aims at jointly developing and most importantly deploying, together with the “productive sectors”, innovative solutions and technologies that can truly be environmentally sound, that can create new jobs and spin off the economy. Such public–private partnerships (PPPs) have a great potential in Greece, especially in the waste management sector and are in line with the circular economy principles (see also chapters 4.1 and 4.6).

**Box 16: A successful show-case of technical cooperation for promoting the objectives of the Barcelona Convention at sub-regional Mediterranean level**

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, two trilateral schemes of technical cooperation and partnership have been initiated, at a high political level, between Greece, Cyprus and Israel and between Greece, Cyprus and Egypt, in 2016 and in 2017, respectively. The ultimate objective of these cooperative schemes is to enhance peace and stability in the region and facilitate the sharing of experiences, knowledge and know-how in order to promote joint projects of mutual interest, find solutions to common concerns and promote interconnectivity and complementarity of actions. In the field of environmental protection, these trilateral cooperation frameworks, focus, inter alia, on: the protection of marine and coastal environment with emphasis on the prevention of marine pollution and the preparedness and response to it (particularly pollution which might stem from oil and gas exploration activities), the prevention of water pollution, water reuse and wastewater treatment with emphasis on wastewater from olive oil mills, and adaptation to climate change. With regard to the latter thematic priority, this is led in both cooperation schemes by Greece, since our country has already advanced its related institutional framework. In particular, Greece is sharing its National Adaptation Observation & Monitoring Mechanism (NAOMM), which is currently in a process of being set up, with its Mediterranean partner countries, as a basis for the exchange of information, inter alia, on relative monitoring and observation mechanisms, on best practices and on know-how including on climate adaptation indicators and climate adaptation web applications and tools, aiming to create a solid knowledge-base for adaptation approaches and specific tools/methods that can be compatible to all parts.

At the same time, Greece is building strong “beyond borders” partnerships with partner countries that face similar challenges and share common goals, through bilateral and trilateral technical cooperation schemes, especially in its geographic neighborhood, i.e. South-East Europe and South-East Mediterranean. In particular, at the Mediterranean level, Greece is a very active Contracting Party to the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the environment of the Mediterranean coastal zone and Sea: the Coordination Unit/Secretariat of the Convention is hosted in Athens since 1981 with the financial support of the Hellenic State. Moreover, Greece has hosted the 16<sup>th</sup> COP of the Convention in Athens in February 2016, it has been presiding the Bureau of the Contracting Parties to the Convention in 2016 and 2017 and is chairing the “Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development” (MCSD) for 2017-2019. Finally, Greece is committed to the full implementation of the “Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development” (MSSD, 2016-2025) which constitutes a well elaborated “translation” of the global 2030 Agenda to the regional Mediterranean context and priorities and a useful tool to guide national efforts to develop a compatible National Implementation Plan for the SDGs, at a later stage.

### **International ministerial meetings and conferences on human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence (SDGs 16.3, 17.16, 17.17)**

The Greek government places special emphasis on initiating international and regional cooperative schemes which are closely linked to human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence. In this context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised the Rhodes Informal Ministerial Conference for Security and Stability which took place on 22-23 of May 2017, under the theme “Living and Working together in Peace and Stability”, following the 1st Rhodes Informal Ministerial Meeting. The participating Ministers of Foreign Affairs and High Officials from twenty European and Arab countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, had the opportunity to reiterate their determination to promote, amid diverse security challenges for the Eastern Mediterranean, a positive agenda of cooperation for the benefit of their strategically, economically and culturally important neighborhood, making it a safer place for its people to prosper. The participants, guided by the “Spirit of Rhodes”, as emerged in 2016 at the 1st Rhodes Informal Ministerial Meeting, deepened their discussions at the 2nd Ministerial Meeting, on major issues of the Eastern Mediterranean, like education, culture and environment, security and stability and migration. The next Rhodes Conference is taking place during the last week of June 2018.

Another area which is also very important is religious and cultural pluralism. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised in Athens, on 18-20 October 2015, an International Conference on “Religious and Cultural Pluralism and Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East”. Participants included Patriarchs and Primate of Christian Churches, religious leaders of the Muslim and Jewish world, as well as other prominent religious personalities, representatives of international politics, academic communities and civil society who expressed their concern about the humanitarian situation and condemned human rights violations and acts of terrorism and violent extremism perpetrated against religious and cultural communities in the context of the protracted conflicts in the area, especially in Syria and Iraq. The Conference sought to contribute to raising awareness of these pressing issues and enhance international efforts for the immediate humanitarian relief of these communities, their protection from violence, persecution and discrimination, their safe voluntary return and resettlement in their ancient cradles. The deliberate destruction and looting of religious and cultural heritage assets (SDGs 4.7, 11.4) in the region was strongly condemned and support was provided to every effort ensuring the effective protection of these cultural treasures. This International Conference resulted, among others, in the adoption of a decision for the establishment of the Centre for Religious Pluralism in the Middle East in January 2016. The 2nd International Conference took place in Athens on 29-31 October 2017 with the active participation of 168 delegations, officials and religious leaders. The Conference overviewed main features and developments of religious pluralism in the Middle East in the last two years. It also focused on the future challenges religious pluralism faces in the region and proposed possible fields where religious co-existence and pluralism could be further developed. The 3rd International Conference is scheduled to take place in October 2019.

### **Developing international partnerships on education (SDG 17.16, 17.17)**

Networking and synergies constitute important means of implementing the UNESCO Education 2030. It is within this context that the Greek school-members of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious



Affairs carry out projects on key thematic areas, including peace and human rights, sustainable development education, intercultural education, global citizenship and world heritage. For the period 2016-2018, the Greek Schools members of the ASPnet were invited by UNESCO -along with 12 other countries and following an invitation from UNESCO- in a pilot programme on climate change, with a view to promoting the Global Programme for Education for Sustainable Development.

In addition, the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs has been very actively involved in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development since its adoption in 2005, having being the Chair Country of its Steering Committee from 2005 to 2010 and member of its Bureau until 2011. Moreover, Greece has constructively participated in the UNECE “Expert Group for Indicators” and has taken part in the elaboration of important documents aimed at promoting ESD, including the “Learning for the future - competences in education for sustainable development”, which provides a framework for the professional development of educators (SDG 4.c) and is of particular importance to individuals, groups and institutions that have a multiplier effect, such as educators of educators.

Equally important, Greece has facilitated the elaboration of the Mediterranean Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (MSESD) that was formally endorsed in Athens, in May 2014, during the Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the European Union, at the Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The Mediterranean Strategy encourages, among others, countries to incorporate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into their formal educational systems, as well as in non-formal and informal educational activities aimed at promoting sustainable development in the Mediterranean region. Greece is also a member of the Steering Committee for the implementation of the Action Plan of the MSESD which has been endorsed by all UfM countries to put the Strategy into practice for the Euro-Mediterranean area.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that at the request of Greece, the UNESCO Executive Board adopted, at its 200th session, a Decision regarding the education of refugees, supported by France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and the United States of America. The Decision invites, among others, Member States to support, through extra budgetary resources, UNESCO activities to provide lifelong learning opportunities for forcibly displaced people. In addition, Member States are called on to coalesce around existing platforms, such as the Education Cannot Wait fund launched at the World Humanitarian Summit 2016, and to ensure joint responses that make the humanitarian system work more efficiently to provide better education for more children in protracted emergencies. It also recommends Member States to integrate refugee and internally displaced populations in their education data systems, and urges Member States to include learning needs among refugees and internally displaced populations in education policies and in humanitarian response plans.

In view of enhancing the inter-Balkan cooperation on pressing issues, Greece participates in a project entitled “Forest Action for Climate Change Mitigation”. One of the key objectives of the project is to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs 4, 13 and 15, and to highlight that forests can be part of the solution in the fight against climate change. The participating countries include Greece (Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature and the 2nd Athens Directorate of

Primary Education), Bulgaria (Blue Flag Movement), Cyprus (Cyprus Marine Environment Protection Association), and Romania (Carpathian-Danubian Centre of Geoecology). The partnership was developed within the framework of implementing the international Learning about Forests programme (LEAF) which seek to generate and increase knowledge about the important role forests play in sustaining life on our planet through outdoor and classroom learning. In the context of the implementation of the project, an educational material was developed by 24 teachers (6 from each country) for upper primary and lower secondary education (ages 10-15) in the following climate change-related thematic areas: (i) forests and biodiversity; (ii) forests and CO<sub>2</sub>; (iii) forests and energy; and (iv) forests fires. In parallel, an ecocode was also developed in the form of a text, poster, song, poem about environmental attitude and ecological behavior in the forest. On the occasion of the World Forestry Day, in March 2017 participating schools organised informative actions aimed at promoting the project in the local community within their country.

### **Fostering international partnerships in the areas of migration and asylum (SDG 17.16, 17.17)**

Recognising the decisive importance of European and international cooperation, the Ministry for Migration Policy is actively involved in multilateral partnerships and processes which promote the exchange of knowledge and expertise in the areas of migration and asylum. In this regard, the Ministry contributes to the development of national positions in the framework of international and regional negotiation processes, such as the current intergovernmental consultations under the United Nations for a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and a Global Compact on Refugees or the on-going discussions in the framework of the competent working groups of the Council of the EU, regarding EU cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum.

In parallel, the Ministry for Migration Policy participates actively in a number of international processes and fora which seek to promote international dialogue and synergies on migration-related issues, including the UN Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), the European Migration Network (EMN), the European Integration Network (EIN), the European Social Fund Thematic Network on Migrants, the Working Group on the Future of Integration under the relevant initiative of the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), the Euro med-Migration III και IV projects, and the OECD Working Party on Migration.

The Ministry also cooperates with international organisations on a systematic basis, mainly the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD), and participates in informal, non-decision making forums such as the Intergovernmental Consultations on migration, asylum and refugees (IGC). It also contributes to the work undertaken by other organisations in relation to its areas of competence, such as the Council of Europe, in particular the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) etc.

# 5 | STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT AND COMMITMENT

Ever since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 (Earth Summit), it was recognised that achieving sustainable development would require the active participation of all sectors of society and all types of people. The 2030 Agenda strongly advocates for the active participation of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders, and as explicitly mentioned in paragraph 74 (d) of Resolution 70/1, one of the guiding principles of the (state-led) follow-up and review processes at all levels, is that they will be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and will support reporting by all relevant stakeholders.

Having reported in chapter 4 on some of the major policies executed by the central government and the line ministries, aimed at achieving the SDGs, emphasis is now placed on some of the SDGs-related actions undertaken by representatives from the local and regional levels of government, the academic and research community, the private sector and civil society organisations. It goes without saying that any actions and initiatives herewith mentioned are only indicative and by no means exhaustive of the vast array of endeavors pursued by all sectors of society.

## 5.1 Local and regional authorities

As all of the SDGs have targets directly related to the responsibilities of local and regional governments, particularly to their role in delivering basic services, their involvement is absolutely essential for the success of sustainable development. In the context of the 325 municipalities and 13 regions of Greece, there are numerous important policies, services and actions that take place all over the country and are related to many SDGs and Targets. However, the local and regional administrations that develop and execute these policies and projects are not often aware of their possible relevance to specific SDGs. Thus, what is needed are actions that raise awareness and advocate for the active role of local actors, as well as support of the local actors in order to make decisions that contribute towards the achievement of the SDGs.

### Localising the SDGs

The local authorities acknowledge and declare that their scope, operation and policies aim foremost at strengthening social cohesion and promoting environment-friendly local development. In fact, in these harsh economic times, the municipalities have made a big effort to create policies and establish mechanisms of relief to the local societies and some of them have pursued partnerships that allowed them to take swift action and deal with the most critical challenges, while demonstrating a significant bottom-up underlying sense of solidarity at every opportunity.

In this context, the municipality of the city of Athens, the capital of Greece, has developed a series of policies and initiatives that align with [SDG 11](#), and aim to support the most vulnerable populations of the city, address issues of transparency and (social & digital) innovation, as well as establish and promote a sustainable and resilient forward-looking strategy for the Athens of 2030. The Municipality has managed to build a robust system for critical relief and welfare

services (SDGs 2, 3) as well as a system of data collection, rationalised administrative procedures and logistics (SDG 16), and has done so with the support of a wide range of partnerships (SDG 17) with civil society institutions and the private sector.

Beyond supporting with food and other basic needs over 20.000 people per week, the Municipality of Athens has also recently established a network of one-stop-shops for health care, psychological, social and legal services, while also implementing a series of initiatives for children, youth and senior citizens, and migrants (actions related directly to SDGs 2, 3, 10) and has forged noteworthy partnerships that have provided significant results (most noticeable in the tourism sector) addressing the SDG 8.

In the same spirit, the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the second largest city of Greece and an important administrative, cultural and business centre in the northern part of the country (Region of Central Macedonia), is promoting urban agriculture by allocating small plots to vulnerable groups, and the Municipality of Trikala, a medium-sized city located in the mainland of Greece (Region of Thessaly), has established five social structures, the Social Restaurant, the Social Grocery, the Social Pharmacy, the Homeless daily-care Center and the Homeless Overnight Structure.

In addition to the socio-economic crisis, another new big challenge for local governments is the refugee crisis. As the local communities are the first affected by the refugee influx, the local authorities are making efforts to manage the impact on their communities by implementing policies and projects that aim to help the newcomers integrate as quickly as possible to the local societies. In this regard, the Municipalities of Thessaloniki and Livadeia, a city of central Greece (Boeotia regional district), launched respectively two programmes supported by the UNHCR and funded by the European Union Civil Protection and the Humanitarian Aid. Both projects, “REACT” and “ESTIA”, aim to ensure decent living conditions, and provide health care and education to refugees and their children.

The achievement of SDGs 11, 13 and 17 is of utmost importance for the people and the institutions active at the local level. In this perspective, the local authorities try to initiate policies and systems designed to ensure the wellbeing of people, to strengthen the urban economy and tackle the impacts of climate change. The Municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki (both selected in 2014 to join the 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) – Pioneered by Rockefeller Foundation network), as well as Trikala, provide three good examples of adopting strategies intended to make their cities resilient, that is, capable of absorbing any future shocks and stresses to their social, economic and technical systems and infrastructures, so as to still be able to maintain essentially the same functions, structures, systems, and identity.

The Athens Resilience Strategy aims to a city that is open, green, proactive and vibrant, setting forth concrete actions that address issues of maintenance, safety, efficiency and accountability, crisis preparedness and management. This can be reached through eco-social policies that elevate the role of local government and give it its rightful place as an important player in economic development, social welfare, environmental adaptation and technological innovation. It is worth mentioning that one or more of the colorful 17 SDG pictograms appear in each page/action of the Strategy, creating in this way a clear correspondence between the Resilience Strategy Actions and the Sustainable Development Goals. By embedding and/or creating transparent links with international, as well as national or municipal strategic documents and guidelines, the Athens

2030 Resilience Strategy is proposing an integrated, holistic and dynamic framework that can provide support to the city's systems, as well as the capacity to monitor their performance that can then provide feedback for better planning, prioritising and implementing the technical plans and annual budget. Thus, the Municipality can efficiently and effectively address its challenges in a horizontal, equitable and sustainable way.

Furthermore, the Athens Resilience Strategy has been working towards promoting [SDG 13](#). Technical support is requested from the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, of which Athens is a member, in order to help the city develop a Climate Action Plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change. The first step of the process concerned the development of a GPC (Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories)-compliant greenhouse gas inventory. This inventory, apart from setting a baseline for Athens, permits the monitoring of activities planned or already under implementation and the evaluation of their outcomes, while allowing for corrective actions, when necessary. Great significance has been given to adaptation; the climate adaptation action plan is crucial for increasing the city's resilience to climate risks, improving the quality of life and ensuring a sustainable future for the next generations. The Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan outlines concrete steps for mitigating the most vulnerable populations' health risks as well as the city's economy and urban quality of life in the face of increasing temperatures, flash floods and bad air quality. The Plan, being compatible with the objectives of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, sets the target for cutting Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 40% until 2030. The main activities concern energy upgrades of the city's very old building stock, public lighting and promotion of sustainable mobility options. The development of this plan is fundamental to the city's resilience. The use of green and blue infrastructures in the city and the adoption of nature-based solutions for cooling the city are crucial measures with multiple co-benefits and a potentially very high resilience dividend.

On March 2017, Thessaloniki launched the project Resilient Thessaloniki – a strategy for 2030, which aims to enhance the city's urban resilience. The Integrated Green Cities is another project that aims at integrated management of urban green space, by educating and reinforcing environmental awareness and mobilisation of the citizens. In the field of new technologies and e-government, the municipality of Thessaloniki has established an infrastructure for spatial information to support environmental community policies, and has created an open data platform, in which all of the city agencies can contribute by sharing their data, which are in this way made available to citizens, researchers, companies and public bodies. The purpose of this project is to provide innovative e-service of access, viewing and downloading the geospatial data of Thessaloniki.

Trikala stands out as a smart city. Technology-powered solutions are integrated into the daily life of the municipality, and government services through e-governance are delivered to citizens. From free Wi-Fi service throughout the city to tele-health care for the elderly, from driverless buses to the e-Dialogos platform where citizens can participate in the public life of the city and its decision-making, Trikala is using technology to increase transparency and improve citizen services.

Linked to [SDGs 7.2, 11.6, 12.3, 12.5, 12.8](#), is the initiative of the Municipality of Halandri, in the northern part of Athens, which along with the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), and within the framework of the Horizon 2020 programme Waste4Think, have developed a pilot-

scale programme for the separate collection at the source and the valorisation of household food waste for the production of useful products and energy. 800 informed citizens dispose their food waste to brown bins, accessed through a key, in biodegradable bags. The collected biowaste is dried and shredded, so that its weight is reduced by a factor of 4-5. The generated FORBI (food residue biomass) product is used by NTUA to generate gaseous and solid biofuels, electricity, compost, activated carbon or animal feed. This management practice, coupled with an effort to collect recyclables in separate streams, will reduce the waste ending up in landfills by 80-90% with obvious environmental, economic and social benefits. The successful implementation for more than one year now has led the municipality to plan its gradual expansion to cover the whole city.

On clean and affordable energy (SDG 7), the municipality of Tilos, a small island of the Dodecanese, which has received the EU Sustainable Energy Week 2017 Energy Islands' Award and the Citizens' Award, provides a first-rate example of the use of renewable energy sources at a local level. The TILOS project (Technology Innovation for the Local Scale) demonstrates how islands can move away from relying on expensive and polluting oil-based energy imports, avoid power cuts and contribute towards renewable energy growth. The TILOS project has designed a battery-based storage system that will in effect turn the island into a resilient RES-based micro grid using only wind and solar power. This project can serve as a model for other islands around the world that are dependent on supply from the mainland or from larger islands nearby.

Even though more effort is needed for comprehensive SDG-aware policies at the local level, some municipalities, like Agios Dimitrios, at the southern sector of Athens, have already published a Sustainability Report, according to the G4 Guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative, setting 2016 as a reference year, and adopting the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact. The report presents the city's sustainable development strategy and initiatives, and it was based on a Materiality Analysis process, in which all the stakeholders were actively involved. In addition, the municipality has decided to take action towards the promotion of the SDGs by including initiatives and actions aiming to increase awareness by informing the citizens.

### **Regionalising the SDGs**

Even though the Greek Regions may need more resources and competences, they intend to play a leading role in the implementation of policies and projects towards the achievement of the SDGs. According to the Association of Greek Regions (ENPE), the Regions have implemented thus far 30,000 projects promoting regional development and local economies, creating new jobs, supporting social solidarity structures, improving the environment and upgrading education, health, tourism and culture.

Among other things, every Region has developed and is implementing a Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation - RIS3. This is an integrated agenda for financial transformation adapted to the particularities of each area. RIS3 focuses on the productive reconstruction of a region, having as major pillars research, technological development and innovation, with a view to decreasing regional inequalities and working towards sustainable employment with respect to people, society and culture. Furthermore, through their established open, participatory and democratic processes, such as the Consultation Committees, and the everyday interaction with local societies, Regions have proved capable of linking global goals with local communities and regional needs.



In this framework, the Greek Regions go beyond **SDG 11** and work for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in relation to the national priorities and taking into account local needs and particularities. The president of ENPE and Governor of the Thessaly Region has declared in 2017 that the “United Nations SDGs are the sustainable development goals of every Greek Region”. Indeed, under the coordination of ENPE, a network for the SDGs from focal points of each Region has been established; this network monitors policies, programmes and infrastructure towards the achievement of all 17 SDGs. Furthermore, in 2018 ENPE is planning to organise a convention in order to share best practices relevant to the achievement of SDGs and to launch an online consultation and engagement platform. ENPE’s position calls for the strengthening of Regions through increased resources, personnel and competences, as the more powerful the Greek Regions become, the more effective they will be in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In fact, ENPE believes that the application of the SDGs provides a unique chance for a qualitative reform of the Greek public administration, towards decentralisation, as well as towards policy planning and implementation, which require vertical and horizontal collaboration schemes, synergies and assessment.

## **5.2 Academic and research community**

Academic and research community constitutes one of the most important stakeholders playing a catalytic role in the promotion and implementation of SDGs across different scientific fields and governance levels. It contributes prominently to enhancing education and training on sustainable development, to inventing new scientific concepts and perspectives, and to applying, disseminating and evaluating SDG-oriented research results and knowledge. Equally important, academic and research community is instrumental in raising social awareness on sustainability challenges and opportunities, to informing evidence-based decision-making and providing solutions to complex and multi-dimensional problems, to elucidating SDGs interlinkages, and to developing synergies and partnerships that share expertise and best practices to support the achievement of the SDGs.

In Greece, university and research institutes and centres have been intensively working on sustainability issues and the promotion of SDGs, either on their own or in close cooperation with international scientific institutions, bodies and networks. This is mainly achieved through the development of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research projects, the organisation of thematic workshops, conferences and other scientific events, and the implementation of education and training programmes addressing all dimensions of sustainable development. These institutes and centres focus their research on a wide spectrum of scientific fields falling within the scope of SDGs, including prominently humanities and social sciences, biosciences and health, natural sciences, engineering and technology sciences, environment and energy, and information and communication technologies.

### **The General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT)**

The GSRT, which belongs to the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, is the main body responsible for setting research policy priorities and providing funding for R&D. For GSRT, the investment in science, research and technology is a key strategic priority for a development model that is socially, financially and environmentally sustainable, and is based upon highly skilled

workforce and novel, innovative products and services. Its tasks include the detailed design, planning, implementation and monitoring of policy and interventions (measures, programmes, etc). The GSRT sets thematic priorities for funding based on the needs and structure of the Greek economy, the needs of society and global S&T perspectives.

Within this framework, GSRT supports through its programmes, the research activities of both the country's scientific research community and those of its productive industry, focusing on SDGs related areas that are important for the national economy and for the improvement of the quality of life. It also designs and promotes a comprehensive, inclusive strategy for research, technology and innovation, that maximises the impact of the highly qualified human research potential, supports creation of new employment opportunities for the highly skilled personnel and reverses brain drain. Additionally, it promotes the transfer and dissemination of innovative technologies to the country's productive sectors for targeted use of the research results, supervises and funds the country's Research and Technological Institutions, and enhances public awareness on science, research and technology issues. At international level, it represents Greece to the relevant institutions of the European Union and other international organisations, and promotes initiatives and programmes for international research & technological cooperation with other countries. Furthermore, it assesses the outcome and impact of research and innovation policies and programmes.

#### **The Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (ELIDEK)**

The ELIDEK is a new institution established by law in 2016 through which a profound reforming effort is being attempted in the field of research and innovation in the country. The ELIDEK supports free research and new researchers by providing scholarships for doctoral candidates and research projects for post-doctoral students, researchers and faculty members. Through ELIDEK, the research and academic community is, for the first time, actively involved in shaping the country's research and innovation policy without thematic or geographical exclusions, but with the sole criterion of scientific quality and excellence.

The ELIDEK aims at actively supporting the capacity building of its research and academic community, which is based on its excellent scientific personnel. By administering initial funds of EUR 240 million for the period 2017 – 2020, the ELIDEK aims to support the critical mass of scientists in Greece that will constitute the basis of restructuring Greece's economy towards building a knowledge-based economy. Some of the SDGs-oriented research areas supported by the ELIDEK include agricultural sciences, natural sciences, mathematics and information science, social sciences, humanities, environment and energy, medicine and health sciences, engineering and technology sciences, innovative entrepreneurship.

#### **Examples of Research and Educational actions promoting the SDGs implementation**

##### **– UNEP/MAP - MEPIELAN Postgraduate Programme and SDGs**

MEPIELAN CENTRE (Mediterranean Programme for International Environmental law and Negotiation)/Panteion University of Athens, being a UNEP/MAP Partner and a non-Contracting Party member of the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development (MCSD), is advancing education as an implementing element of sustainable environmental governance in the Mediterranean. In this framework, it is in the process of developing a joined MEPIELAN Centre – UNEP/



MAP international Master's Degree Programme entitled "Sustainable Marine Governance in the Mediterranean", with the collaborative support of the Cambridge Centre for Environment, Energy and National Resource Governance, University of Cambridge, UK, the Istanbul Bilgi University Law Faculty, Turkey, the University of Milan-Bicocca, Italy, and the University of Valencia, Spain.

This International Postgraduate Programme will develop a broad and comprehensive knowledge of interdisciplinary methodology, process understanding and innovative approaches regarding the sustainable governance of the Barcelona Convention system and the Mediterranean Action Plan, examining the creative linkage of environmental law and governance with political science, ecology, management, technology, biological sciences, climate science, economics and social sciences, but also addressing the crucial ethical dimension. In doing so, it will address, in two separate parts, the process and the means of implementing a wide range of SDGs -including mainly [SDGs 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17](#) - in the Mediterranean context. The general part will focus on issues related to sustainable environmental governance in the Mediterranean region, law of the sea and sustainable governance in the Mediterranean, international environmental negotiation and diplomacy in the Mediterranean context. The special part will address issues such as public participation and sustainability governance in the Mediterranean region, sustainable consumption and production in the Mediterranean, special issues of law and governance for the protection of the environment and sustainability of the Mediterranean Sea region and their relation to the SDGs, investment and environment in the Mediterranean.

#### **– The Greek Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN Greece)**

The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), set up in 2012, promotes practical problem solving for sustainable development, including the design and implementation of the SDGs. Its members are organised into national or regional networks promoting sustainable development projects and solutions through training materials and action plans. The Greek chapter of SDSN has been included in the SDSN network and is co-hosted by ICRE8 (International Centre for Research on the Environment and the Economy) and PESD (Political Economy of Sustainable Development Lab of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens). It started operating in September 2015 and its main purpose is to include the country's university and research institutes engaged in sustainable development in the international network and to coordinate efforts towards the achievement of the SDGs. Currently, 29 universities and research centres around the country have been invited to become members of the SDSN Greece community, on a path to incorporate a sustainable agenda within education at a university level. To this end, SDSN Greece has communicated an action plan to universities that urges them to promote the SDGs agenda through a number of educational and training activities and initiatives.

SDSN Greece works on three cross cutting thematic priorities and five focus areas underpinned by a firm commitment to science driven technological and social solutions for implementing the SDGs. The cross-cutting thematic priorities include Sustainability and the Value of Nature, Climate Change: Mitigation and Adaptation Policies, and Sustainable Development in Times of Crisis. The first thematic priority aims to highlight the state-of-the-art of a structured approach to valuation that can help decision-makers capture the values of ecosystems in order to incorporate this value in investment processes. The second thematic priority focuses on the national and regional vulnerabilities and the options to provide defensive measures against climate change through an adaptation investment plan which protect vulnerable sectors or regions and promote

economic growth. The third thematic priority aims to shed light on practical means of exodus from the crisis in line with the SDGs, since Greece can provide an important case study of how to deal with the key challenge of addressing the acute short-term ills, while laying the foundations for long term prosperity.

Within these cross-cutting thematic priorities, SDSN-Greece has five focus areas linked to the SDGs. These include the Sustainable Shipping and Management of Marine Resources that seeks to stimulate constructive dialogues, partnerships, and joint research and development (R&D) for the implementation of sustainable shipping and marine resource management; the Sustainable Energy and Energy Security aiming at conceptualising the fundamental aspects of energy related consumer behaviour, the governance and institutional frameworks that determine the implementation of the relevant policies and the possible interactions between individuals and institutions that can support sustainable energy transition; the Sustainable Food-Water-Energy Nexus focusing on the interdependencies between these elements and in so doing takes into account not only the ways in which the relationships between water, energy and food can exacerbate negative impacts within the nexus, but also how synergies between the elements can benefit integrated solutions; the Sustainable Tourism that seeks to involve all stakeholders (namely the host community, the public and the private sector) in planning and implementation at all stages of policy planning; and finally Education and Training for Sustainable Development that is about planting the seed of sustainability in all levels of education and in organisations.

Following the adoption of the SDGs, SDSN is now committed to supporting the implementation of the SDGs at local, national, and global scales. In an effort to overcome the compartmentalisation of technical and policy work by promoting integrated approaches to the challenges facing the world, SDSN Greece, through the Horizon 2020 project OpenAIRE-Connect, where ICRE8 is a partner and representative of, is embarking on the creation of an electronic database (e-library) that will aggregate the complete body of research (publications, white documents, data, models, etc.) of the last 20 years that relates to the SDGs in Greece. As part of this, ICRE8 has undergone an initial screening of completed and on-going research projects where Greek institutions participated as coordinators, partners and/or case study partners and are relevant to the 17 SDGs. Greece has been very active in sustainability-driven research with more than 1,500 projects, even before 2030 Agenda came into play, with the projects spanning across the range of the 17 SDGs, focussing mainly on [SDGs 6, 7, 12, 13, 14](#) and [15](#). The aim is to make this information accessible to interested stakeholders through tools that will help them analyse and create indices on social, economic and environmental issues.

#### **– The Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR)**

The HCMR is a governmental research organisation operating under the supervision of the General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT) of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. The HCMR is participating on a long-term basis in a series of municipal, national, European and international research projects and actions associated with a number of SDGs, including mainly [SDGs 4, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15](#) and [17](#).

In particular, the HCMR contributes to the SDGs implementation through, among others, the development and operation of research infrastructures and technology equipment monitoring and observing marine and freshwater environment, the analysis of the effects of climate change in

both marine and freshwater ecosystems, the exploration of the underwater cultural heritage, the integrated water resources management and the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services. It also develops and offers services for the development of the aquaculture, implements science-based management plans and monitoring actions for effectively regulating fish harvesting and end overfishing, and design and apply measures aimed at preventing the introduction of invasive alien species on water ecosystems. In addition, the HCMR offers its strong scientific support to policy-oriented research projects and actions contributing to the implementation of European directives and long-term strategies, such as the EU Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Blue Growth Strategy. It also provides guidelines to local government and competent ministries on issues relative to the integrated water resources management (IWRM), the integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and the marine protected areas (MPAs), and submits strategic environmental impact assessment studies to the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The HCMR also provides educational services related to the aquatic environment to different levels of education, and disseminate knowledge and research results to the public through its cooperation and partnership with non-governmental organisations.

#### – The Hellenic Pasteur Institute (HPI)

The HPI, which is a private, non-profit organisation supervised by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Health, has a long tradition in translational biomedical research, particularly in the field of infectious diseases, and a commitment to providing essential public health services. The HPI is a member of the International Network of Pasteur Institutes (RIIP) maintaining a strong scientific collaboration with the Institute Pasteur in Paris and other Pasteur Institutes in North and Central Africa, SE Asia, Europe and Canada. The HPI contributes substantially to ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all (SDG 3) through the conduct of cutting edge basic and applied research on three key thematic areas: human and animal infectious diseases, public health, vaccines.

In particular, the activities of the HPI aim to improve human health and well-being through internationally recognised biomedical research, materialised by advanced technologies and translated towards the clinic through innovative diagnostic, prophylactic and therapeutic approaches (SDG 3.b). Research activities in the HPI currently focus on three main scientific fields: infectious diseases, immunology and neurobiology, each having groundbreaking contributions to their fields. In addition, a unique feature of the HPI is its strategic role in investigating outbreaks, epidemics and/or pandemics in Greece. The HPI provides services to the Ministry of Health through a well-organised and accredited Diagnostic Centre specialised in the rapid detection and diagnosis of bacterial, viral and parasitic diseases (SDG 3.3). It also contributes to the Ministry of Health policy and to the surveillance, prevention and control of infectious diseases programme, by hosting a number of reference laboratories. Equally important, research in the HPI is oriented towards the development, production, storage and distribution of vaccines, biological and therapeutic agents (SDG 3.8), according to the national demands set by the Greek Authorities. A Vaccine Unit equipped with a modern Quality Control Laboratory provides vaccines to the public sector and assessment control on vaccines and biological products on behalf of the Ministry of Health and the National Drug Organisation (EOF).

### – The National Centre for Social Research (EKKE)

The EKKE is a public legal entity supervised by the General Secretariat of Research and Technology of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. Since 1959, EKKE has been monitoring, recording and researching the socio-political, demographic, and socio-economic structures and trends of Greece. Through targeted and non-targeted research, it has been producing surveys, studies and evaluations on SDG related issues, including poverty, employment, income distribution, social economy, immigration, social discriminations, political culture and electoral geography, deviant behavior and incarceration institutions, cultural practices, tourism, environment, urban and rural studies, education and training. In general, research at the EKKE aims at developing short to long term strategies towards the improvement of research infrastructure, contributing to public policy and strengthening new areas of expertise. In this context, the research activities conducted by the EKKE are compatible with a number of SDGs, such as [SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8, 10](#) and [11](#). In particular, the EKKE carries out a significant number of research projects and programmes which have been directed, among other, towards the elimination of exclusion and inequality (projects on immigration and inequality ([SDG 4.7](#), [SDG 10.3](#)), research on various layers of poverty ([SDG 1.2](#), [1.b](#)) and projects directed towards urban development ([SDG 11.a](#)). The multi and inter-disciplinary nature of implementing research ensures that issues are dealt in a comprehensive manner which facilitates national and international cooperation and develops interlinking networks between and amongst groups of relevant stakeholders, professionals and academics, thus contributing effectively to the achievement of [SDG 17](#). In addition, the EKKE publishes a significant number of journal articles and books on SDG oriented issues aiming at the widest possible dissemination of activities.

### – The Institute of Applied and Computational Mathematics (IACM)

The IACM, one of the research institutes of the Foundation for Research and Technology - Hellas (FORTH), is an internationally recognised research and training centre in applied mathematics which places special emphasis on mathematical and computational modelling in interdisciplinary research. The research activities conducted by the IACM are mainly focused on the fields of innovation and infrastructure ([SDG 9.1](#), [9.5](#)), good health and well-being ([SDG 3.b](#)), and affordable and clean energy ([SDG 7.a](#)). In addition to the general SDGs which are related to research, innovation and education, the IACM has a strong presence in the research area of underwater acoustics, studying, modelling and monitoring among others underwater noise, as well as in marine bioacoustics contributing, in this way, to the achievement of [SDG 14](#), and in particular [SDG 14.1](#) (pollution control) and [SDG 14.2](#) (ecosystems). Furthermore, the IACM has a substantial presence in the European Research Area, leading research and technological development (RTD) projects in the framework of the Horizon 2020 and FP7 in the domain of earth observation, linked to [SDGs 11, 13](#) and [15](#), as well as in the domain of urban research, focusing on urban environment and urban climate, contributing to [SDG 11](#).

### – The Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (IMBB)

The IMBB, which also belongs to the research institutes of the Foundation for Research and Technology - Hellas (FORTH), is a hub of leading edge molecular biology research in Greece. All the activities carried out by IMBB fall within the thematic area of research and innovation. Through its overall scientific output, the IMBB contributes to fostering innovation in industrial sectors and

infrastructure (SDG 9.5, 9.1), promoting decent work and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8.6, 8.4), ensuring inclusive and quality education for all (SDG 4.7, 4.5), and achieving gender equality at all levels (SDG 5.5). It also participates actively in research projects which seek to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all (SDG 3.3), to eradicate hunger, to achieve food security and improved nutrition and to promote sustainable agriculture (SDG 2.3, 2.5).

#### Box 17: The Horizon 2020 “SIM4NEXUS” project – the Greek case study

Under the Horizon 2020 call “Integrated approaches to food security, low-carbon energy, sustainable water management and climate change mitigation”, the University of Thessaly in collaboration with the National Technical University of Athens participate in the 4-year project entitled SIM4NEXUS. The project aims to predict society-wide impacts of resource use and relevant policies on sectors such as agriculture, water, biodiversity and ecosystem services through a model-based analysis of water, land, food, energy, and climate that are interconnected, comprising a coherent system (the ‘nexus’), dominated by complexity and feedback. Putting pressure on one part of the nexus can create pressures on the others. Management of the nexus is critical to securing the efficient use of our scarce resources. SIM4NEXUS main goal will be achieved through the adoption of a four-pillar approach, including: (i) providing a strong scientific base on the nexus; (ii) conducting extensive research regarding nexus-related policies; (iii) using appropriate and innovative tools and methodologies for integration; and (iv) implementing participatory procedures, based on real case studies involving local stakeholders and end-users, in order to develop, test and validate the proposed approaches, methodologies and tools. Greece will serve as a national case study where the nexus trade-offs and the impact of different SDGs related policies for the future will be explored. In the Greek case study, a special concern pertaining to nexus-related policies will be paid, focusing on policy coherence analysis at different scales, phases of planning and implementation (SDG 17.14), so as to provide a better understanding of how the nexus-relevant and related policies (e.g. climate change, biodiversity and SDGs) are linked, with the participation of critical stakeholders, including line ministries, NGOs, relevant private and public companies, and the Greek Ombudsman.

### 5.3 Private Sector

The 2030 Agenda calls upon all businesses, whether micro-enterprises, cooperatives or multinationals, to apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges. At the same time, the SDGs present significant opportunities for the private sector to open up new market opportunities and attract new private investments in sustainable development by leveraging companies’ core competencies, expertise and resources. In Greece, the representative bodies of both big companies and small & medium-sized enterprises support the 2030 Agenda and make efforts to be consistent with the SDGs and raise awareness among their members.

#### – The Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV) acknowledges the 2030 Agenda as the opportunity for a sustainable future

The SEV has consistently fostered business development in Greece, since its foundation in 1907. It is the independent voice of businesses, representing a wide range of the country’s economic activities, including manufacturing and services. Representing about 50% of the business activity in Greece, the SEV is the largest business network playing a leading role in the country’s transformation into a productive, outward-looking and competitive economy.

Since 2008, the SEV Business Council for Sustainable Development (SEVBCSD) serves as an independent organisation that promotes the sustainable development concept within the business community, as well as governmental authorities and society. Being at the forefront of the sustainable development agenda, the SEVBCSD closely follows all trends and topics and acts as a positive contributor to the social dialogue, a knowledge multiplier to the business sector and a responsible stakeholder in general.

Sustainability is imperative to long-term business success. By incorporating social and environmental criteria into their business strategies, enterprises maximise their performance for stakeholders, society and the environment. The last couple of years the perception on sustainability has been positively changed due to the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, highlighting the most significant challenges to be addressed. Business can become a major force for sustainable development that will play a decisive role in achieving the 2030 Agenda. Companies have a critical role to play as a source of finance, as a driver of innovation and technological development and as generators of economic growth and employment.

Since the launch of the 2030 Agenda, SEVBCSD promotes the SDGs as an overarching framework to shape, steer, communicate and report on business strategies, goals and activities. In order to raise awareness at the universal framework of the SDGs, SEVBCSD and CSR HELLAS co-organised on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017, the successful – with more than 400 attendees- business Conference “Commitment for sustainable development – 17 global goals for a common future”, through which it was sought: (i) to launch a broader dialogue among companies and stakeholders; (ii) to present good practices that can be used by business; and (iii) to highlight the critical role of SDG 17 “Partnership for the Goals” in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the focal role of businesses.

Furthermore, the SEVBCSD has recently completed a study among SEV members on the business perspective of the SDGs in Greece, which reveals that **SDGs 8 and 9** emerge as first priority for business, regardless of the company size or sector, followed by **SDGs 4, 5, 7, 13 and 17**.

It is now better understood that the 2030 Agenda can be a pathway for Greece to exit the crisis in a sustainable manner. Businesses, mostly of bigger size (+250 employees) have already started to utilise the universal framework of the SDGs for identifying new business opportunities, improving risk management and strengthening stakeholder relations by sharing common purposes and by using the internationally accepted SDG language. Government should provide for the constructive and open dialogue between all stakeholders with an aim to liaise the National Growth Strategy -currently under consultation- with the SDGs, align policies, prioritise national targets and build alliances with all sectors, in order to maximise the outcome.

The SEV and SEVBCSD will continue to foster integration of the SDGs in the business agenda in Greece, by further awareness-raising events, dissemination of the relevant tools, recommendations for effective implementation and participation in the stakeholder dialogue at national level.

#### **– The Federation of Industries of Northern Greece (FING) gives priority to the SDGs**

The FING supports the UN's 17 SDGs and 169 targets. The FING intends to support and promote the SDGs within its strategic and daily sphere of operation, and to publicise them among its member companies, to its direct partners and to the general public. As a developmental body for Northern Greece's business community, the FING has proved itself to be a strong champion and believes that the shaping of strategies to ensure social prosperity, environmental sustainability



and economic growth is a national priority. For the FING, the SDGs must be linked to supporting actions and policies for socially-responsible, competitive and innovative businesses, which have succeeded in complying with the principles of environmental protection, by contributing to sustainability and sustainable growth.

Specifically for the FING, moving towards a “circular economy” is a very good example of developmental orientation, a direction in which businesses are called on to move, both in terms of the quest for sustainability as well as for their general contribution to creating a new growth model for Greece. Saving water and energy, cutting down on food waste, care of the soil and recycling, are just some of the actions that can be included as part of the circular economy and sustainability. These are actions which, apart from being business challenges and opportunities, produce multiple benefits on a local and regional level because they bolster employment as well as synergy between public bodies, businesses and consumers.

Another area in which the FING has been operating for the last twenty years is socially responsible entrepreneurship. Companies undoubtedly have a responsibility towards their employees and shareholders, as well as to the society in which they are active. This perception, particularly in a period of crisis, has been taken up more and more by a large section of the business world. Thus, the most important business organisations in Thessaloniki, including the FING, have joined forces and created the Network of Social Solidarity and Assistance, with the goal of promoting the idea of corporate social awareness and responsibility towards socially-excluded population groups. The work of the Network involves linking the business community in the Northern Greek region with people, groups, bodies and organisations which perform philanthropic work.

The FING also promotes the SDGs through raising awareness among its members, achieved by continuously keeping them updated through the propagation of information, and also through the bestowing of awards. Within this context, and in recognition of the important work carried out by the business world in Northern Greece, the FING has undertaken over the last five years the initiative of bestowing upon manufacturing companies in Northern Greece the “GREEK VALUE Awards of Northern Greece”. These accolades are given to businesses which stand out for their excellent track record in meeting a number of criteria. For instance, the award for “Environmental Excellence” is given to those businesses which implement environmentally-friendly production, distribution and infrastructure methods, while the ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ award goes to those companies which, through their actions, contribute positively to social cohesion.

A specific example of real interest related to protecting the environment is a Greek paper manufacturing company, an activity which involves the use of large quantities of water. Apart from its commitment to continuously optimising its wastewater processing unit, this company applies programmes for reducing the consumption of cold water, as well as economising on rinsing water and energy. In addition, a specific example of Corporate Social Responsibility is a Greek water bottling company which has joined forces with Action Aid to set up a comprehensive water supply system for 43,000 people in Usigu, Kenya.

#### – Small, micro and medium-sized enterprises on the 2030 Agenda

The Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) is the EU’s flagship policy initiative to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which represent the vast majority of business in Europe (99%). It comprises a set of policy measures organised around 10 principles, which are directly linked to



SDGs 8, 9, 17, and in particular to SDGs 8.2, 8.3, 9.3, 17.14. In this context, EU Member States are making efforts to converge and implement the SBA principles.

The latest SBA report shows that SMEs constitute the vast majority of businesses in Greece (99.9% of all enterprises), and they generate three quarters of added value and 86.9% of employment of the business activity in the country. Greece shows significant signs of improvement in the areas of public investment and public procurement and in general has a positive evaluation for the implementation of the SBA principles. More specifically, the Report on Greek Small Enterprises refers to the effective implementation of the out-of-court debt settlement mechanism and to the need to establish a mechanism of Early Warning for businesses in distress.

In this context, the Small Enterprises' Institute of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (IME GSEVEE) participates in the "European Network for Early Warning and Support to Enterprises and Second Starters", an EU programme funded by COSME (EU's programme for SMEs). The IME GSEVEE will implement the pilot project in Greece for supporting businesses in distress, by adopting best practices from the European countries. The aim is to adapt successful paradigms of tackling overindebtedness and business restructuring. A key element is to create conditions and establish institutions for entrepreneurs and businesses across sectors that can help them face major sustainability challenges, including crisis management, dealing with bankruptcy and getting a second chance.

More specifically, the project which is developed by the IME GSEVEE will: (i) promote policy development and implementation of innovative policy measures relating to bankruptcy and second chance; (ii) help companies in distress by setting up early warning mechanisms, providing advisory and volunteer mentoring to companies in distress. Among others, the results and learning points of the action will be used for inspiration to promote business culture.

#### **– The Hellenic Network for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR HELLAS) and the SDGs**

The CSR Hellas is the leading non-for-profit business association founded in 2000 to disseminate and support the principles of responsible entrepreneurship in the business community and facilitate the alignment of business strategy with sustainability. Since 2008, the CSR Hellas is also the hosting and leading organisation of the United Nations Global Compact Network in Greece (GCNH) representing a considerable number of companies and other non-business entities as signatories of the Global Compact Initiative. Being the national partner of CSR Europe -the leading European venture organisation for corporate social responsibility- the CSR HELLAS takes part in planning and implementing national and European Initiatives for CSR and Sustainable Development, including among others the EU Multi-Stakeholder Platform on the SDGs. Moreover, in March 2017, CSR Hellas – UNGC joined efforts with the Business Council for Sustainable Development of SEV (Federation of Greek Enterprises), organising with great success, the first international conference on the SDGs in Greece "Commitment for Sustainable Development: 17 Global Goals for a Better Future".

In September 2017, CSR Hellas – UNGC took a new step to engage with youth and academia for the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda and decided to dedicate the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Student CSR Competition on the SDGs, highlighting the importance of this voluntary global agreement and inviting participants to present their views and position on the "Challenges for Responsible and Sustainable

Development and the New Business Model: (i) how businesses can contribute to the SDGs?; (ii) why the achievement of SDGs is also everyone's responsibility?; (iii) what do you think that Greece should do?"

CSR Hellas implements the GEFYRA pilot programme which combines the goals of the European Pact 4 Youth initiative (EP4Y) and the EU Talent project aiming to tackle [SDGs 4, 8, 10, 17](#). The programme envisions the creation of at least 3,000 quality jobs in three areas (apprenticeships, internships, traineeships), including through 150 partnerships between businesses and academia, a research on mapping the skills gap, a guide of best practices and implementation for training programmes, a platform to match supply and demand of positions and 8 dissemination and communication activities. GEFYRA aims to create new employment opportunities for youth, thus tackling youth unemployment, to enhance training programmes, to increase quality of VET, to tackle inequalities directly contributing to [SDGs 4, 8, 10](#) and to build partnerships between businesses, academia and youth ([SDG 17](#)).

Furthermore, CSR Hellas collaborates with organisations, foundations and enterprises in a number of initiatives, including: (i) the launching, by a big credit institution, of a crowdfunding platform (Act4Greece) that enables the gathering of financial resources from all over the world so as to channel them to specific projects. The idea is to create a space where anyone with a vision for change can participate and directly address significant societal problems and is related to [SDG 17](#), in terms of promoting solidarity and collaboration with a view to ensuring prosperity, while it covers projects falling within the SDGs thematic areas, including welfare and health, social economy, education and research, environment, and innovative entrepreneurship; and (ii) the Carpos Frontidas initiative, implemented at the village of Notia in the Prefecture of Pella, which promotes a new business model and social agricultural product and aims at the creation of social value through new opportunities for small growers, the creation of business value through a new innovative product in the fresh potato market, and the sustainability of the projects so as it can be replicated in other geographical areas. The initiative has a direct linkage to [SDGs 2, 8, 12](#) and [17](#).

#### 5.4 Civil Society

Civil society and non-governmental organisations in Greece have become very active in a wide variety of sectors, ranging from human rights to poverty reduction and from environment protection to cultural heritage. According to the research project "Thales – Evaluation of the Greek Non-Governmental Organisations", co-funded by the European Union and national funds and led by the Department of Political Science and International Relations of the University of the Peloponnese, there were 422 non-profit organisations active beyond the neighborhood level in 2015. In fact, since 2010 and the outbreak of the crisis, a drastic increase of citizen involvement in volunteering and social solidarity activities has been noted, along with an expansion of the social welfare role played by civil society organisations and a more competitive funding environment (crowdsourcing and other forms of fundraising to make up for the lack of resources). At the same time, the NGOs participate in the policy dialogue on the SDGs in a structured manner through appropriate channels as in the case of the National Center for Environment and Sustainable Development (see Box 15) and collaborate with the research and academic community to further enhance the science-policy interface.

**The Hellenic Platform for Development**, an umbrella-organisation that operates as a “national platform”, leads a network of Greek Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) active in the fields of education for sustainable development, humanitarian aid, global citizenship action and developmental social support. Its current members are supported by a large segment of Greek society and offer their programmes nationwide as well as in many developing countries. It also represents Greek NGOs in CONCORD -the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development- which is the main non-governmental interlocutor of EU institutions as regards the European development policy. The main objective of the Hellenic Platform is to influence -through the joint action of its members- policy makers in Greece, in the EU and internationally, for the improvement of sustainable development policies and actions. It also aims to provide education, skills development, training and sharing of information among Greek NGOs regarding the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

In the fall of 2015, the Hellenic Platform organised, in collaboration with the United Nations Regional Information Center for Western Europe (UNRIC), a webinar for the representatives of Greek CSOs, in order to present the much anticipated new framework and to discuss the launch of 2030 Agenda. It also facilitated 3 workshops on the SDGs aimed at local government and municipalities’ personnel, within the framework of the LADDER Project (Local Authorities for Development Education and Awareness), a programme co-funded by the EU.

The Hellenic Platform participates, along with other national platforms and networks, in a 3-year EU funded project “Europe in the World – Engaging in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda,” with the slogan “Make Europe Sustainable for All”. The overall objective of the project is to create a pan-European cross-sectoral civil society coalition on the SDGs that will ultimately mobilise a total of 25 million EU citizens to make the transition to more sustainable lifestyles. The project covers all 17 SDGs, but nevertheless it will integrate gender, climate and migration issues into 3 focused campaigns: human development and inequalities; sustainable food and agriculture; sustainable consumption and production. An annual highlight of the project will be the Global Goals Action Week, held every September, with many activities taking place simultaneously, marking the anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs combined with thematic media campaigns.

All members of the Hellenic Platform are committed to sustainable development and each organisation through its actions aims to raise awareness and be part of the implementation of at least one of the SDGs. Some of the highlights to-date include: (i) a “Student Action Week” campaign for students and schools all over Greece, which will culminate in the publication of the “Planet 2030” student edition; (ii) interactive seminars and online information campaign on “Drugs & SDGs: Policies for Development and Reduction of Damage”, within the framework of the LADDER Project (Local Authorities for Development Education and Awareness), a programme co-funded by the EU; (iii) participation in the 3-year EU project “InterCap -Developing capacities together: European CSO-university networks for global learning on migration, security and sustainable development in an interdependent world”, that aims to promote SDGs, notably the fight against poverty, the promotion of justice, the defense of human rights and democratic sentiment, with a key focus on education; and (iv) raising awareness campaign on the SDGs by organising workshops, lectures and programmes for all ages, including the #Citizens4GlobalGoals initiative, and by promoting actions which seek to implement a new urban agenda, in partnership with the World Urban Campaign, an advocacy and partnership platform led by UN-Habitat.

**The Sustainable Greece 2020 Initiative** has been developed by QualityNet Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation, which works together with various institutions, businesses and social partners from Greece and abroad, as it has received support, through knowledge transfer, from organisations such as the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), the European Network for Sustainable Development (ESDN) and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBSCD). The development of the Initiative is based on the active participation of social partners, social bodies and business associations, companies, local authorities, civil society organisations and active citizens, and aims to develop a dialogue on a national level, in order to meet the needs of Greek society with regards to sustainable development and social cohesion. This dialogue has culminated in the development of tools and methodologies that are offered for free to the organisations in order to support them towards their sustainability transition. The tools and methodologies that have been developed by Sustainable Greece 2020 Initiative include: (i) the SDGs Sustainability Observatory, a monitoring mechanism of all practices and initiatives developed on sustainable development issues, responsible business and social responsibility; (ii) the Bravo Sustainability Dialogue & the Bravo Sustainability Awards regarding sustainability programmes and actions implemented by companies, local authorities and civil society organisations in Greece; (iii) the Greek Sustainability Code, a structured reporting framework with regards to transparency and self-commitment of organisations on the issues of sustainable development and responsible business; and (iv) the Sustainability Performance Directory, a point of reference for all enterprises that develop policies, initiatives, actions and systems contributing to the creation of a sustainable economy and society.

#### **AIESEC and the Youth**

In December 2015, AIESEC's (the world's largest non-profit youth-run organisation) young global leaders and representatives from 126 countries and territories gathered at the United Nations Headquarters to promote and drive youth participation in the implementation of the SDGs by creating the Youth 4 Global Goals initiative. Youth 4 Global Goals is an AIESEC initiative aiming at the mobilisation of youth towards the implementation of the SDGs. The initiative aims to educate youth about the SDGs and provide practical volunteering opportunities to unleash their potential while being an active world citizen. AIESEC in Greece aims to raise awareness of SDGs in Greek society through the "Youth Speak Initiative" and create multicultural opportunities that contribute directly to SDGs through the "Global Volunteer" programme.



# 6 | MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The 2030 Agenda recognises emphatically that the effective realisation of the SDGs necessitates the existence of multiple and credible implementation means. Achieving sustainable development across different sectors and levels of governance presupposes an equally ambitious, transformative and holistic approach with respect to the means of implementation. For Greece, the promotion of means which ensure the comprehensive and integrated implementation of the SDGs constitutes a priority of utmost importance. In this regard, the improvement of legislation, the promotion of policy coherence and interlinkages, the mobilisation of financial resources, the public awareness raising and participation, and the external action of the country feature prominently among the key means of SDGs implementation.

## 6.1 Improving the legislation

The continuous improvement and necessary adaptation of legislation to the SDGs framework, through the adoption of an integrated approach of the legislative process (planning, drafting, implementation, evaluation) at all stages, contributes significantly to promoting and implementing the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental, economic) in a coherent and balanced manner. Within this framework, the centre of government and the ministries play an essential role towards: (i) implementing effectively the sustainability principle which is contextually embedded in different provisions of the Greek Constitution [i.e. art. 5, 16, 21, 24] and the European Treaties [i.e. art. 3(5) and 21(2) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU)]; (ii) incorporating the core principles and objectives of the 2030 Agenda, and integrating the EU legislation (EU *acquis*) into national legislation (given that the majority of SDG targets are already being addressed by the related EU policy and legislative framework); and (iii) reflecting crucial social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainable development in key reports accompanying legislative proposals.

Enhancing the quality and coherence of legislation requires the enduring implementation and update of regulatory governance policies, through the use of better regulation tools which integrate effectively and appropriately the SDGs. In this regards, the Better Regulation Office of the General Secretariat of the Government has undertaken the initiative to organise and implement training seminars on better regulation for the senior staff of the Ministries' Better Regulation Units and the Ministers' Counselors. During these seminars, the Ministries senior staff is provided with relevant material on drafting Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) and explanatory reports as well as on the process of the ex-post evaluation of regulations. One of the main objectives of these seminars is to highlight, among others, the importance of mainstreaming the three key dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, environmental), as reflected in the SDGs, in the better regulation tools. Equally important, the Better Regulation Office of the General Secretariat of the Government is currently updating circulars and relevant standards concerning the drafting of RIAs and the process of ex post evaluation of regulations so that they become consistent with key principles and objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## 6.2 Fostering policy coherence and interlinkages: the case of the agricultural, tourism and cultural sector

The integrated implementation of the SDGs at different governance levels and across sectors requires, among others, the promotion of policy coherence and the identification of inter-linkages and synergies between economic, social and environmental policy areas and objectives. This is well-illustrated by 2030 Agenda which considers policy coherence for sustainable development an important means of implementing effectively all the SDGs (SDG 17.14).

Greece attaches great importance to the development and sharing of best practices on policy coherence and interlinkages which seek to integrate all dimensions of sustainable development. The National Growth Strategy recognises the crucial role that coherence, integrated planning and coordination play in achieving the sustainable reconstruction and growth in Greece. Within this framework, the Greek government has been working so far on pursuing initiatives and actions which promote the SDGs interlinkages in cutting edge policy fields of utmost importance for the sustainable development of Greece, including indicatively the agricultural, tourism and cultural sector.

### – Agricultural and rural development sector: promoting a strong, sustainable and competitive agro-food system

The Ministry of Rural Development and Food pursues policies aimed at developing a modern agro-food system, from production and supply to consumption, taking into account the prevailing economic, social and environmental conditions. The overarching objective is to create a sustainable production chain of safe and high quality food, with added value for producers and satisfactory prices for consumers, contributing to the economy, the employment and rural income, the social cohesion, the development of the Greek countryside, the environment, and the responsible food consumption awareness. These policies are interrelated and complementary to other policies designed to achieve economic, social and environmental objectives, and therefore an integrated and coherent approach has been promoted and implemented.

The following table showcases the interlinkages between various SDGs and the measures and initiatives undertaken by Greece in the field of agriculture and rural development.

<b>SDGs interlinkages:</b>
<b>Reinforcing economic development of the countryside and the competitiveness of the economy (linked to SDGs 1.4, 2.3, 2.4, 6.4, 7.2, 7.3, 8.3, 9.3, 9.5, 14.2, 14.4, 14.5, 14.a, 14.b)</b>
<b>Job creation and renewal of human capital in rural areas (linked to SDGs 2.3 &amp; 8.3)</b>
<b>Reducing regional and social inequalities (linked to SDGs 2.3, 5.5 )</b>
<b>Sustainable production of safe and high quality food – Promotion of sustainable dietary patterns – Development of responsible food consumption awareness (linked to SDGs 2.1, 2.4, 12.3, 12.4, 12.8)</b>
<b>Protection and sustainable management of ecosystems, agricultural and forestry land, and natural resources (linked to SDGs 2.4, 2.5, 6.6, 7.2, 13.2, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.9)</b>



### **Reinforcing economic development of the countryside and the competitiveness of the economy**

Greek agricultural sector is characterised by fragmentation with large percentage of small-scale farms and large age composition of the rural population. In particular, the average size of agricultural holdings is 6.8 hectares, with 76.7% of holdings with less than 5 hectares, while 49.7% of farms have an economic size of less than EUR 4,000. The contribution of the primary sector to Gross Value Added (current prices) of the country is about 4%, while employment in the primary sector (total persons) is 11.31% of the total employment (total persons), one of the highest in EU28.

Greece attaches great importance to developing policies which aim to maximise the sector's contribution to economic growth and the competitiveness of the agri-food system, thus increasing the value added of domestic agricultural products and ensuring income stability.

The National Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 is the main policy framework contributing significantly to the integrated development and sustainable competitiveness of the agricultural sector. It focuses, among other, on strengthening competitiveness and sustainability of holdings, promoting local development in rural areas, while providing support for investments to improve economic efficiency of farms, increase value added of products and enhance land reclamation infrastructure, which contributes to better management and efficient use of water in agriculture.

Additionally, the Greek government adopted in 2016 a new legislative framework (law 4384/2016) aimed at modernising and strengthening agricultural co-operatives, in a highly competitive economic environment given that sustainable agricultural co-operatives contribute to business sustainability, especially for small and scattered holdings. Furthermore, in order to enhance the sustainability of farm holdings and to facilitate access to financing, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (2016-2017) with banking institutions for the development of financial tools which will enable Greek farmers' access bank financing on favourable terms and simple procedures.

Moreover, for Greece, fisheries and aquaculture constitutes a key sector of the national economy. It contributes to the production of high nutritional value products, exploitation of local resources, and employment of a significant number of people, contributing in this way to the social and economic cohesion of the country's large coastal and island regions. The Greek government sets priorities and implements policies which serve to promote the sustainable management of fishery resources, through implementing and monitoring management plans and a system for preventing, deterring and eliminating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, controlling areas where banning measures have been taken, implementing a fishery data collection programme, and facilitating fishermen in accessing the market and organising their activities. Furthermore, the National Operational Programme for Fisheries and the Sea (OPFS) 2014-2020 is a major development lever for the country. Greece's main priority is to promote an environmentally sustainable, resource-efficient, innovative, competitive and knowledge-based fishery sector, with a view to reducing the impact on the marine environment and protecting and restoring marine biodiversity and the ecosystems.

### **Job creation and renewal of human capital in rural areas**

Only 5.2% of Greek farmers are under 35 years old, while 31.3% are over 64 years old. By implementing appropriate policy measures, such as the national RDP, Greece aims at ensuring that

young people enter the labour market either by providing incentives for their first establishment in agricultural sector or by exploiting opportunities for out-farm activities in rural areas. In doing so, the Greek government contributes to the renewal of human capital, supporting active farmers and fostering synergies with other sectors, such as tourism, culture, gastronomy.

### **Reducing regional and social inequalities**

In the context of strengthening the countryside's social fabric, the national RDP provides support for areas with natural or other specific constraints. Mountainous and less-favoured areas account for 61% of the country's total area and 64% of rural areas. These areas are characterised by limited land use potential and high production costs. For this reason, support is foreseen to offset additional costs and/or income foregone caused by agricultural activity under such adverse conditions.

In parallel, the Greek government adopted in 2016 a new legislative framework (law 4384/2016) designed to modernise and strengthen rural cooperatives. This legislative framework places emphasis, among other, on the enhanced role of rural woman in Greece by supporting and regulating women cooperatives. Within this framework, a three-year Protocol (2016) was signed between the Ministry of Rural Development and Food and the General Secretariat for Gender Equality.

### **Sustainable production of safe and high quality food – Promotion of sustainable dietary patterns – Development of responsible food consumption awareness**

With a view to promoting sustainable agro-food chain of safe and high quality food, Greece adopted over the last years a set of specific measures aimed at protecting human health and the environment, fostering consumer awareness and establishing the reputation of local agricultural products.

In particular, the Greek Government revised in 2015 the National Action Plan for Rational Use of Pesticides, in order to provide, among others, for integrated pest management, training, certification and public information. At the same time, emphasis is put on the development of quality systems for the production of high quality agricultural products and foodstuffs. Greece has registered 105 products in the European Geographical Indication system (GIs: PDO-PGI), which allows both consumers to buy certified quality products and producers to sell their products in better prices.

Greece also attributes high importance to the reduction of food losses and waste in the production and supply chain, "from farm to consumer table". To this end, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food established in 2017 a working group on this issue composed of experts from the co-competent ministries and stakeholders. The ultimate objective of this working group is to develop a national strategy for reducing food waste through specific proposals, actions and raising awareness initiatives, taking into account the relevant EU policy and legislative framework.

For Greece, the promotion of sustainable dietary patterns necessitates the improvement of children's dietary habits. It is within this context that the Greek government decided to implement in schools an innovative programme designed to promote and increase fruit and vegetables consumption in students' diet. In addition, Greece places particular emphasis on the promotion, enhancement and dissemination of the Mediterranean Diet. The Mediterranean Diet is considered a sustainable dietary model of high nutritional value which is inextricably linked with the cultural

asset of the country. It offers many opportunities for development and contributes to the preservation of biodiversity and the promotion of cultural diversity and identity of the Mediterranean Basin. The Mediterranean Diet is recognised by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

### **Protection and sustainable management of ecosystems, agricultural and forestry land, and natural resources**

Policy and legislative frameworks developed at national and European level contribute to the protection of agricultural and forestry land and the preservation of natural resources from intensive agricultural activities. It is within this context that the Greek Government adopted in 2015 a national legislation (law 4351/2015) on the development of Management Plans for all the grazing land of the country. This legislation will contribute substantially to the rational management, exploitation and distribution of grasslands, as well as to the support of livestock farming. In this connection, a National Geographic Information Database of the country's grasslands is planned to be established. In addition to the above measures which also serve to combat desertification, the key priorities for that matter include the updating of the national action plan against desertification in order to reflect new challenges and the revised strategic and operational objectives of the International Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), as well as strengthening partnerships and joint planning with other relevant international conventions, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD ) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Equally important, the national RDP includes measures aimed at protecting the environment from agricultural activity, and addressing current challenges, such as desertification and proper natural resource management. These measures seek to enhance the implementation of agri-environmental commitments on preserving the environment and maintaining the countryside, and to support the development of organic farming, encouraging farmers to implement environment-friendly farming systems, especially in areas with environmental constraints. In addition, the measures of the national RDP aim to promote the conservation, sustainable use and development of genetic resources and biodiversity in agriculture, given that Greece is considered one of Europe's richest countries in natural vegetation and wild species, to facilitate the preparation of thematic management plans in protected areas, including significant areas under agricultural activity (cultivated and pasture land), and to boost investments in the development of forest areas and the improvement of forest sustainability, through actions which increase, restore and maintain forest land and resources, creating at the same time agro-forest systems combining extensive agriculture and forestry.

### **– Cultural sector: cultural heritage and creativity as sustainable development motivator**

The National Growth Strategy regards the country's rich cultural heritage as one of its comparative advantages. For Greece, cultural heritage, linked to tourism and new technologies, constitutes a key driver for economic growth and sustainable development. The Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework (PA) 2014-2020, the main strategic plan for growth in Greece, mainstreams culture in practically all sectoral and regional operational programmes. Cultural heritage -along with tourism and the cultural and creative industries- has been identified as one of the eight priority sectors with a substantial contribution to economic growth.

Greece attaches great importance to the development and implementation of policies which protect and promote cultural heritage, a field that maintains by far the highest priority within the competent Ministry of Culture and Sports in terms of funding, project implementation and organisational support. In particular, in the broader field of culture and the arts, the Greek government has established policy priorities aimed at building closer ties between culture and society (including cultural participation), supporting creativity, especially young artists and culture professionals, and promoting internationalisation of Greek cultural production.

The following table showcases the interlinkages between various SDGs and the measures and initiatives undertaken by Greece in the field of culture.

<b>SDGs interlinkages:</b>
<b>Protecting and promoting cultural heritage through extended excavation and restoration works and appropriate infrastructure (linked to SDGs 8.3, 8.9, 11.a, 11.4, 11.7, 12.b)</b>
<b>Protection and promotion of cultural heritage as well as dissemination of cultural products through synergies for the creation of sustainable cities and communities (linked to SDGs 2.4, 8.3, 8.9, 11.4, 12.8, 12.b)</b>
<b>Fostering policies that support cultural creativity and increase employment in cultural sector, including cultural tourism and cultural and creative industries (linked to SDGs 1.4, 4.7, 8.3, 12.b, 16.7, 17.16, 17.17)</b>

#### **Protecting and promoting cultural heritage through extended excavation and restoration works and appropriate infrastructure**

Archeological sites, museums and monuments are closely connected to tourism and local communities through synergies that boost local and peripheral economy and strengthen the country's comparative advantage, creating a product of high value added. The numerous regional services of the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports (Ephorates of Prehistoric/Classical and of Byzantine/Post-Byzantine Antiquities) responsible for the on-site implementation of policies on the protection, preservation and valorisation of archaeological heritage hold permanent and periodic exhibitions and numerous educational programmes with a special focus on the local community and the children.

Cultural development projects (excavations, restorations and conservation works) are often included in several sectoral and regional operational programmes of the country because of the added value they provide to local employment, productivity and economy in general. More than 7% of Greek territory is officially registered in the National Archeological Land Registry, while every excavation for engineering projects in the country is under the supervision of the local archeological service for the case of historical findings.

The considerable archeological safeguarding work of the Ministry of Culture and Sports is spread throughout the country. It consists largely of large scale construction works of building infrastructure that contribute significantly to developing the local economy and fostering local employment.

More importantly, Greece recognises the important role played by archeological sites and museums in contributing to the economic and touristic development of the whole country. In this

regard, the Greek government has already moved towards the promotion of appropriate investing activities based on the use of cutting-edge technologies (such as the e-ticket initiative) which increase significantly revenues from tourism in the archeological sites and museums, contributing to their sustainability and financial self-adequacy.

### **Protection and promotion of cultural heritage as well as dissemination of cultural products through synergies for the creation of sustainable cities and communities**

The Ministry of Culture and Sports places particular emphasis on linking cultural heritage with the local community through the development of synergies of touristic and awareness-raising content. Such interlinkages enhance the cultural product and strengthen the country's position in the international touristic map, thus contributing to its economic and social growth. Synergies with the touristic sector have the significant potential to broaden the touristic period and to involve professionals of different fields from a vast geographical area.

The adoption of measures and actions aimed at implementing the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) at national level are expected to highlight the value and importance of Intangible Cultural Heritage elements, for both the local communities and the whole country. To this end, the Ministry places particular emphasis on promoting good examples of intangible cultural heritage actions which link sustainable development of local communities with traditional and eco-friendly practices. Illustrative examples include the Mediterranean diet, the Tinian marble craftsmanship, the craft of wooden shipbuilding, and the sacred forests of the villages of Zagori and Konitsa.

### **Fostering policies that support cultural creativity and increase employment in the cultural sector, including cultural tourism and cultural and creative industries**

The implementation of the PA 2014-2020 in the sector of culture is expected to further promote and enhance cultural heritage for the benefit of a wider audience. It will also contribute to supporting contemporary culture, institutions and creators, and in particular to strengthening support for the cultural and creative sectors which constitute an important driver of growth. The cultural and creative industries (CCIs) -including the visual and performing arts, ICT apps, gaming, publishing, fashion, the music and film industries and various youth subcultures- are increasingly recognised as a dynamic cluster of sectors which underpin local, regional and national economies and societies.

Based on published reports, the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in Greece -including the visual and performing arts, ICT apps, gaming, publishing, fashion, the music and film industries and various youth subcultures- correspond to 3% of National GDP, employing approximately 110,000 people (3% of total employment in Greece). In addition, the results of a study carried out by Deloitte in 2014 concluded that the total economic impact of the implementation of cultural projects produces a multiplying effect of 3.44 for the Greek economy. According to the recent mapping of the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in Greece, an increase in final demand by EUR 1 million for the products of audiovisual, television and radio industries will increase total production in the Greek economy by EUR 1.4 million., gross value added by EUR 0.8 million, labour income by EUR 0.4 million., and will create 18.5 new jobs.

Additionally, the "Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation" Operational Programme (one of the five sectoral operational programmes of the PA 2014-2020) has included the cultural and creative sector in the key priority sectors. In particular, it encourages the development of

multi-stakeholders partnerships in the cultural creative sector, including public, public-private and civil society entities, and the promotion of effective policies and practices, through the adoption of two basic actions, the “Start-Up Entrepreneurship” and the “Upgrading of micro and small enterprises by developing their skills in new markets” initiatives.

Equally important, the PA 2014-2020, provides for the financing of actions designed to boost employment in the wider cultural sector. In particular, the proposed programme entitled “Fostering Self-Employment among Tertiary Education Graduates” aims to support tertiary education graduates born before 1/1/1991 in their efforts to start/sustain a professional activity related to their field of specialisation and to organise their own independent professional premises. The professional activities to be financed by this programme include indicatively architects, designers, journalists, writers, interpreters, guides, sculptors or painters or cartoonists or engravers, actors/actresses, musicians, dancers, choreographers, directors, set designers, costume makers, and decorators.

#### **– Tourism Sector: fostering sustainable and inclusive tourism growth and competitive tourism product & services**

Tourism is a central pillar of the Greek economy and by many analysts it is considered to be an “export champion” for Greece. The country possesses unique characteristics (i.e. climate, nature, history, culture, gastronomy) that offer a globally competitive tourism product. Even during the times of crisis, the tourism industry in Greece has been one of the main stays of economic growth and employment, with a continued growth in both tourist arrivals and revenues. This considerable achievement is driven mainly by the determined efforts of the Greek tourism authorities and associations to upgrade the tourism product and services offered, but also by the development of new key markets and strengthening of existing ones<sup>4</sup>. In accordance with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in 2016 was EUR 13.2 billion (7.5% of GDP), while in 2017 was EUR 14.3 billion (8% of GDP). In addition, the total contribution of Travel and Tourism to employment was 934,500 jobs in 2017 (24.8% of total employment).

The following table showcases the interlinkages between various SDGs and the measures and initiatives undertaken by Greece in the field of tourism.

<b>SDGs interlinkages:</b>
<b>Fostering entrepreneurship and growth, boosting tourism investment and creating jobs (linked to SDGs 8.3, 8.9, 17,9)</b>
<b>Promoting education, training and skills in the tourism sector (linked to SDGs 4.3, 4a)</b>
<b>Investing in clean energy and promoting sustainable consumption and production in the tourism sector (linked to SDGs 7a, 12b)</b>

#### **Fostering entrepreneurship and growth, boosting tourism investment and creating jobs**

Greece favours the implementation of a variety of policies which seek to boost the level and quality of investment in tourism, with a particular focus on efficient and effective tourism products

<sup>4</sup> According to the available international tourism data, in 2016, for a 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, Greece broke again its all-time records in tourist arrivals, by counting 28 million visitors (Border Survey conducted by the Bank of Greece, Press Release, 12/04/2017 - Developments in the balance of travel services – 2016).



and services on a basis of sustainable and inclusive growth. The primary objectives are to identify innovative and effective investment mechanisms, instruments and strategies to stimulate tourism growth and development, to maximise the economic and social returns, and to promote and share country experiences and good investment practices (at national, regional and local level) which could serve as learning models to be adapted to different situations.

Tourism investments are financed by the sectoral and regional operational programmes of the PA (2014-2010) and more precisely by the Operational Programme “Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation” and the 13 Regional Operational Programmes which are drawn up by the competent ministries in consultation with the regional authorities. These programmes seek to record and identify investment needs along with the socio-economic partners involved in tourism businesses. In particular, the investment needs are identified, evaluated and prioritised through an extensive consultation process among the Ministry of Tourism, and the respective tourism organisations and managing authorities. Since tourism is a priority sector for the Greek economy, public and EU resources strategically support the private investment and optimise its effectiveness.

In this framework, Greece proceeded to the promotion of the Alternative Tourism Initiative (ATI), an act planned within the Operational Programme “Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation”. The primary objective of this initiative was to help enterprises improve their competitiveness and grow through extroversion. It covers all tourism services that are driven by the tourists’ special needs, motives and preferences. In particular, the ATI aimed at the diversification and enrichment of the Greek tourism product such as the alternative forms of tourism and the promotion of natural and cultural resources, with the scope of gaining revenue for the local economy, combatting seasonality and amplifying tourism demand. Through this initiative, many investment projects were financed, which contributed to the development of special and alternative forms of tourism (e.g. sport, sea, rural, gastronomic, medical and wellness tourism). In addition, in the context of this programme, Greece focused on transforming the traditional “sun & beach” tourist product into a number of specific and higher-value products, including nautical tourism, city break tourism, cultural and religious tourism, medical tourism, and meetings and incentives (MICE) tourism.

Furthermore, the Greek government places particular emphasis on the promotion of less known and less popular tourism destinations in Greece, while simultaneously encourages entrepreneurship, sustainable tourism investments and job creation. To this end, the Ministry of Tourism participates in the European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) Programme, under the support of the European Commission. The EDEN Programme is based on national competitions that take place every other year and result in the selection of a tourism “destination of excellence” and 4 runners-up for each participating country. Through the selection of destinations, EDEN effectively achieves the objective of drawing attention to the values, diversity and common features of European tourism destinations. In doing so, it aspires to promote sustainable tourism development models across the EU and enhances the visibility of emerging, non-traditional European destinations, creating a platform for sharing good practices across Europe and promoting networking among awarded destinations. This European quest for excellence in tourism is developed around an annual theme, chosen by the European Commission in cooperation with the national tourism authorities. The key feature of the selected destinations is their commitment to social, cultural



and environmental sustainability of tourism. The EDEN initiative helps to spread the sustainable practices used in the awarded destinations across the EU. Its tasks include encouraging dialogue among stakeholders, co-financing the national selection procedures, launching awareness-raising campaigns, and organising the award ceremony at European level.

Moreover, it is worth noting that nowadays Greece is shifting towards a unique 365-day quality tourism destination, offering unparalleled value for money travel experiences. In this light, there was a record high in international tourist arrivals over the last two years which was attributable to the effective implementation of the national tourism policy of the Ministry of Tourism and its close cooperation with the country's regional and local authorities, chambers, tourism bodies and the private sector. In this connection, the Ministry of Tourism has been pursuing initiatives which seek to increase the extensive involvement of the local communities in the promotion of tourism both at national and international level. To this end, many tailor-made action plans have been set in order to promote the cultural, gastronomic and natural attractions of local destinations. The aforementioned measures contribute to increasing tourism flows through successful communication strategies, and to extending the tourism season. This cooperative effort enhances Greece's international appeal, laying priority to the promotion of sustainable tourism development, job creation, and local growth.

#### **Promoting education, training and skills in the tourism sector**

The Greek government regards tourism education and training as a key instrument for achieving a competitive advantage for the Greek tourism product. In this regard, the Ministry of Tourism encouraged the establishment of tourism studies faculties at the Greek universities, and, in fact, two university faculties for tourism were created for the first time in Greece. Furthermore, in the context of the 13 Regional Operational Programmes of the PA (2014-2020), it proceeded to the reestablishment of schools for tourist guides. More specifically, the action entitled "Human Resources Training for tourism in the Regions 8, 3 & 2" consisted of training programmes that were implemented with the following beneficiaries: workers, seasonal workers, self-employed persons and entrepreneurs, for whom there was a correlation of the training received with current work or their possible new tasks in the context of enterprises' reengineering or in relation to a change of their professional activity. This was a very important initiative for the tourism sector that was followed by radical institutional changes in the domain of vocational schools and technical educational institutes.

#### **Investing in clean energy and promoting sustainable consumption and production in the tourism sector**

The Green Tourism Initiative constituted another important programme run by the Ministry of Tourism in the context of the Operational Programme "Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation". The core objective of this initiative was the improvement of the energy efficiency and energy savings of the buildings of eligible businesses, the proper and responsible management of water and waste, and the implementation of procedures that do not have negative impacts on the environment. With regard to hospitality, the programme aims to improve the performance of the tourism micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) by offering goods and services of high added value, excellent quality, and environmental sensitivity. In particular, through this programme, tourism MSME in the hospitality sector are: (i) supported to adopt innovative and

effective investment mechanisms, instruments and strategies to stimulate tourism growth and development with the focus placed on resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, sustainable lifestyles, as well as green jobs and better quality of life for all; (ii) encouraged to promote the unique, ecologically-wise, characteristics (cultural and natural resources) of their destinations; (iii) financed to improve the energy efficiency of buildings so as to reduce total energy consumption, and to deal with the pressing concerns of water; and (iv) guided to raise awareness among key stakeholders. Thus, combining “green” strategies and innovation, hotels and other categories of accommodation, businesses will be able to apply fully integrated and innovative methods for their energy efficient modernisation.

In a nutshell, the aforementioned overall actions constitute a strategic tourism road map by which Greece will advance its goals of tourism development over the next years to the direction of growth based on a sustainable and inclusive tourism development framework, being in line with latest market trends, enhanced visitor experience, and community-led development, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are widely channeled to the whole society and economy.

### **6.3 Effective use of financial resources**

The mobilisation of financial resources is indispensable for the effective implementation of the SDGs. In Greece, there is a wide range of financial instruments and means contributing to sustainable economic growth and the achievement of the SDGs, including the Public Investments Programme, the new Investment Law, the Public Private Partnerships, the Hellenic Development Bank as well as the support provided by international financial institutions and other sources.

#### **Public Investments Programme**

The Public Investments Programme contributes as a key development policy tool to the development of the Greek economy and to the support of social cohesion. The Public Investments Programme funds for 2017 amount to EUR 6.75 billion, divided into 5.75 billion for co-financing and 1 billion for projects to be fully financed from national resources. Furthermore, an increase of 7 billion for the years 2019-2020 is expected. The development areas of interest to the Public Investments Programme are inextricably linked to the SDGs, including primarily energy, the environment, transport, entrepreneurship, human capital development, employment, health and welfare, the strengthening of the knowledge society, education and training, administrative reform and support for local government investment programmes. The national funding covers mainly policies for the maintenance and expansion of infrastructure and social structures, investment priorities of the local and regional authorities, emergencies arising from natural disasters, and other actions, such as the strengthening of private investment in the frame of the implementation of development laws. A key criterion for funding projects from national funds is their complementarity, synergies and feasibility, while the main priority is to cover the needs for social cohesion and public infrastructure. The main source of revenue for the Public Investments Programme is EU and national resources. Under the revision clause of the EU’s Multiannual Financial Framework, an additional EUR 1 billion inflow is expected. The allocation of these resources to various sectors will be agreed upon and negotiated with the EU. Another funding resource is lending by international financial institutions, such as the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the World Bank. This lending is critical for the recovery of the Greek economy, given the favourable

lending conditions, as it increases the amount of public investment resources and leverages private funds into development projects.

### **The New Investment Law**

The Investment Incentives Law (4399/2016) constitutes a statutory framework for the establishment of Private Investments Aid Schemes for the regional and economic development of the country. The key objectives of the law include the creation of new jobs with emphasis on skilled employment, the increase of exports and innovativeness of businesses, the increase in value added, the improvements in technology and competitiveness, the creation of a new export-oriented national image (branding), the reindustrialisation of the country, the attraction of foreign direct investments, the achievement of a better placement of the country in the international division of labour, and the promotion of a balanced and sustainable development with emphasis on regional convergence. The aid amounts in the sub-schemes are defined annually by decision of the Minister of Finance and Economy. The tax exemption incentive for 2017 is set at EUR 437 million, and grant, leasing subsidy and job creation cost subsidy is set at EUR 70 million for 2018 and EUR 220 million for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021.

### **Public Private Partnerships**

The law 3389/2005 on Public Private Partnerships (PPP) lays the foundations for the wide provision of services and the undertaking of public benefit construction work, in collaboration with and co-funded by the private sector. This law is designed to facilitate public-private partnerships by creating a market-friendly regulatory environment. In Greece, an affordability cap (or ceiling) has been set, in order to define the limit on the overall long-term firm liabilities of all PPPs. Currently, the informal cap at official level is the 10% of the nationally-sourced portion of the Public Investment Budget (estimated at EUR 100 million for 2017), while there is a strong political will to increase this cap to 20% (about EUR 200 million for 2017). In the meantime, current spending on existing PPPs procured under the PPP law is running at EUR 48 million for 2017.

### **Hellenic Development Bank**

The Hellenic Development Bank (HDB), to be created in 2018, will promote long-term investments and socio-economic development, as well as support entrepreneurship in Greece by providing promotional investment and financing, financial and advisory services and by issuing securities or otherwise raising funds or capital in support of those services, excluding deposits from retail. The HDB will be developed through the restructuring and reconstruction of The Hellenic Fund for Entrepreneurship and Development (ETEAN SA) and will act as a central funds coordinator/manager, guarantor for SMEs.

HDB may act as a wholesale intermediary in coordination with and via commercial banks, private investors and other private financial intermediaries, based on ex-ante defined market failures. At the same time it will provide funding for infrastructural projects, particularly those that enhance Greece's competitiveness or are in the interest of the Greek and European economy, such as projects in the interest of the European Union that are co-financed by the European Investment Bank or similar multilateral financing institutions. The participation of other public entities and/or international and European development banks or sovereign financial institutions in the capital of the HDB is envisaged.

### Support from international financial institutions and other sources

Furthermore, the sustainable economic growth and the implementation of the SDGs in Greece has been supported by technical and financing support provided by European institutions, international financial institutions (IFIs) and EU member states. In particular:

- There is roughly EUR 36 billion of EU Funds to support growth and jobs in Greece over the 2014-2020 programming period. Since 2014, Greece has received more than EUR 13 billion from a large pool of EU Funds, with around EUR 25 billion (14% of Greece's GDP in 2016) still available (including from the previous programming period). Operations under the Juncker Plan's Funds are to date expected to deliver an additional EUR 3 billion in investments.
- IFIs have mobilised considerable additional resources for Greece. The EIB is expected to approve loans of EUR 2 billion for 2017 alone, which will inter alia support SMEs and mid caps as well as the implementation of the privatisation programme. The EBRD initiated operations in Greece and to date have invested EUR 798 million in projects in the corporate sector, SMEs, energy and infrastructure.
- Unprecedented level of technical support has been provided through the Commission's Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) in cooperation with Member States and international organisations. Technical support is aligned with the provisions of the stability support programme, including in key areas to support growth, e.g. barriers to competition, investment licensing, cadastre, tourism, energy and HCAP.

### 6.4 Enhancing public awareness and participation

In its effort to cultivate a culture of dialogue and partnership, the Office of Coordination, Institutional, International and European Affairs of the General Secretariat of the Government (OCIIEA) encourages and facilitates, individually or in close cooperation with line ministries, the transparent and inclusive consultation with multiple stakeholders actively engaged in the SDGs implementation process (civil society and social partners, the private sector, academia and research community, regional and local authorities). Through the organisation of bilateral and multilateral meetings with representative stakeholders and its participation in workshops and roundtable conferences organised by ministries and stakeholders, the OCIIEA aims to raise public awareness on the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda, promote the shared responsibility of all stakeholders, and facilitate the sharing of experiences and lessons learned on the implementation of SDGs (fostering a whole-of-society approach).

From the very beginning an ongoing dialogue is taking place with some of the major national stakeholders, such as the Economic and Social Committee of Greece (ESC), the Business Council for Sustainable Development of the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEVBCSD), the Hellenic Network for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR Hellas), the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (GSEVEE), the Association of Greek Regions (ENPE), the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE) and individual Municipalities like those of Athens and Thessaloniki, the Research institutions of Greece, as well as Universities, various Non-Governmental Organisations, Youth representatives, networks, such as the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Independent Authorities, such as the Greek Ombudsman, and, of course, the Hellenic Parliament.

In the initial round of dialogue, an extended discussion about the stakeholders' involvement in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda took place, and this consultation with the stakeholders led to the formulation of the national priorities and the identification of the challenges and opportunities arising for each one of them by implementing the SDGs. Thus, the stakeholders contributed to the formulation and the drafting of the VNR for the HLPF 2018, and they will do the same for the upcoming national implementation plan.

The aim of the OCIEEA is to broaden, extend and systematise the consultation and participatory process, by further engaging the stakeholders in the implementation, follow-up and review of the whole project, supporting the role of the Economic and Social Committee (ESC), and creating an online platform, which can provide a broad forum for all the interested parties to participate, discuss, disseminate information and promote their good practices.

A worth noting initiative that the OCIEEA took in cooperation with the Institute of Training of the National School of Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA), is the introduction of a 3-day recurring seminar for the SDGs, where the senior public employees are trained at the international, European and national dimension of the SDGs. Thus, the employees from the ministries, local and regional administrations, universities, research centers and independent authorities who are enrolled for this seminar become fully aware of the core vision, priorities, objectives and multiple dimensions of the 2030 Agenda, and they add credits to their CV and personal career. Most importantly, they build a network of senior public employees with shared responsibility and commitment to implementing PCSD and SDGs across sectors and governance levels. Additionally, this network could contribute significantly to the submission of policy proposals and recommendations on SDG related issues and to the elaboration and drafting of key policy documents, such as national implementation plans for the SDGs and strategies. In addition to that, an innovative workshop for the implementation of the SDGs, with the participation of the major stakeholders will take place at the same institution.

Since March 2017, the OCIEEA participated in a number of high-level multi-stakeholder events that have been organised by either, the ministries, the private or civil society sector, in order to inform, raise awareness on the SDGs and provide a space for multi-stakeholder interaction:

- Conference on "Commitment for Sustainable Development", co-organised by CSR Hellas & SEV Business Council for Sustainable Development), 2.3.2017.
- Multi-stakeholder Event on "Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development", co-organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Secretariat of the Government, 7.3.2017.
- Dialogue meeting on "the SDGs and the Environment", organised by the National Environment and Sustainable Development Center, 15.3.2017.
- Concordia Europe Summit & roundtable discussion on the implementation of the SDGs in Greece, Athens, Greece, 6-7.6.2017.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> International SDSN Mediterranean Conference/Official Launch of SDSN Greece, 7-8.9.2017.
- A Special Event on "Peer learning in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs", organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the participation of representatives from Diplomatic Missions of EU member states and countries of the Mediterranean region, 3.10.2017.

- Event on “Standards for Sustainable and Smart Cities”, co-organised by the Hellenic Organisation for Standardisation (ELOT) and the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE), 13.10.2017.
- High Level Forum on “Business and Civil Society in the Fight Against Corruption to Promote Sustainable Economic Development”, co-organised by the General Secretariat Against Corruption and OECD, 28-29.11.2017.
- Conference on “the Development of a National Growth Plan”, organised by the Economic and Social Committee of Greece (ESC), 14.3.2018.
- Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility and the SDGs, organised by Naftemporiki newspaper, 28.3.2018.

Of course, many other initiatives from individual stakeholders are taking place all over the country that aim to raise awareness and citizen participation for the SDGs and sustainable development in general. A good recent example is a weekly radio programme on the municipal radio station of Athens, dedicated entirely to the SDGs.

### 6.5 Promoting the SDGs implementation at global and regional level

Greece underlines the need for the development of a more effective, coherent and rules-based multilateral system which respects the principles of sustainable development and enables development opportunities for all. Within this context, the Greek government is committed to implementing international agreements and frameworks related to sustainable development, including, among others, the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the New Urban Agenda agreed during the Habitat III global UN conference in 2016.

At the global level, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs shape the Government’s global engagement. The common global vision and ambition expressed in the SDGs are in line with the interests, values and principles for which Greece has worked globally for decades. The Government’s global engagement contributes to realising the SDGs –a world of peace, justice, stability, religious tolerance, without poverty but with sustainable development in all its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental), where no one is left behind. The Government’s overall foreign and security policy contributes to achieving the SDGs in several ways, directly and indirectly, including through trade and investments, development cooperation, economic and sectoral cooperation, by promoting peace, security, respect for human rights, gender equality, the rule of law and good governance.

Within this framework, Greece has already taken many important initiatives towards promoting the development of peaceful and inclusive societies and accountable institutions as envisaged by [SDG 16](#). In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has so far organised a series of International Conferences and Ministerial Meetings on certain pressing issues linked to human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence, including security and stability, migration, human rights, environmental sustainability and religious and cultural pluralism (see chapter 4.8).

With regard to the implementation of [SDG 14](#), Greece considers that the protection and sustainable management of the oceans, seas and marine resources constitute a strong driver for



strengthening ocean governance and enhancing policy coherence. Most importantly, it provides an impetus for collective global accountability for oceans under the 2030 Agenda. Greece shares the fundamental obligation and responsibility to protect, conserve and sustainably use the oceans and their resources in order to enable sustainable development for the benefit of the present and future generations.

Greece, as a maritime nation and coastal state with 18,400 km coastline and 9,800 islands, has important resource, environmental and economic interests in the oceans. Shipping, fishing, development of offshore energy sources, port and transportation facilities, recreation and tourism are vital economic activities. The health and well-being of coastal populations, especially island communities which are sometimes wholly dependent upon fishing and tourism are ultimately linked to the quality of the marine environment. Greece recognises the importance of a well-managed sustainable blue economy and the need for resilient oceans and ecosystems. To this end, Greece has committed to expand the coverage of marine protected areas within its territorial waters from 6%, as it currently stands, to 17% by 2020, well beyond [SDG 14.5](#) which provides for the conservation of at least 10% of coastal and marine areas by 2020.

The Greek government is also determined to elaborate and adopt a National Maritime Spatial Planning Strategy (NMSPS) by 2021, which will be the strategic framework of maritime spatial planning in Greece, setting priorities and giving strategic guidance for more elaborate maritime spatial plans. Furthermore, Greece has signed a trilateral declaration with Cyprus and Egypt on the implementation of [SDG 14](#), where the parties agreed to cooperate in the following five key areas, namely: (i) preparedness and response to major marine pollution incidents in the Mediterranean Sea; (ii) combating coastal erosion and coastal zone management; (iii) biological biodiversity and nature protection; (iv) waste management; and (v) climate change adaptation.

Greece firmly believes that the achievement of [SDG 14](#) and ocean-related targets of the 2030 Agenda will be critical to restoring the sustainability of the oceans. In this context, respect for the rule of law and more specifically the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out, is of paramount importance. UNCLOS provides a solid basis and the legal tools for effectively dealing with issues related to sustainable development and with new challenges raised in this field. Emphasis should be placed on its effective and full implementation as well as the implementation of relevant international and regional instruments, which supplement its provisions.

In the context of [SDG 8](#), an inclusive network of state agencies and NGOs, constituting the National Referral Mechanism to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery, has undertaken a number of actions governed by the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, large scale policy making changes have been made possible due to the commitment to the SDGs. In particular, the legal and political arsenal that combats human trafficking and modern slavery in Greece, is premised on the conceptual framework of human security that is an intrinsic component of the [SDGs 5.2, 8.7, 16.2](#). The new laws and action plans that have been adopted on the issue consolidate a more inclusive identification regime for potential victims of trafficking and shifts the emphasis on human rights and victim-centered approach. At the same time, the new Mechanism provides a platform of communication between policy makers, diplomats, and civil society and promotes a system of values that favours holistic and interdisciplinary solutions and opposes obsolete and compartmentalised notions of security and development.



In the spirit of enhanced regional cooperation, Greece has taken initiatives to discuss various aspects of the migratory phenomenon (SDG 10.7) at a regional level. Illustrative examples include the Trilateral Meeting held in Athens, on 14 April 2016, between high level officials of the Foreign Ministries and Police Directorates of Greece, Italy and Albania, and the Quadrilateral Meeting held in Thessaloniki, on 21-22 April 2016, between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Interior Ministers of Greece, Albania, Bulgaria and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Specifically, during the Trilateral Meeting of Athens, the officials of the three countries -Greece, Italy and Albania- reiterated their commitment to step up efforts to tackle networks of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, with a special emphasis on the protection of unaccompanied minors. They agreed to work together in order to find the correct mechanism for legal migration and how to tackle long-term problems. Finally, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs agreed to turn the Quadrilateral Meeting into a permanent institutional mechanism of cooperation, which will convene at regular intervals. Further to the above commitment, the 2nd Ministerial Meeting took place in Thessaloniki on 5 October 2017 and concentrated on regional cooperation, security, citizens' security and cross border collaboration, firefighting and fire safety and migration.

The safeguarding and promotion of culture contributes directly to achieving many of the SDGs, including safe and sustainable cities, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, environment, promotion of gender equality and peaceful and inclusive societies. The indirect benefits of culture are accrued through the culturally-informed and effective implementations of the development goals. An important initiative of Greece within this context is the International Forum of Ancient Civilisations which was held in Athens on 24 April 2017 in order to promote cultural heritage and cooperation between the participating countries, Bolivia, China, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Mexico and Peru. It is a platform for dialogue and cultural cooperation among the participating states. The aim of the Forum is to conduct dialogue and consultations with a view to reaching coordinated positions, where appropriate, on issues of major importance relating to the protection of cultural heritage (SDGs 4.7, 11.4), within the relevant international organisations, such as UNESCO.

Last but not least, it should be pointed out that Greece participates in joint intergovernmental committees, regional cooperation agreements, and bilateral and trilateral memoranda of cooperation which mainstream, among others, the SDGs in a wide range of thematic areas, including renewable energy and energy efficiency, sustainable consumption and production, alternative and sustainable tourism, climate change, protection of the marine environment, marine living resources and marine biodiversity, sustainable environment and sustainability of natural resources, sustainable management of water resources, biodiversity conservation, and protection of nature and industrialisation.

### **Development Cooperation**

The EU is collectively committed to providing 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) as ODA (SDG 17.2) within the timeframe of the 2030 Agenda. The EU will continue playing its part in the implementation of 2030 Agenda, both externally and internally. International action can only complement domestic efforts. The new European Consensus on Development and the Council Conclusions on a Sustainable European Future are important steps in this regard. The Greek government is committed to work towards realising the SDGs in the UN and other international fora and institutions. Government's engagement in the work of the Economic and Financial Committee

(Second Committee) of the UN General Assembly is guided by the relevant EU policies harnessed to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Currently, there is an ongoing process within the Directorate General of International Development Cooperation-Hellenic Aid of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to adopt development cooperation policy so as to reflect the SDGs implementation in partner countries. Greece is a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of OECD since 1999. Despite the tight budgetary constraints, total Official Development Assistance (ODA) of Greece (bilateral and multilateral ODA) in 2016, amounted to USD 368.53 million i.e. 0.19% of Gross National Income (GNI). Total bilateral ODA which amounted to USD 159.15 million was directed in sectors like education, health, environmental protection, infrastructure and refugee subsistence. Total multilateral ODA amounted to USD 209.38 million. Multilateral ODA is provided by the ministries which provide funds for international development purposes via the international organisations. As a small country, Greece acknowledges the need to concentrate efforts on making an impact, and as such the necessity of prioritising the SDGs. This prioritisation is based on areas where Greece has competencies and experience that enable the country to contribute to progress.

# 7 | NATIONAL FOLLOW UP AND REVIEW PROCESS: NEXT STEPS

## 7.1 The National Implementation Plan for the SDGs

The National Implementation Plan for the SDGs scheduled for 2019 aims to foster the adoption of an integrated approach to the planning and implementation of the SDGs at different governance levels and across policy sectors promoting policy coherence for sustainable development. In particular, it will focus, inter alia, on further elaborating the national priorities on the SDGs embedded in the Voluntary National Review 2018, enhancing the connection with the National Growth Strategy, revisiting existing thematic legislation, strategies and policies building on them, and making them more “SDG aware” by improving their coherence. Moreover, it will include the identification of key cross-cutting priorities for the country (e.g. circular economy, sustainable consumption and production patterns, social economy, research and innovation, adaptation to climate change impacts and migration, water-food-energy nexus, education for sustainable development, nutrition-youth-health nexus etc.) to be pursued through new horizontal cross-sectoral integration tools and arrangements that will produce a special added value for the process of implementing the SDGs in Greece. In parallel, the National Implementation Plan will seek to explore and promote some key good practices of national policies and legislation which interlink different thematic SDGs.

Again, the same procedural principles will be applied for the elaboration and execution of the National Implementation Plan as in the Voluntary National Review: Political commitment and ownership at top level, bottom-up, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, broad participation and multi-stakeholder dialogue. More emphasis will be given on strengthening the institutionalisation of social dialogue, the science-policy interface, the use of indexes and the credible monitoring of the whole process, so as to ensure a realistic and yet aspiring implementation plan.

The drafting and execution of the National Implementation Plan will definitely bring a lot more people and institutions on the road to sustainable development and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda objectives. Public discussions on multiple forums, mobilisation of resources, and policies and actions from the public, private and civil society sectors, will emerge and become known to the citizenry, which in this way will become more informed and engaged.

## 7.2 The role of the Hellenic Parliament

The Hellenic Parliament will play an instrumental role in the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. In particular, the progress reports on the execution of the National Implementation Plan for the SDGs will be submitted, at regular intervals, to the Hellenic Parliament for discussion and review in the context of joint meetings of parliamentary committees (reflecting all the thematic aspects of the SDGs), where all political parties are represented. In addition, these joint meetings will also debate and examine the Voluntary National Reviews reports

on SDGs, which are due to be presented at the UN High-Level Political Forum. Within this context, the joint meetings of parliamentary committees will provide the Parliament with the opportunity to discuss in depth and track progress on the legislative and policy framework developed with a view to mainstreaming the SDGs and promoting all the dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental, economic).

### **7.3 Statistical monitoring and the role of the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT)**

With the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution 70/1 Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the member states of the United Nations committed to follow-up and review the progress made towards implementing the SDGs and targets over 2030. The resolution noted that the SDGs and targets will be followed up and reviewed using a set of global indicators, which will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national level.

The 2030 Agenda states that the annual progress report shall be based on the global indicator framework and data produced by the National Statistical Systems and information collected at regional level. The UN Statistical Commission has also decided that the compilation of global indicators will be based to the greatest extent possible on comparable and standardised national official statistics provided by countries to the international statistical systems and that when other sources and methodologies are used, these will be reviewed and agreed by national statistical authorities and presented in a transparent manner.<sup>5</sup>

The 17 SDGs are specified in a group of 169 individual targets to be achieved by all countries by 2030. For the quantitative measurement of these targets, a number of indicators have been proposed that attempt to capture the current situation for all member-states and to evaluate the progress made towards achieving these targets. The number of Sustainable Development Indicators has reached the number of 232 while there is an ongoing discussion on the usefulness, effectiveness and availability of statistics for each one.

On 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016, Eurostat distributed an initial proposal of an EU SDG indicator set, structured along the 17 SDGs. Indicators considered for the EU SDG indicator set had to be produced and disseminated in line with the principles stipulated in the Code of Practice of European Statistics. This requires that at least one data point is ready to use and published by its producer, that regular data production is ensured, preferably with official mandate and adequate resources, that a sound methodology exists, that data are accessible online and metadata publicly available and that compliance with international or EU standards is fulfilled where these exist. The assumption is that indicators from official statistics and other well established institutions with quality policy fulfill the above requirements. The admissibility requirements should only be relaxed in cases where there is a genuine lack of indicators that meet these criteria. In these cases, users will be informed as appropriate about the limitations of the affected indicators. Indicators considered for the EU SDG indicator set had to achieve a minimum quality according to a quality rating on frequency, timeliness, geographical coverage and comparability as well as length of time series and comparability over time. In November 2017, Eurostat published the *Sustainable Development in the European Union: Monitoring Report on Progress towards the SDGs in an EU context*. The next publication is scheduled for the autumn of 2018.

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5. See Decision 47/101 (I) from the rapport of 47<sup>th</sup> UN Statistical Commission.

The Hellenic Statistical System (ELSS) is the set of rules, tasks and competent bodies responsible for the execution of statistical assignments, with the aim of developing, producing and disseminating the official statistics of the country. Official statistics cover all sectors of public and private activity, support decision-making and are submitted to international organisations according to the country's obligations. The Hellenic Statistical System includes public sector organisations that generate «European Statistics», which are determined in the European Statistical Programme, and their production and dissemination procedures follow the European Statistics Code of Practice. The Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) as coordinator of the Greek Statistical System aims at the production on a regular basis of official statistics with the target of ensuring and continuously improving their quality. ELSTAT is also responsible for certifying the statistics of the ELSS authorities and organisations. This delivers more direct coordination and ensures the quality of official statistics in the country. ELSTAT has already conducted 3 rounds to identify the data required for the SDGs. At the same time, the ELSS is in close cooperation with the custodian agencies either to provide data or to validate the proposed methodology and data.

The official data for Greece from the Greek Statistical Office – Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) and Eurostat can be found in the Annex to this report.



## ANNEX: Statistical follow-up on the 2030 Agenda

This section of the report presents some characteristic statistical information and data aligned with the Greek National Priorities. This statistical data is derived from the Eurostat database on the SDGs, produced in collaboration with the Hellenic Statistical Authority. These indicators have strong links with the EU policies and are in line with the European Statistics Code of Practice.



### SDG 1: No Poverty People at risk of poverty or social exclusion

This indicator corresponds to the sum of persons who are: at risk of poverty after social transfers, severely materially deprived or living in households with very low work intensity. Persons are counted only once even if they are affected by more than one of these phenomena. The aforementioned phenomena are presented in the following indicators.

Figure 1: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion

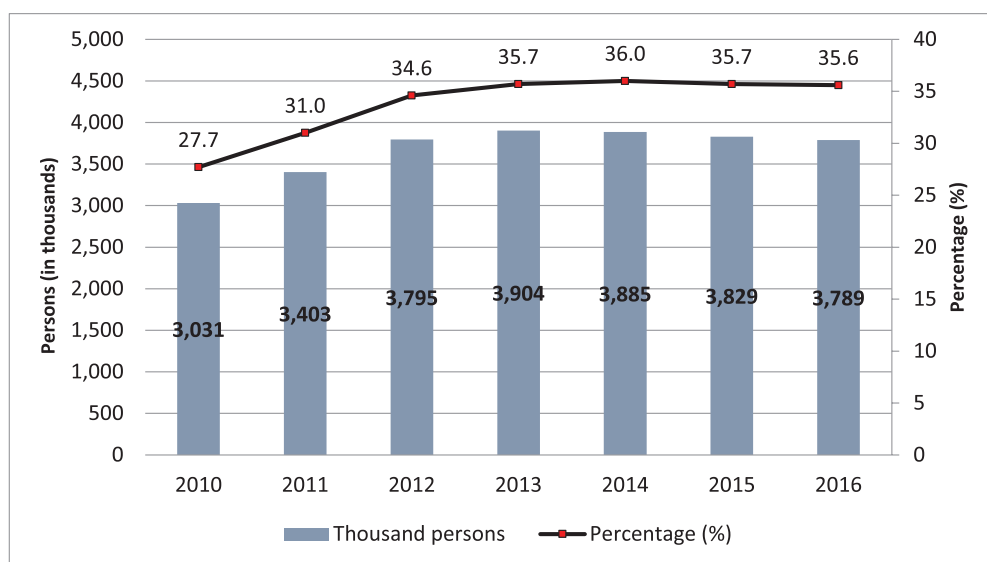


Table 1: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion in total and by sex

Year	Total		Male		Female	
	Thousand persons	Percentage (%)	Thousand persons	Percentage (%)	Thousand persons	Percentage (%)
2010	3,031	27.7	1,401	26.0	1,630	29.3
2011	3,403	31.0	1,604	29.6	1,799	32.3
2012	3,795	34.6	1,829	33.9	1,966	35.2
2013	3,904	35.7	1,862	34.6	2,041	36.8
2014	3,885	36.0	1,862	35.3	2,023	36.7
2015	3,829	35.7	1,819	34.8	2,010	36.6
2016	3,789	35.6	1,786	34.4	2,003	36.6



### People at risk of income poverty after social transfers

People at risk-of-poverty are persons with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60 % of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers).

The indicator is part of the multidimensional poverty index.

Figure 2: People at risk of income poverty after social transfers

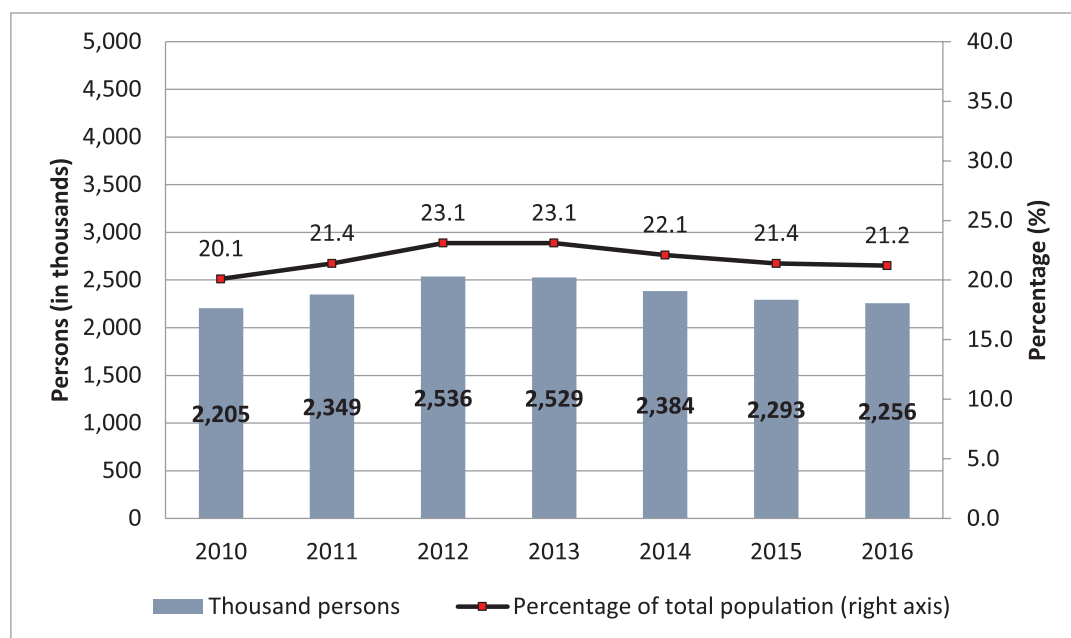


Table 2: People at risk of income poverty after social transfers in total and by sex

Year	Total		Male		Female	
	Thousand persons	Percentage (%)	Thousand persons	Percentage (%)	Thousand persons	Percentage (%)
2010	2,205	20.1	1,044	19.3	1,161	20.9
2011	2,349	21.4	1,130	20.9	1,219	21.9
2012	2,536	23.1	1,216	22.5	1,319	23.6
2013	2,529	23.1	1,207	22.4	1,322	23.8
2014	2,384	22.1	1,169	22.2	1,215	22.0
2015	2,293	21.4	1,127	21.5	1,167	21.2
2016	2,256	21.2	1,099	21.2	1,157	21.2



**SDG 2:**  
**Zero hunger**  
Government support to agricultural research and development

The indicator refers to Government Budget Appropriations or Outlays on R&D (GBAORD). GBAORD data measure government support to research and development (R&D) activities, or, in other words, how much priority governments place on the public funding of R&D. GBAORD data are built up using the guidelines laid out in the proposed standard practice for surveys of research and experimental development, the OECD's Frascati Manual from 2002. GBAORD data are broken down by socio-economic objectives in accordance to the nomenclature for the analysis and comparison of scientific programmes and budgets (NABS 2007).

Figure 3: Government support to agriculture research and development in euro per inhabitant

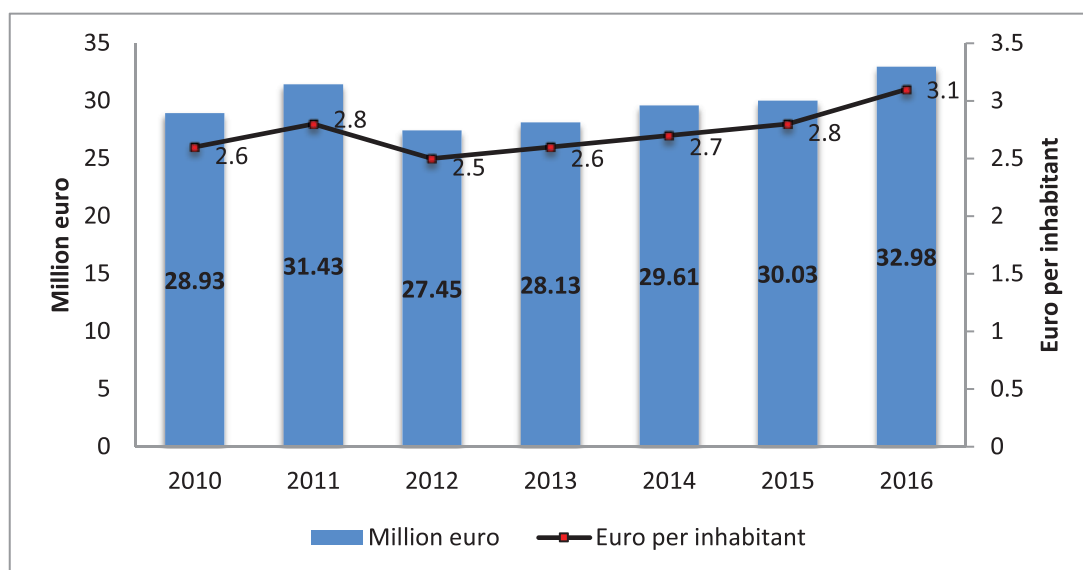


Table 3: Government support to agriculture research and development in euro per inhabitant and in million euro

Year	Euro per inhabitant	Million euro
2010	2.6	28.93
2011	2.8	31.43
2012	2.5	27.45
2013	2.6	28.13
2014	2.7	29.61
2015	2.8	30.03
2016	3.1	32.98



### SDG 3: Good health and well-being

#### Life expectancy at birth by sex

Life expectancy at birth is defined as the mean number of years that a new-born child can expect to live if subjected throughout his life to the current mortality conditions (age specific probabilities of dying).

Figure 4: Life expectancy in birth by sex

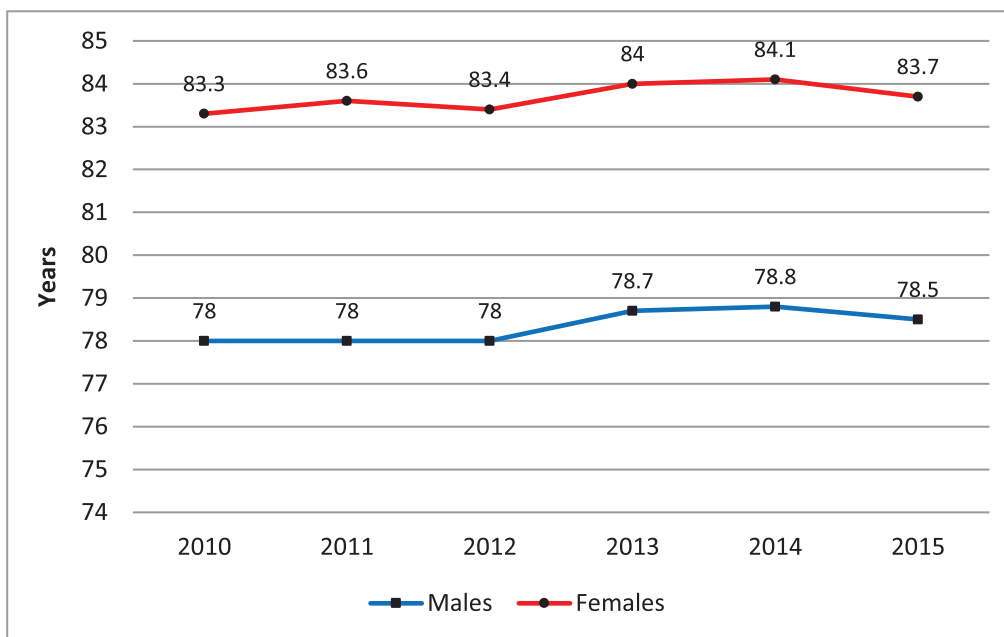


Table 4: Life expectancy in birth by sex and in total

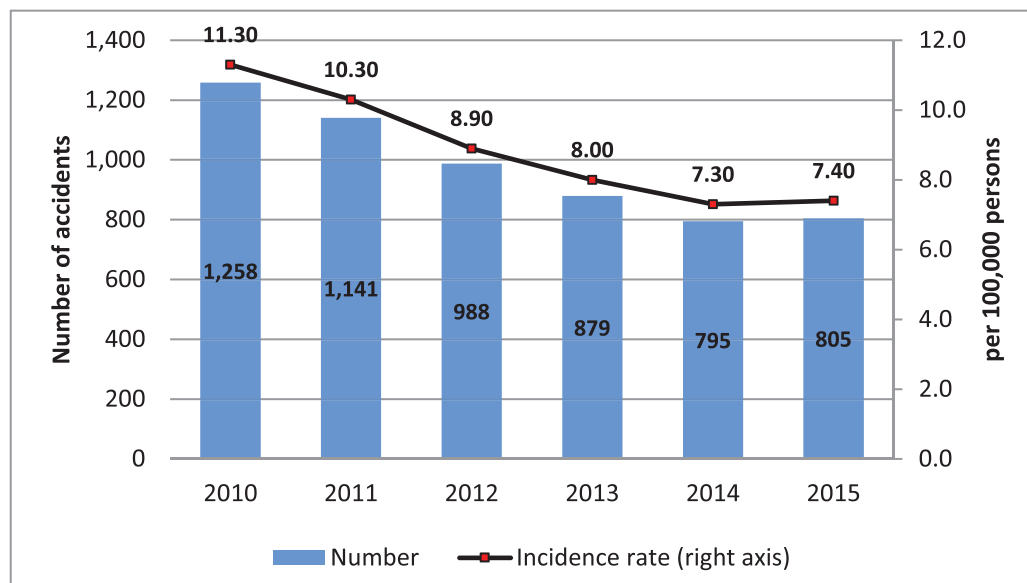
Year	Total	Males	Females
2010	80.6	78.0	83.3
2011	80.8	78.0	83.6
2012	80.7	78.0	83.4
2013	81.4	78.7	84.0
2014	81.5	78.8	84.1
2015	81.1	78.5	83.7

### People killed in road accidents (source: EC services)

The indicator measures the number of fatalities caused by road accidents, including drivers and passengers of motorised vehicles and pedal cycles as well as pedestrians. Persons dying on road accidents up to 30 days after the occurrence of the accident are counted as road accident fatalities. After these 30 days, the reason for dying might be declared differently.

For Member States not using this definition, corrective factors were applied.

Figure 5: Number and incidence rate of road accidents



Source: EC Services

Table 5: Number and incidence rate of road accidents

Year	Number	Incidence rate
2010	1,258	11.3
2011	1,141	10.3
2012	988	8.9
2013	879	8.0
2014	795	7.3
2015	805	7.4



## SDG 4:

**Quality education**

Early leavers from education and training by sex  
(This indicator is also included in SDG 5: Gender equality)

The indicator measures the share of the population aged 18 to 24 with at most lower secondary education who was not involved in any education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey. Lower secondary education refers to ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) 2011 level 0-2 for data from 2014 onwards and to ISCED 1997 level 0-3C short for data up to 2013. Data stem from the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS).

Figure 6: Percentage (%) of the population aged 18 to 24 early leavers from education and training by sex

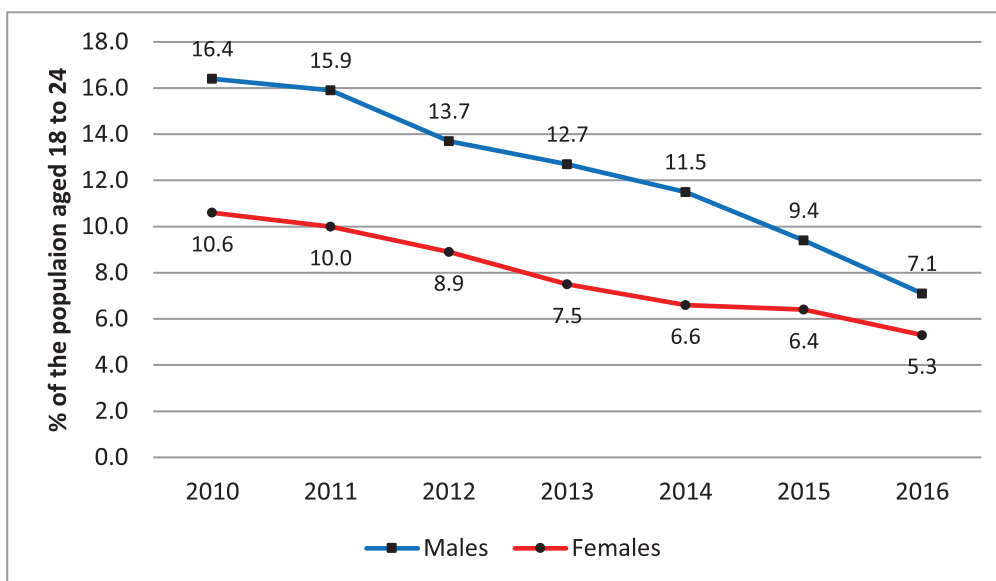


Table 6: Percentage of the population aged 18 to 24 early leavers from education and training by sex

b: break in time series

Year	Total	Males	Females
2010	13.5	16.4	10.6
2011	12.9	15.9	10.0
2012	11.3	13.7	8.9
2013	10.1	12.7	7.5
2014	9.0 <sup>(b)</sup>	11.5 <sup>(b)</sup>	6.6 <sup>(b)</sup>
2015	7.9	9.4	6.4
2016	6.2	7.1	5.3

b: break in time series

### Tertiary educational attainment by sex

The indicator measures the share of the population aged 30-34 who have successfully completed tertiary studies (e.g. university, higher technical institution, etc.). This educational attainment refers to ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) 2011 level 5-8 for data from 2014 onwards and to ISCED 1997 level 5-6 for data up to 2013. The indicator is based on the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS).

Figure 7: Percentage of people aged 30 to 34 with tertiary educational attainment by sex

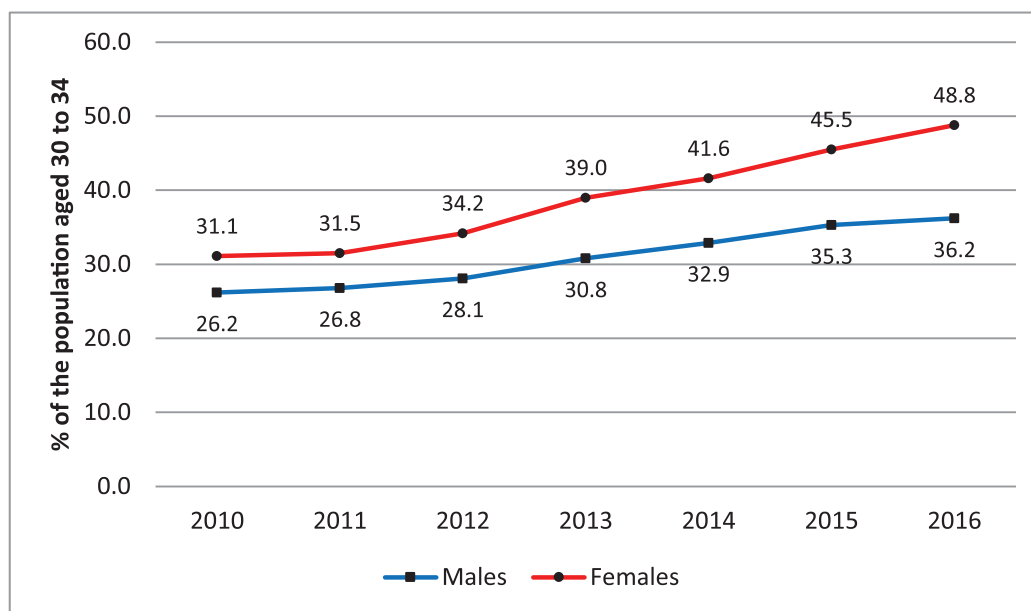


Table 7: Percentage of people aged 30 to 34 with tertiary educational attainment in total and by sex

Year	Total	Males	Females
2010	28.6	26.2	31.1
2011	29.1	26.8	31.5
2012	31.2	28.1	34.2
2013	34.9	30.8	39
2014	37.2 <sup>(b)</sup>	32.9 <sup>(b)</sup>	41.6 <sup>(b)</sup>
2015	40.4	35.3	45.5
2016	42.7	36.2	48.8

b: break in time series

### Employment rates of recent graduates by sex

The indicator measures the employment rates of persons aged 20 to 34 fulfilling the following conditions: first, being employed according to the ILO definition, second, having attained at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3) as the highest level of education, third, not having received any education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey and four, having successfully completed their highest educational attainment 1, 2 or 3 years before the survey. The indicator is calculated based on data from the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS).

Figure 8: Employment rates (%) of recent graduates aged 20 to 34 years by sex

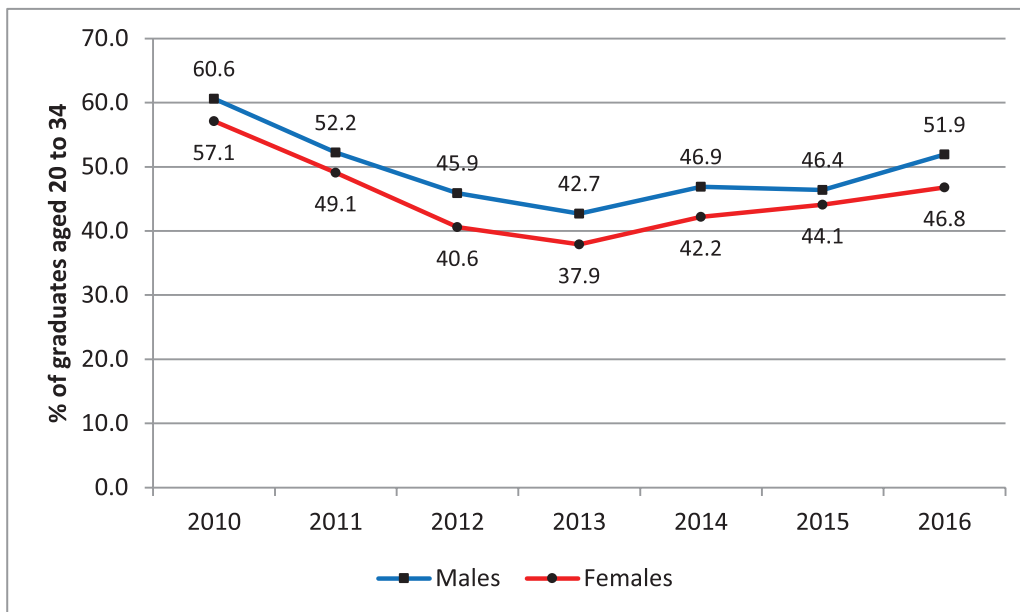


Table 8: Employment rates of recent graduates aged 20 to 34 years in total and by sex

Year	Total	Males	Females
2010	58.6	60.6	57.1
2011	50.4	52.2	49.1
2012	43.0	45.9	40.6
2013	40.0	42.7	37.9
2014	44.3 <sup>(b)</sup>	46.9 <sup>(b)</sup>	42.2 <sup>(b)</sup>
2015	45.2	46.4	44.1
2016	49.2	51.9	46.8

b: break in time series





## SDG 5: Gender equality Gender employment gap

The indicator measures the difference between the employment rates of men and women aged 20 to 64. The employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of persons aged 20 to 64 in employment by the total population of the same age group. The indicator is based on the EU Labour Force Survey.

Figure 9: Gender Employment Gap - Difference between employees and employment rates of men and women aged 20 to 64

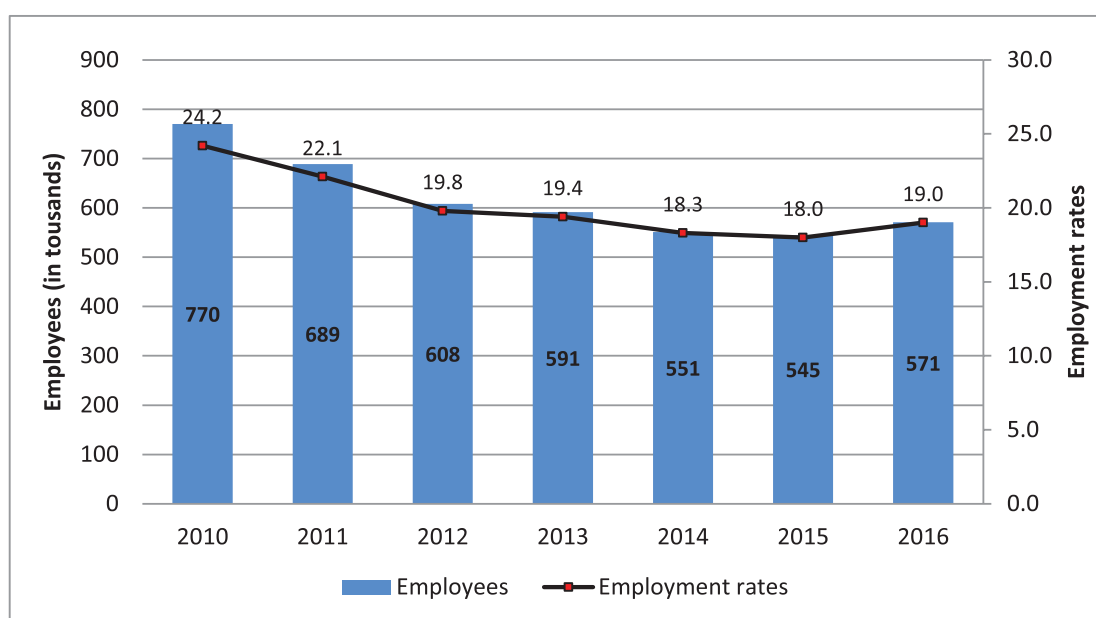


Table 9: Number of employees and employment rates of men and women aged 20 to 64

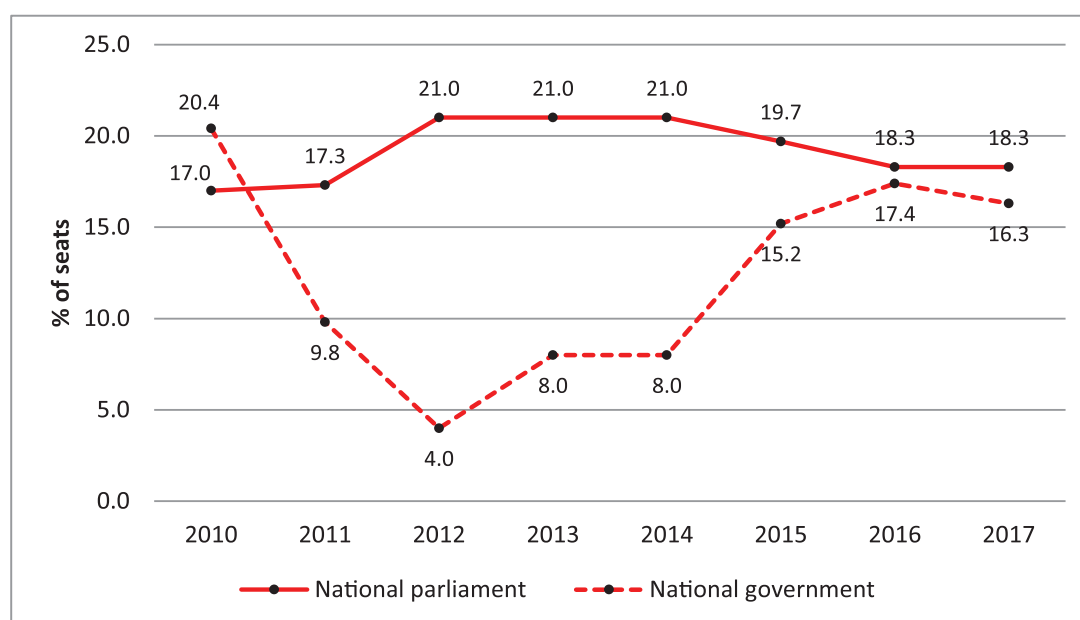
Year	Employees (in thousands)			Employment rates		
	Males	Females	Difference	Males	Females	Difference
2010	2,525	1,755	770	76.0	51.8	24.2
2011	2,325	1,636	689	70.8	48.7	22.1
2012	2,114	1,506	608	65.0	45.2	19.8
2013	2,019	1,428	591	62.7	43.3	19.4
2014	2,008	1,457	551	62.6	44.3	18.3
2015	2,041	1,496	545	64.0	46.0	18.0
2016	2,084	1,513	571	65.8	46.8	19.0

### Seats held by women in national parliament and government (source: EIGE)

The indicator measures the proportion of women in national parliaments and national governments. The national parliament is the national legislative assembly and the indicator refers to both chambers (lower house and an upper house, where relevant). The count of members of a parliament includes the president/speaker/leader of the parliament.

The national government is the executive body with authority to govern a country or a state. Members of government include both senior ministers (having a seat in the cabinet or council of ministers, including the prime minister) and junior ministers (not having a seat in the cabinet). In some countries state-secretaries (or the national equivalent) are considered as junior ministers within the government (with no seat in the cabinet) but in other countries they are not considered as members of the government.

Figure 10: Percentage (%) of seats held by women in national parliament and national government



Source: EIGE

Table 10: Percentage of seats held by women in national parliament and national government

Year	National parliament	National government
2010	17.0	20.4
2011	17.3	9.8
2012	21.0	4.0
2013	21.0	8.0
2014	21.0	8.0
2015	19.7	15.2
2016	18.3	17.4
2017	18.3	16.3

### Positions held by women in senior management positions (source: EIGE)

The indicator measures the share of female board members in the largest publicly listed companies. Publicly listed means that the shares of the company are traded on the stock exchange. The 'largest' companies are taken to be the members (max. 50) of the primary blue-chip index, which is an index maintained by the stock exchange and covers the largest companies by market capitalisation and/or market trades. Only companies which are registered in the country concerned are counted. Board members cover all members of the highest decision-making body in each company (i.e. chairperson, non-executive directors, senior executives and employee representatives, where present). The highest decision-making body is usually termed the supervisory board (in case of a two-tier governance system) or the board of directors (in a unitary system).

Figure 11: Percentage (%) of women in senior management positions

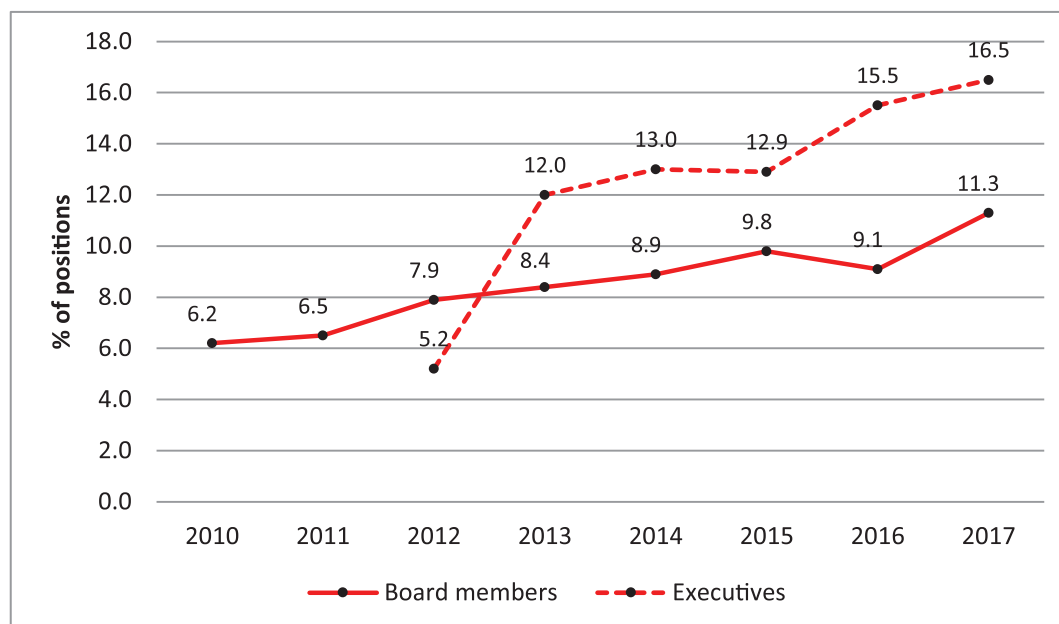


Table 11: Percentage of women in senior management positions

Year	Board members	Executives
2010	6.2	N/A
2011	6.5	N/A
2012	7.9	5.2
2013	8.4	12
2014	8.9	13
2015	9.8	12.9
2016	9.1	15.5
2017	11.3	16.5



## SDG 6:

**Clean water and sanitation**

Total population having neither a bath, nor a shower, nor indoor flushing toilet in their household

(This indicator is also included in SDG 1: No Poverty)

The indicator measures the share of total population having neither a bath, nor a shower, nor an indoor flushing toilet in their household.

Figure 12: Percentage (%) of people having neither a bath, nor a shower, not indoor flushing toilet in their households by income situation in relation to the risk of poverty threshold

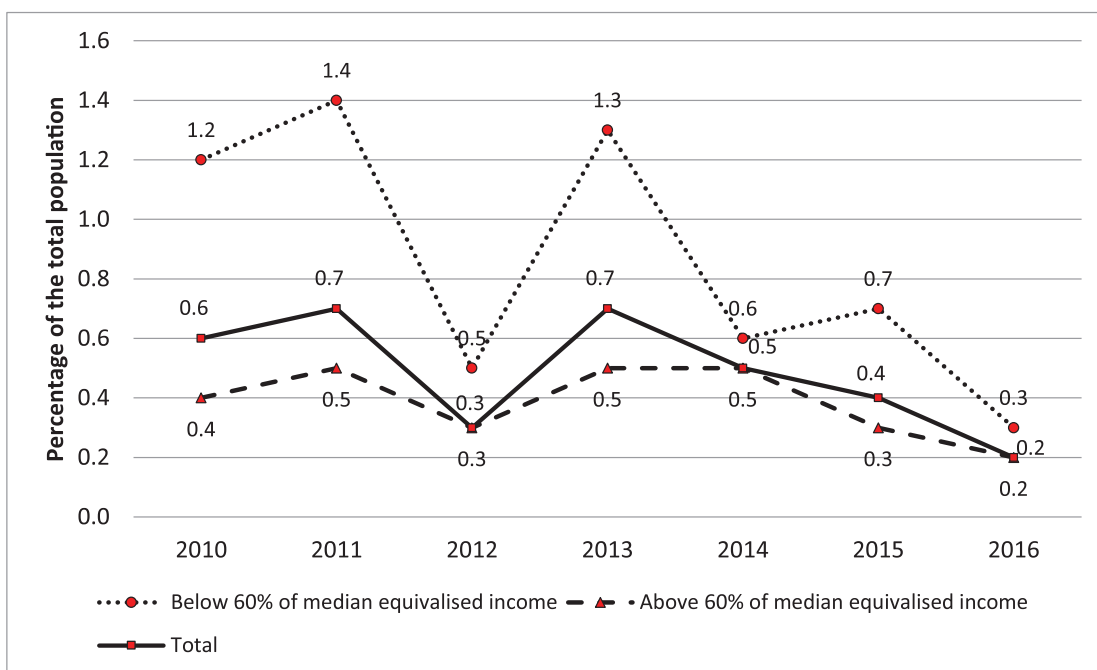


Table 12: Percentage of people having neither a bath, nor a shower, not indoor flushing toilet in their households by income situation in relation to the risk of poverty threshold and sex

Year	Below 60% of median equivalised income	Above 60% of median equivalised income	Total
2010	1.2	0.4	0.6
2011	1.4	0.5	0.7
2012	0.5	0.3	0.3
2013	1.3	0.5	0.7
2014	0.6	0.5	0.5
2015	0.7	0.3	0.4
2016	0.3	0.2	0.2



## SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy

### Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption by sector

The indicator measures the share of renewable energy consumption in gross final energy consumption according to the Renewable Energy Directive. The gross final energy consumption is the energy used by end-consumers (final energy consumption) plus grid losses and self-consumption of power plants.

Figure 13: Percentage of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption

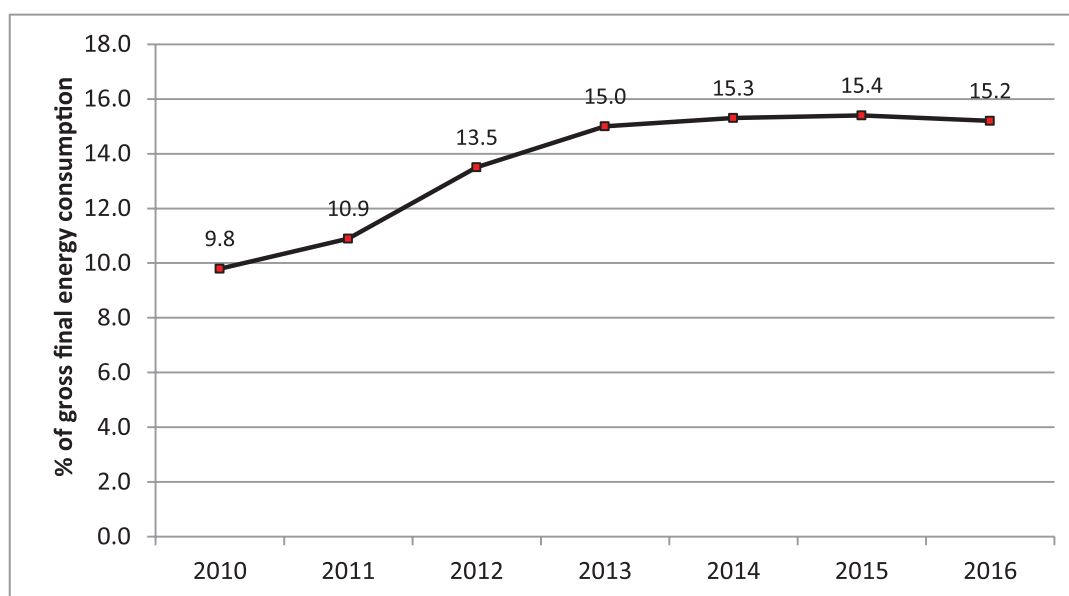


Table13: Percentage of renewable energy by energy indicator

Year	Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption	Share of renewable energy in transport	Share of renewable energy in electricity	Share of renewable energy in heating and cooling
2010	9.8	1.9	12.3	17.9
2011	10.9	0.6	13.8	19.4
2012	13.5	0.9	16.4	23.4
2013	15	1	21.2	26.5
2014	15.3	1.3	21.9	26.9
2015	15.4	1.4	22.1	25.6
2016	15.2 <sup>(e)</sup>	1.4 <sup>(e)</sup>	23.8 <sup>(e)</sup>	24.5 <sup>(e)</sup>

e: estimation

### Greenhouse gas emissions intensity of energy consumption (source: EEA and Eurostat)

(This indicator is also included in SDG 13: Climate change)

The indicator is calculated as the ratio between energy-related GHG emissions and gross inland consumption of energy. It expresses how many tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents of energy-related GHGs are being emitted in a certain economy per unit of energy that is being consumed. The data on energy emissions are being sourced from the GHG emissions reported to the UNFCCC.

Figure 14: Index of greenhouse gas emission intensity of energy consumption

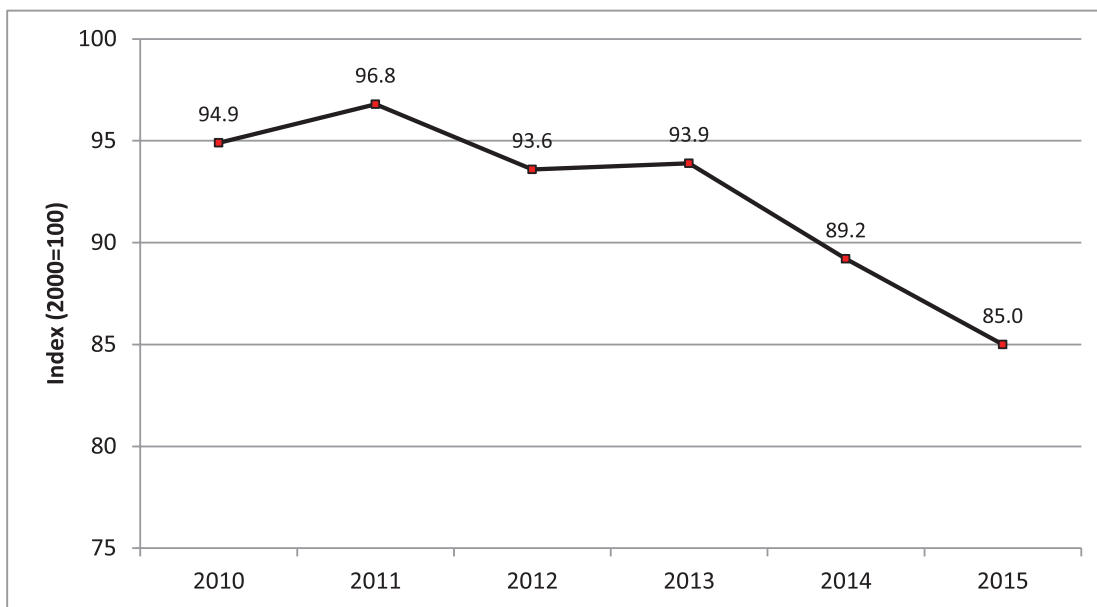
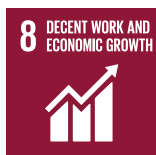


Table 14: Index of greenhouse gas emission intensity of energy consumption

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Greenhouse gas emissions intensity of energy consumption (source: EEA and Eurostat)	94.9	96.8	93.6	93.9	89.2	85.0



**SDG 8:**  
**Decent work and economic growth**  
 Real GDP per capita

The indicator is calculated as the ratio of real GDP to the average population of a specific year. GDP measures the value of total final output of goods and services produced by an economy within a certain period of time. It includes goods and services that have markets (or which could have markets) and products which are produced by general government and non-profit institutions.

It is a measure of economic activity and is commonly used as a proxy for the development in a country's material living standards. However, it is not a complete measure of economic welfare. For example, GDP does not include most unpaid household work. Neither does GDP take account of negative effects of economic activity, like environmental degradation.

Figure 15: Real GDP in euro per inhabitant

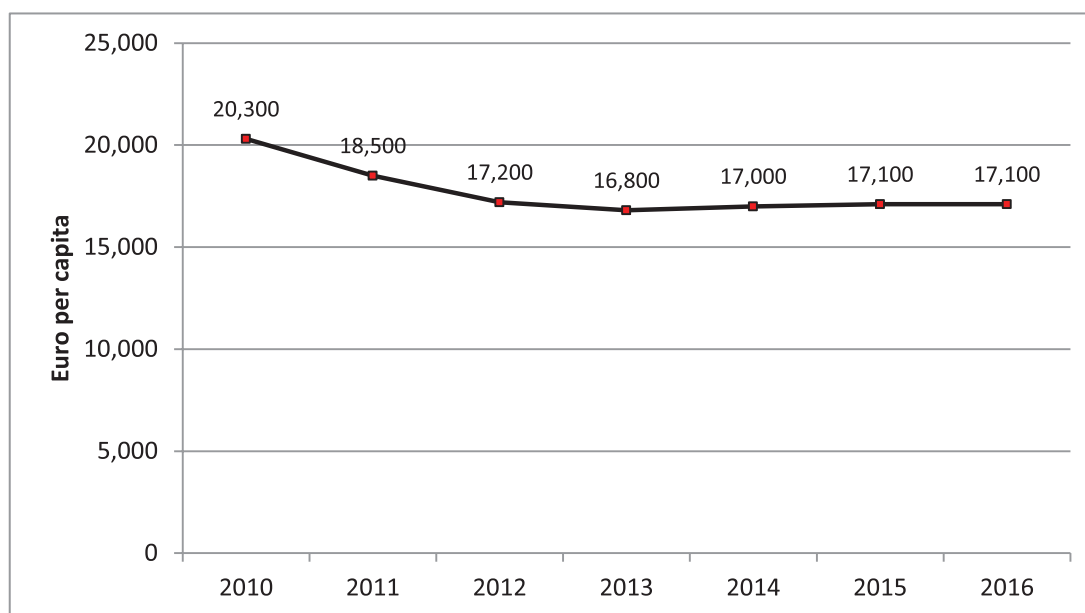


Table 15: Real GDP in euro per inhabitant

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Real GDP euro per capita	20,300	18,500	17,200	16,800	17,000	17,100	17,100



### Employment rate by sex

The indicator measures the share of the population aged 20 to 64 which is employed. Employed persons are defined as all persons who, during a reference week, worked at least one hour for pay or profit or were temporarily absent from such work.

The indicator is part of the adjusted, break-corrected main indicators series and should not be compared with the annual and quarterly non-adjusted series, which have slightly different results.

Figure 16: Employment rate of the population aged 20 to 64 years by sex

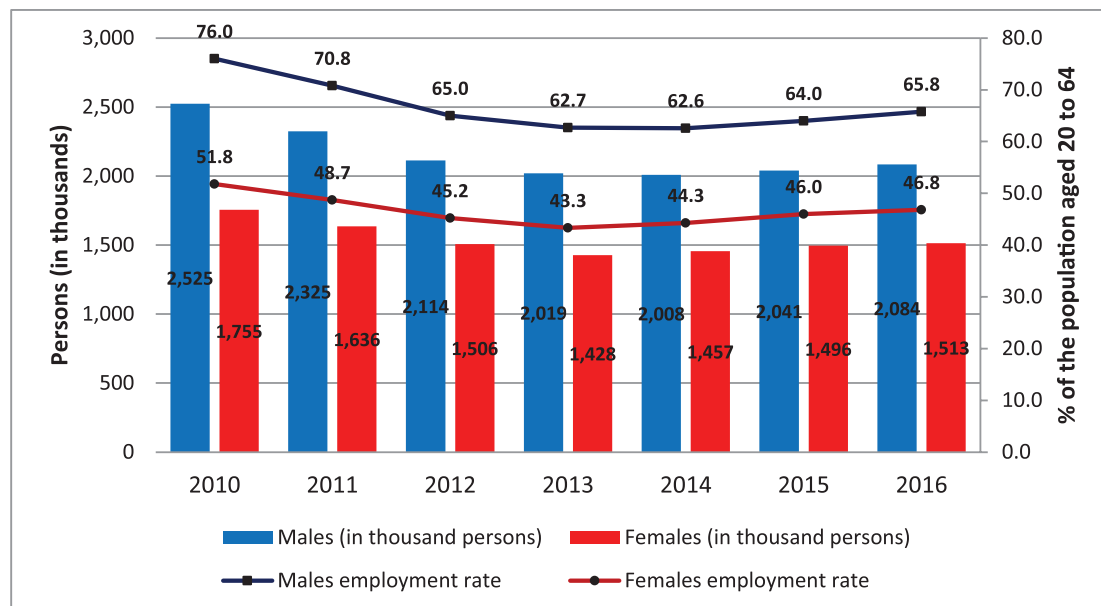


Table 16: Employment rate of the population ages 20 to 64 in total and by sex

Year	Total		Males		Females	
	Thousand persons	Employment rate	Thousand persons	Employment rate	Thousand persons	Employment rate
2010	4,280	63.8	2,525	76.0	1,755	51.8
2011	3,960	59.6	2,325	70.8	1,636	48.7
2012	3,620	55.0	2,114	65.0	1,506	45.2
2013	3,447	52.9	2,019	62.7	1,428	43.3
2014	3,465	53.3	2,008	62.6	1,457	44.3
2015	3,536	54.9	2,041	64.0	1,496	46.0
2016	3,597	56.2	2,084	65.8	1,513	46.8

### Long-term unemployment rate by sex

The indicator measures the share of the economically active population aged 15 to 74 who has been unemployed for 12 months or more.

Unemployed persons are defined as all persons who were without work during the reference week, were currently available for work and were either actively seeking work in the last four weeks or had already found a job to start within the next three months. The unemployment period is defined as the duration of a job search, or as the length of time since the last job was held (if shorter than the time spent on a job search).

The economically active population comprises employed and unemployed persons. The indicator is part of the adjusted, break-corrected main indicators series and should not be compared with the annual and quarterly non-adjusted series, which have slightly different results.

Figure 17: Long term unemployment rate of the active population by sex

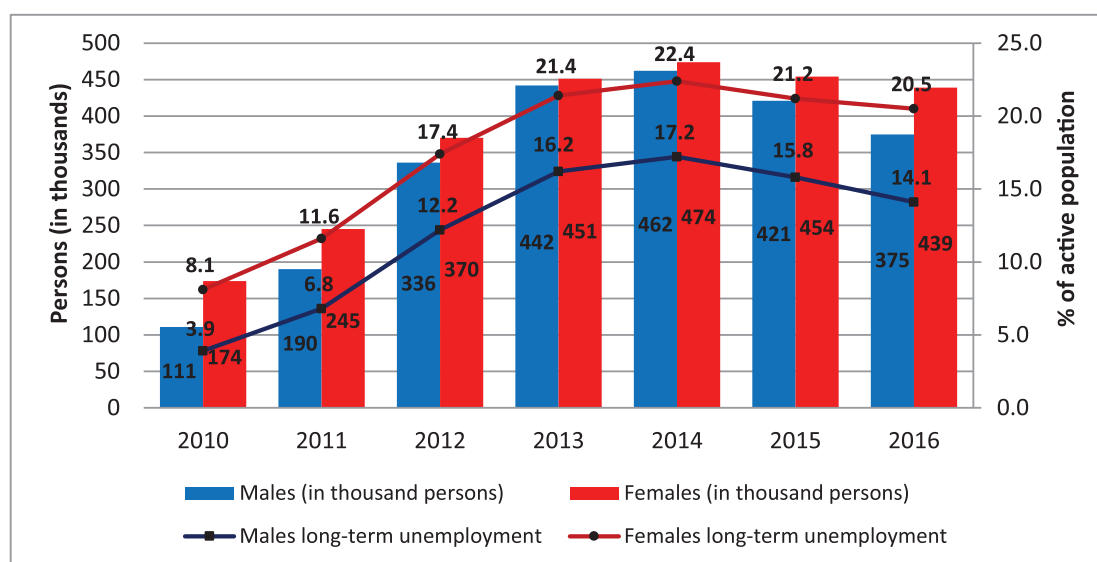


Table 17: Long-term unemployment of the active population in total and by sex

Year	Total		Males		Females	
	Thousand persons	Long-term unemployment	Thousand persons	Long-term unemployment	Thousand persons	Long-term unemployment
2010	285	5.7	111	3.9	174	8.1
2011	435	8.8	190	6.8	245	11.6
2012	706	14.5	336	12.2	370	17.4
2013	893	18.5	442	16.2	451	21.4
2014	937	19.5	462	17.2	474	22.4
2015	875	18.2	421	15.8	454	21.2
2016	814	17	375	14.1	439	20.5

### Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex

(This indicator is also included in SDG 4: Quality education)

The indicator measures the share of the population aged 15 to 29 who is not employed and not involved in education or training. The numerator of the indicator refers to persons who meet the following two conditions: (a) they are not employed (i.e. unemployed or inactive according to the International Labour Organisation definition) and (b) they have not received any education or training (i.e. neither formal nor non-formal) in the four weeks preceding the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The denominator includes the total population aged 15 to 29 (excluding those who did not answer the questions on 'participation in regular (formal) education

Figure 18: Percentage of population aged 15 to 29 years neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) by sex

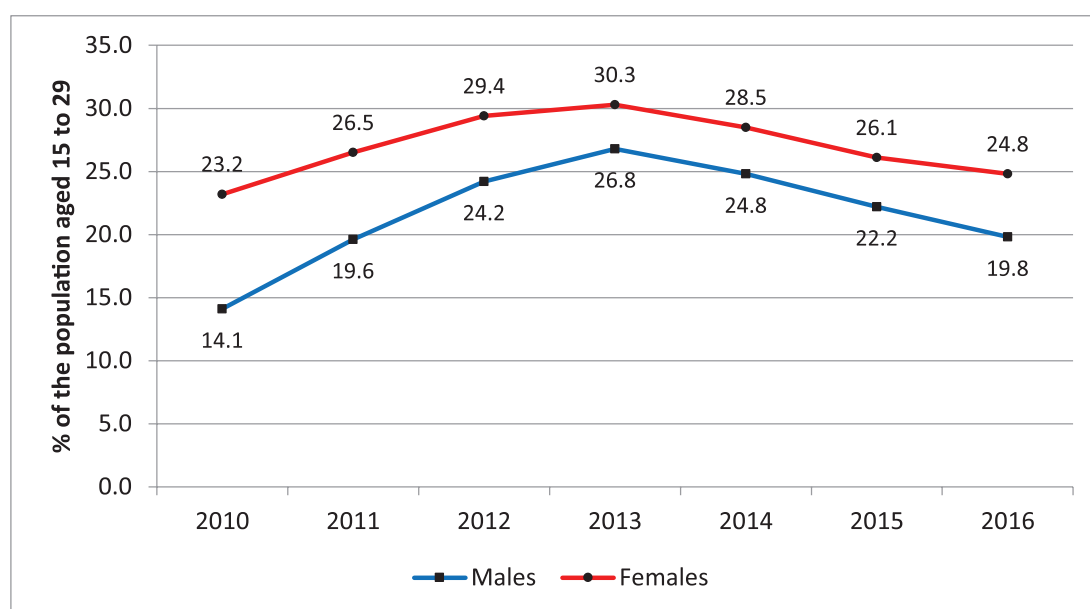


Table 18: Percentage of population aged 15 to 29 years neither in employment nor in education and training in total and by sex

Year	Total	Males	Females
2010	18.6	14.1	23.2
2011	23.0	19.6	26.5
2012	26.8	24.2	29.4
2013	28.5	26.8	30.3
2014	26.7	24.8	28.5
2015	24.1	22.2	26.1
2016	22.2	19.8	24.8





## SDG 10:

**Reduced inequalities**

Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income - coefficient of 0 (maximal equality) to 100 (maximal inequality)

The indicator measures the extent to which the distribution of income among individuals or households within a society deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. It ranges from 0 to 100, where 0 represents perfect equality (everyone has the same income) and 100 represents maximum inequality (all income is accrued by a single household).

Figure 20: Gini Coefficient of Equivalised Disposable Income

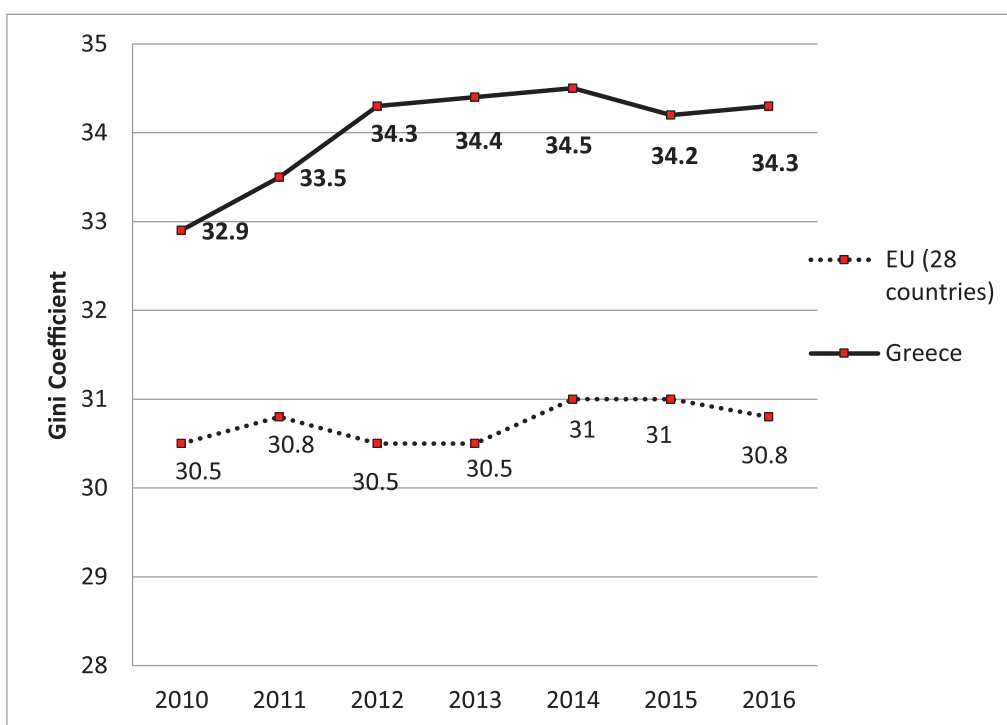


Table 20: Gini Coefficient of Equivalised Disposable Income

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Greece</b>	32.9	33.5	34.3	34.4	34.5	34.2	34.3
<b>EU (28 Countries)</b>	30.5	30.8	30.5	30.5	31.0	31.0	30.8

### Asylum applications by state of procedure - number per million inhabitants

The indicator shows the number of first-time asylum applicants per million inhabitants and the number of positive first instance decisions per million inhabitants. Please note that caution is required when comparing these two values, since applications received in a given year might not be processed until a later year. Source data are supplied to Eurostat by the national Ministries of Interior and related official agencies.

A first-time applicant for international protection is a person who lodged an application for asylum for the first time in a given Member State.

First instance decisions are decisions granted by the respective authority acting as a first instance of the administrative/judicial asylum procedure in the receiving country.

Figure 21: Asylum applications by state of procedure

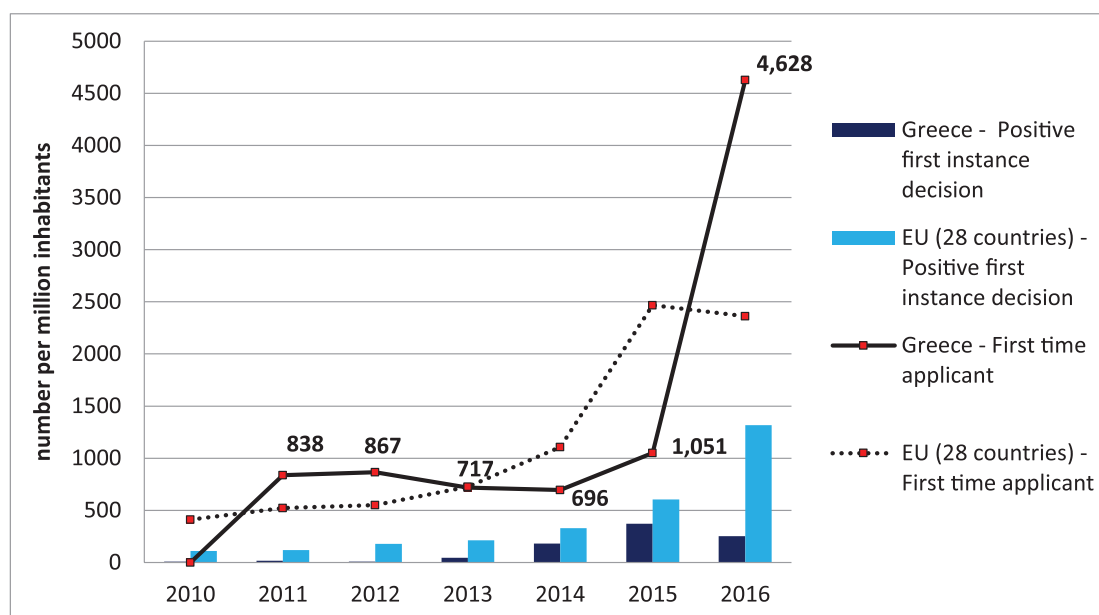


Table 21: Asylum applications by state of procedure - number per million inhabitants

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Greece – First time applicants</b>	-	838	867	717	696	1,051	4,628
<b>Greece - Positive first instance decision</b>	9	16	9	46	181	372	252
<b>EU (28 countries) - First time applicant</b>	411	523	551	727	1,108	2,468	2,361
<b>EU (28 countries) - Positive first instance decision</b>	110	118	180	213	330	604	1,317



## SDG 11:

**Sustainable cities and communities**

## Overcrowding rate by poverty status

(This indicator is also included in SDG 1: No Poverty)

The indicator measures the share of people living in overcrowded conditions in the EU. A person is considered to be living in an overcrowded household if the house does not have at least one room for the entire household as well as a room for a couple, for each single person above 18, for a pair of teenagers (12 to 17 years of age) of the same sex, for each teenager of different sex and for a pair of children (under 12 years of age).

Figure 22: Percentage (%) of people living in overcrowded household by income situation in relation to the risk of poverty threshold

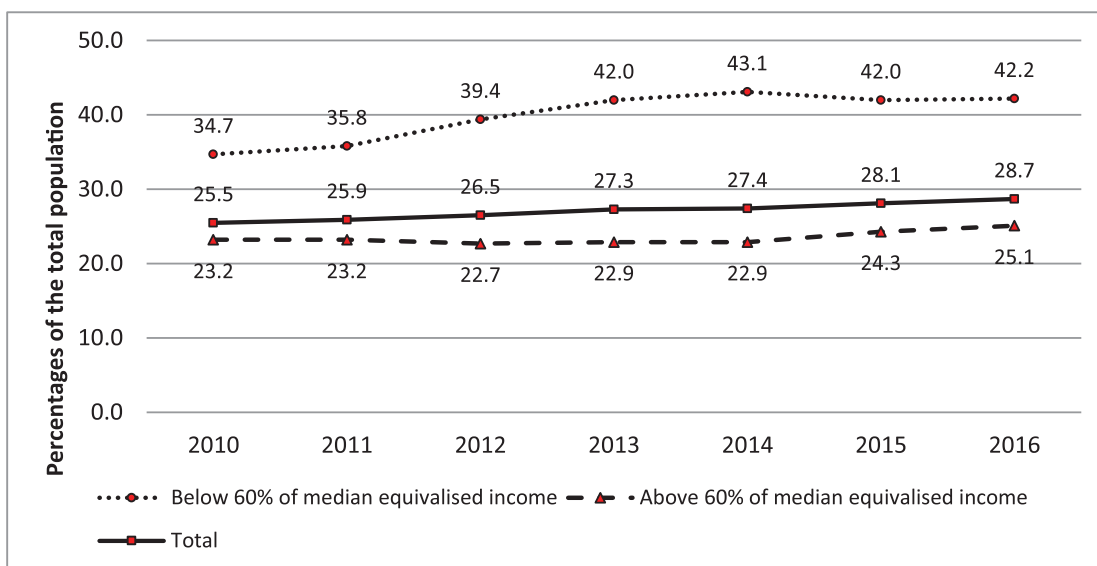


Table 22: Percentage of people living in overcrowded household by income situation in relation to the risk of poverty threshold and sex

Year	Total			Males			Females		
	Below 60% of median equivalised income	Above 60% of median equivalised income	Total	Below 60% of median equivalised income	Above 60% of median equivalised income	Total	Below 60% of median equivalised income	Above 60% of median equivalised income	Total
2010	34.7	23.2	25.5	35.8	23.9	26.2	33.6	22.5	24.8
2011	35.8	23.2	25.9	36.2	23.7	26.3	35.4	22.7	25.4
2012	39.4	22.7	26.5	38.7	23.4	26.8	40.1	22	26.3
2013	42	22.9	27.3	42.8	23.2	27.6	41.3	22.6	27
2014	43.1	22.9	27.4	43	23.4	27.8	43.2	22.4	27
2015	42	24.3	28.1	43	24.7	28.6	41.1	24	27.6
2016	42.2	25.1	28.7	42.8	25.6	29.3	41.6	24.5	28.1





## SDG 12:

**Responsible consumption and production****Consumption of toxic chemicals by hazardousness – CO<sub>2</sub> per km**

The indicator is defined as the average carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions per km by new passenger cars in a given year. The reported emissions are based on type-approval and can deviate from the actual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of new cars.

Figure 23: Consumption of toxic chemicals by hazardousness – CO<sub>2</sub> per km

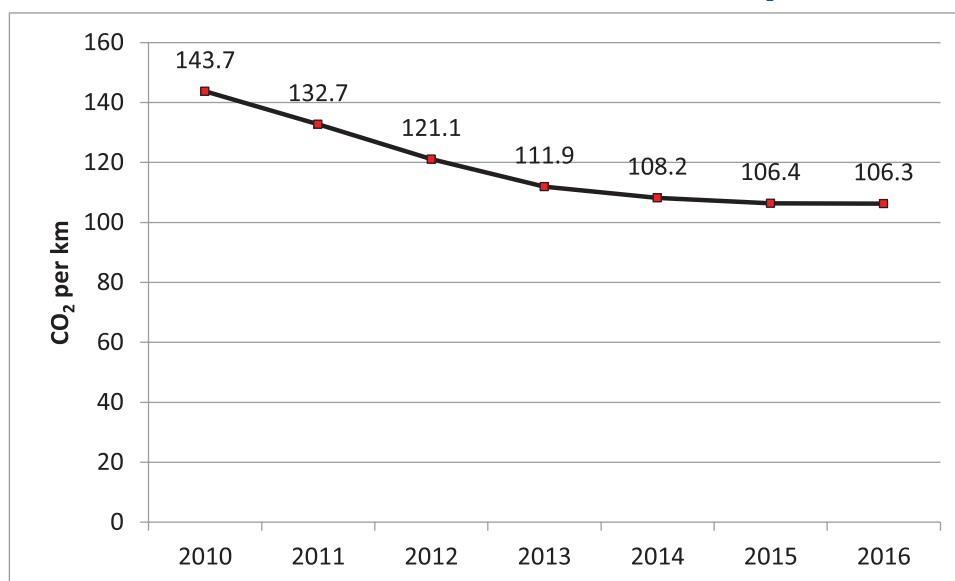


Table 23: Average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per km from new passenger cars – CO<sub>2</sub> per km

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
CO <sub>2</sub> per km	143.7	132.7	121.1	111.9	108.2	106.4	106.3



**SDG 13:**  
**Climate change**  
 Greenhouse gas emissions (source: EEA)

The indicator measures all man-made emissions of the so called ‘Kyoto basket’ of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and the so-called F-gases (hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, nitrogen trifluoride (NF<sub>3</sub>) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>)). Using each gas’ individual global warming potential (GWP), they are being integrated into a single indicator expressed in units of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents. Emissions data are submitted annually by the EU Member States as part of the reporting under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Figure 24: Exposure to air pollution by particulate matter (1990=100)

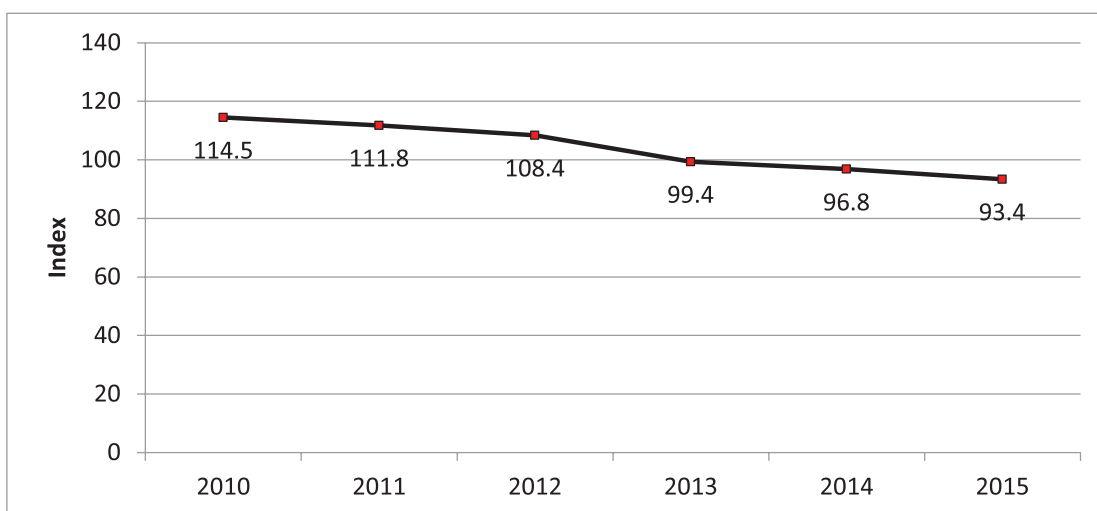


Table 24: Greenhouse gas emissions - index, 1990=100

Year	Deposit onto or into land
2010	114.5
2011	111.8
2012	108.4
2013	99.4
2014	96.8
2015	93.4



## SDG 14:

**Life below water**

## Sufficiency of marine sites designated under the EU Habitats directive

(source: EC services and EEA)

The indicator measures the extent to which Sites of Community Importance proposed by the Member States adequately cover the species and habitats listed in Annexes I and II to the Habitats Directive. 100% indicates sufficiency of proposals for all Annex I terrestrial habitat types and Annex II terrestrial species of Community Interest occurring in Member States' territories.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 25: Sufficiency of marine sites designated under the EU Habitats directive

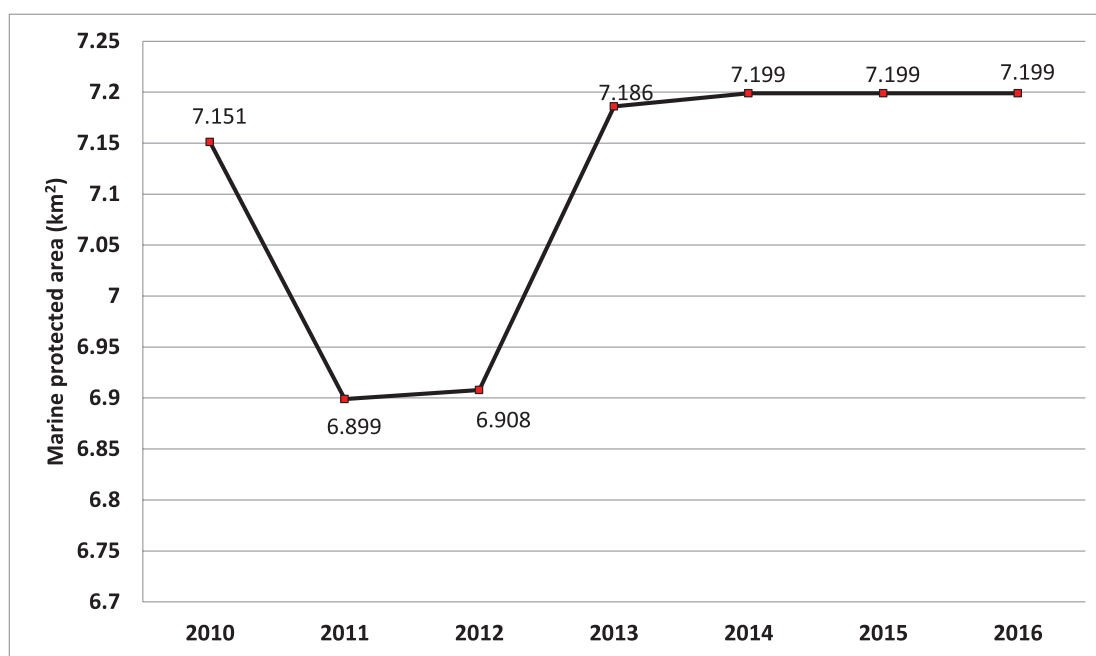


Table 25: Sufficiency of marine sites designated under the EU Habitats directive

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Marine protected area (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>	7,151	6,899	6,908	7,186	7,199	7,199	7,199

6. For updated data see p. 67.

### Bathing sites with excellent water quality by locality

The indicator is assessed according to standards for microbiological parameters (intestinal enterococci and Escherichia coli). The new Bathing Water Directive requires Member States to identify and assess the quality of all inland and marine bathing waters and to classify these waters as 'poor', 'sufficient', 'good' or 'excellent'.

Figure 26: Bathing sites with excellent water quality by locality



Table 26: Bathing sites with excellent water quality by locality - % of bathing sites

Year	Seawater number	Seawater excellent number	Seawater excellent - %
2015	1.540	1.497	97.20
2016	1.540	1.495	97.08



## SDG 15: Life on Land

### Sufficiency of terrestrial sites designated under the EU Habitats Directive

The indicator measures the degree to which the EU Habitats Directive has been implemented in terms of areas covered and numbers of species under protection. This measure is obtained by the terrestrial sufficiency index, which expresses by each member state, the share of species and habitats listed in the Directive for which the European Commission considers the national network of terrestrial Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) to be sufficient in terms of number, extent, distribution and representativeness.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 27: Sufficiency of terrestrial sites designated under the EU Habitats Directive

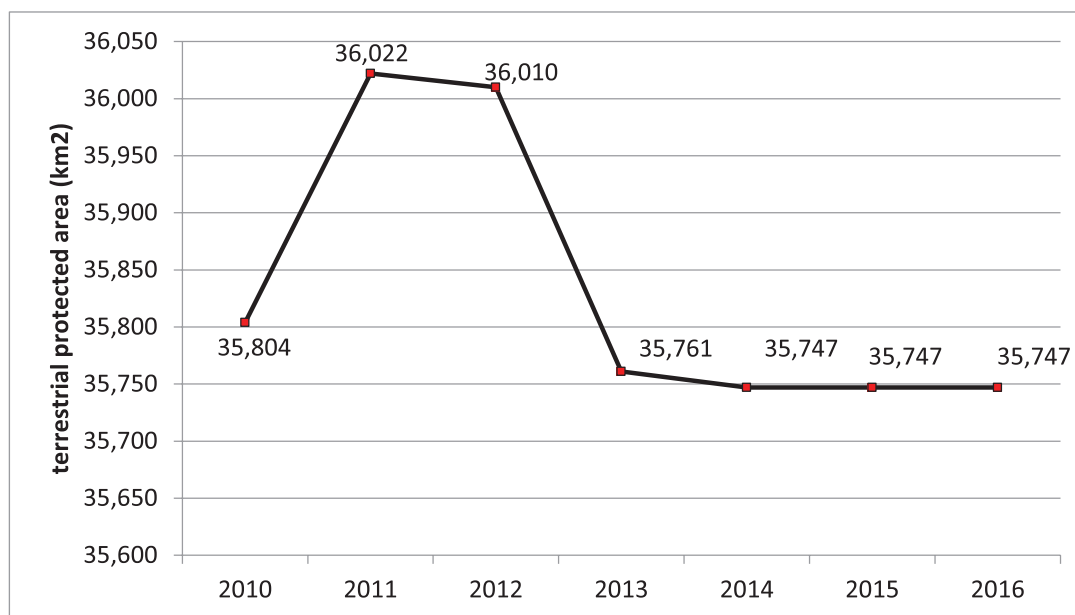


Table 27: Sufficiency of terrestrial sites designated under the EU Habitats Directive - Terrestrial protected area (km<sup>2</sup>)

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Terrestrial protected area (km <sup>2</sup> )	35,804	36,022	36,010	35,761	35,747	35,747	35,747

7. For updated data see p. 67.

### Share of Forest Area

The indicator measures the proportion of forest ecosystems in comparison to the total land area. The data used for this indicator derives from the Land Use and Cover Area frame Survey (LUCAS) and they have been mapped to the FAO definitions, distinguishing between the categories 'forests' and 'other wooded land'.

LUCAS surveys are carried out in-situ, this means that observations are made and registered on the ground by field surveyors. A mixed panel approach is used, so some points are visited in subsequent years. In the field, the surveyor classifies the land cover and the visible land use according to the harmonized LUCAS Survey land cover and land use classifications.

**Table 28: Share of forest area**

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Forest and other wooded land FAO</b>	40.4	44.5
<b>Forest FAO</b>	28.4	31.1
<b>Other wooded land FAO</b>	12.0	13.4



## SDG 16:

**Peace, justice and strong institutions****Population reporting occurrence of crime, violence or vandalism in their area by poverty status**

The indicator shows the share of the population who reported that they face the problem of crime, violence or vandalism in their local area. This describes the situation where the respondent feels crime, violence or vandalism in the area to be a problem for the household, although this perception is not necessarily based on personal experience.

Figure 29: Population reporting occurrence of crime, violence or vandalism in their area by poverty status

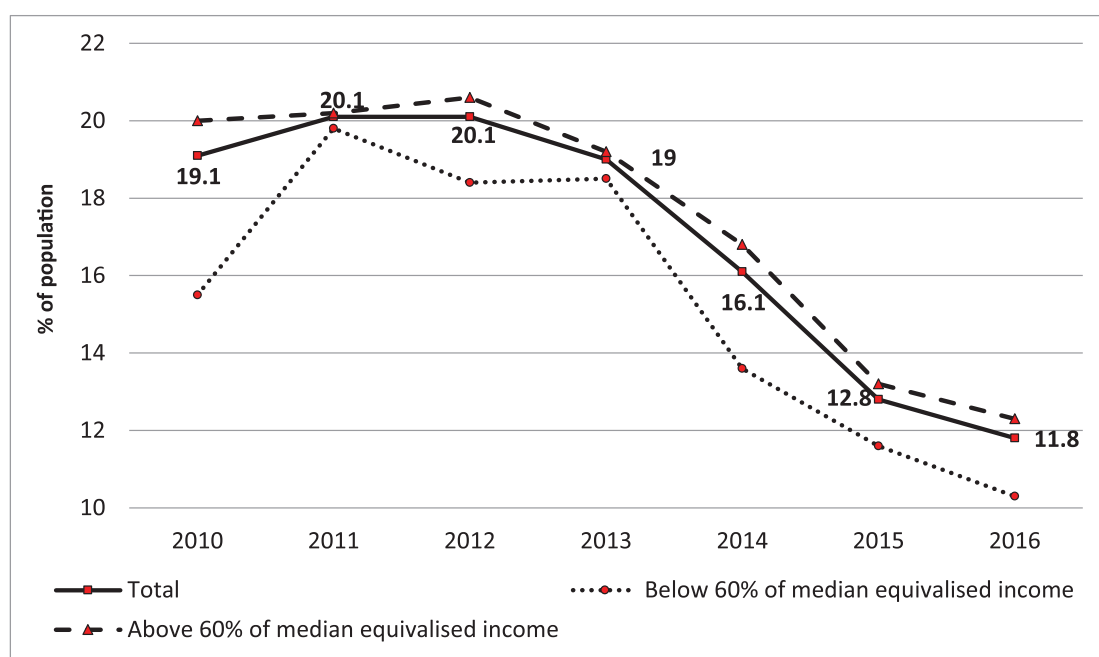


Table 29: Population reporting occurrence of crime, violence or vandalism in their area by poverty status - % of population

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>11.8</b>
<b>Below 60% of median equivalised income</b>	15.5	19.8	18.4	18.5	13.6	11.6	10.3
<b>Above 60% of median equivalised income</b>	20	20.2	20.6	19.2	16.8	13.2	12.3



### Corruption Perceptions Index

The indicator is a composite index based on a combination of surveys and assessments of corruption from 13 different sources and scores and ranks countries based on how corrupt a country's public sector is perceived to be, with a score of 0 representing a very high level of corruption and a score of 100 representing a very clean country. The sources of information used for the 2017 CPI are based on data gathered in the 24 months preceding the publication of the index. The CPI includes only sources that provide a score for a set of countries/territories and that measure perceptions of corruption in the public sector. For a country/territory to be included in the ranking, it must be included in a minimum of three of the CPI's data sources. The CPI is published by Transparency International.

Figure 30: Corruption Perceptions Index (source: Transparency International) - score scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean)

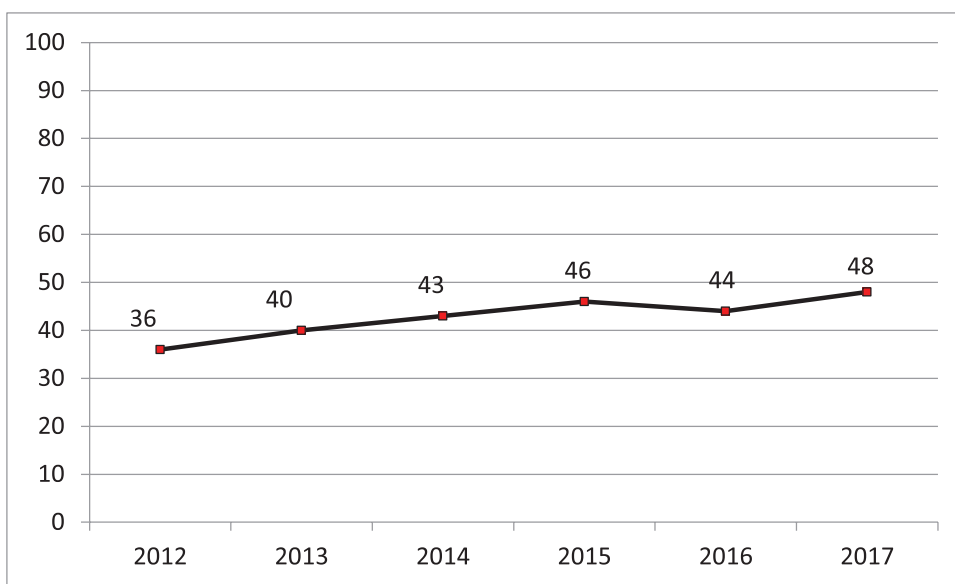


Table 30: Corruption Perceptions Index (source: Transparency International) - score scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean)

Year	C.P.I.
2012	36
2013	40
2014	43
2015	46
2016	44
2017	48



## SDG 17:

**Partnership for the goals**

Official development assistance as share of gross national income (source: OECD) - % of gross national income (GNI)

Official development assistance (ODA) consists of grants or loans that are undertaken by the official sector with the objective of promoting economic development and welfare in recipient countries. Disbursements record the actual international transfer of financial resources, or of goods or services valued at the cost of the donor. ODA is here presented as a share of Gross National Income (GNI). GNI at market prices equals Gross Domestic Product (GDP) minus primary income payable by resident units to non-resident units, plus primary income receivable by resident units from the rest of the world. The list of countries and territories eligible to receive ODA is determined by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee.

Figure 31: Official development assistance as share of gross national income (source: OECD)

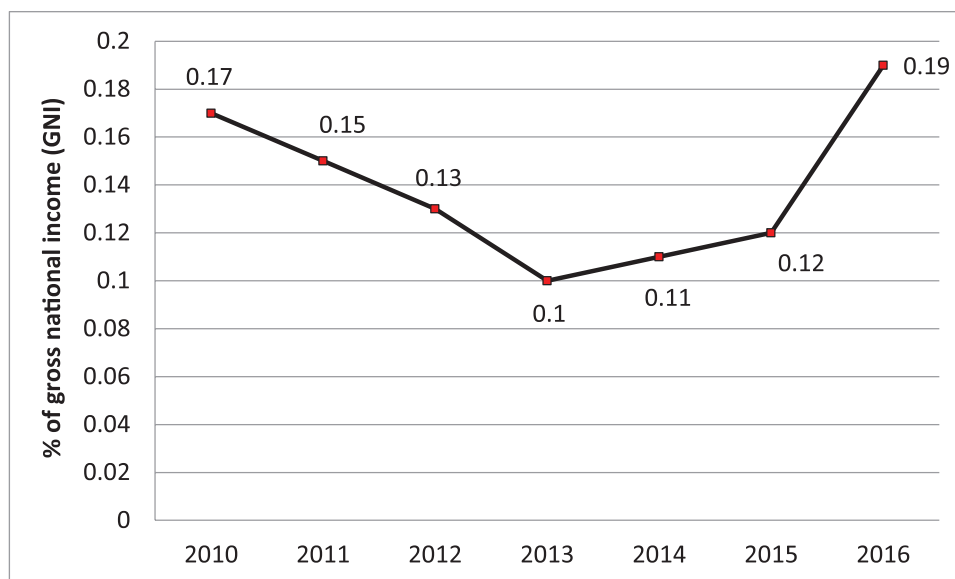


Table 31: Official development assistance as share of gross national income (source: OECD) - % of gross national income (GNI)

Year	O.D.A.
2010	0.17
2011	0.15
2012	0.13
2013	0.10
2014	0.11
2015	0.12





