



GREECE - Voluntary National Review 2022

Main Messages

The **VNR process** was led by a designated Working Group set up in 2021 within the Presidency of the Government, in close cooperation and consultation with all ministries, the Hellenic Statistical Authority and key stakeholders, including the Hellenic Parliament, regional/local authorities, social partners, civil society, guided by a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Over the last years, **stakeholders** from a wide range of sectors have increasingly mainstreamed the sustainability principle and the SDGs into their strategic priorities, objectives and actions.

Greece's second VNR reflects **challenges and strategies** related to three crises: the aftermath of a ten-year national depression, with persisting economic and social issues, the consecutive COVID-19 pandemic which put a significant strain on the national health system and the economy and, before this is over, the repercussions of a war outbreak within the European continent causing deep global concern.

In spite of the adversities, Greece remains fully committed to the Agenda 2030. The 17 Goals are embedded in all its major binding political plans. Compact strategies are launched, policies are elaborated and institutional reforms are designed to accelerate the full implementation of the SDGs and to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic. Greece is also reported as one of only two countries in the European Union (EU) that managed to not move away from any of the 17 Goals (2021).

SDG implementation in Greece was affected by the pandemic, albeit not invariably: plans to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of health services were negatively influenced, policies for clean energy advanced mostly undeterred and digitalization of public services was largely accelerated.

Systemic **challenges** escalating for decades are not favored by the crises. Of particular concern are weak demographic rates, higher female and youth unemployment and a low record on gender equality. Moreover, the pandemic brought out long overdue reforms in the health sector; the justice and waste management systems have exceeded their operations limit causing complications to the society, economy and environment.

Several long-standing challenges are showing significant **progress**; inter alia, poverty, unemployment, poor housing, sanitation, income disparities, early school-leaving, female participation in senior management, share of RES in energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, road accident fatalities and homicides.

In 2020, the EU member states agreed on an ambitious comprehensive plan to **build back better** from the pandemic and to make European societies and economies more sustainable, inclusive and resilient. This overarching plan is supported by a temporary recovery instrument, the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility.

The Greek Recovery and Resilience Plan coherently introduces forward-looking reforms and investments aimed at accelerating transition towards a sustainable growth model and fostering its economic, social and institutional resilience. It is financially supported by a budget of EUR 31.164 billion up to 2026 and structured around four key pillars inextricably linked to the core priorities of the SDGs, including: (i) green transition, (ii) digital transition, (iii) employment, skills and social cohesion, and (iv) private investment and economic and



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institutional transformation. All SDGs are considerably served by the national Plan, though emphasis is reasonably placed on healthcare sustainability and economic productivity, which increasingly emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Greece has also integrated the sustainability principle and the SDGs into the better regulation agenda, the national budgetary process and the overall financing framework for sustainable development.

Attributing particular importance to the protection and support of the disadvantaged, the Government over the last two years has endorsed a number of National Action Plans (NAPs) and Strategies that mainstream the principle of **leaving no one behind** in public policies and reform measures. For the first time, NAPs for youth, children's rights, child protection from sexual abuse, the rights of people with disability and those of the LGBTQI+ were launched, along with updated strategies for gender equality and Roma.

At **international and regional levels**, the country continues to play an instrumental role in promoting initiatives supporting the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, through the establishment of partnership schemes, the adoption of comprehensive legal and policy tools and the launch of cooperative initiatives, in the fields of trade and investments, development, environmental protection, sustainable use of natural resources, cultural and natural heritage, peace, security, human rights and the rule of law.