

# **Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**Mr Socrates Fanellos**

**Alternate Minister of Environment and Energy, Greece**

## **I. Introduction**

Greece is strongly committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs, as they provide an ambitious and transformative framework for a new, fair and sustainable development path, which ensures a balance between economic growth, social cohesion and justice as well as protection of the environment and of the country's unique ecological wealth.

Ensuring that "no one is left behind" is a high political priority for Greece, which is now exiting a period of prolonged economic crisis.

As detailed in the country's VNR Report, the unprecedented economic crisis forced a focus towards economic policies that often create divergence, rather than contributing to achieving sustainable development.

Greece's utmost objective is to reap the full benefits that the SDGs provide in order to reframe the country's development perspectives from an "SDGs lens", for present and for future generations.

The country's first Sustainable Development Strategy dates back to 2002; however it is now that Greece has adopted a truly strategic approach ensuring political ownership at the highest political level. For building a robust long-lasting institutional mechanism to coordinate national efforts for achieving the SDGs, Greece has successfully endorsed (i) a "whole-of-government" approach, with an active operational Inter-Ministerial Coordination Network, steered by the General Secretariat of the Government, and (ii) a "whole-of-society" approach with a strong stakeholder engagement in the stock-taking process, enhancing transparency, partnership and accountability.

Through an open dialogue within all government units and with a wide array of stakeholders, an in-depth mapping exercise has been carried out, in 2017, to define the country's starting point. The exercise resulted in the endorsement of eight National Priorities for adapting the 17 SDGs to national needs and circumstances, also in line with the recently adopted National Growth Strategy:

- Fostering a competitive, innovative and sustainable economic growth
- Promoting full employment and decent work for all
- Addressing poverty and social exclusion, and providing universal access to quality health care services
- Reducing social and regional inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities for all
- Providing high-quality and inclusive education
- Strengthening the protection and sustainable management of natural capital as a base for social prosperity and transition to a low-carbon economy
- Building effective, accountable and transparent institutions
- Enhancing open, participatory, democratic processes and promoting partnerships

Thus, the country had to balance out through measures for equitable growth by improving the business environment and encouraging investments, promoting social and solidarity economy, supporting human capital, research and innovation, and fostering sustainability in sectors such as agriculture, tourism and infrastructure. Engaging youth from all sectors of society, ensures that they get the tools and the opportunity to bring about social and economic changes.

On the social pillar, and with a particular outlook to regional cohesion, policy priorities have been focusing on addressing urgent gaps related to unemployment, particularly for youth and women, responding to the pressing humanitarian needs of the large refugee flows, showing solidarity in the midst of a challenging social and economic context as well as addressing social inequalities and promoting inclusion of immigrants and vulnerable population groups. These have been implemented through a robust social security system, the establishment of a minimum guaranteed income for all, universal access to quality health care services, a reduced social residential electricity tariff, support for “energy communities”, and free access to quality education for everyone at all education levels.

On the environmental pillar, progress has been achieved in all related SDGs. Key national priorities include the shift towards a low carbon circular economy and improvement in waste reduction, reuse and recycle for creating new jobs and increasing resource efficiency. Firmly committed to the Paris Agreement objectives, Greece is already in a good place to meet its national GHG reduction targets earlier than 2030. Successes also include the full application of Integrated Water Resources Management principles considering both social aspects and ecosystem needs, significant increase in RES penetration and progress towards the full digitalization of land-uses (in land and sea), ensuring a high protection status of the country’s ecological wealth.

Building effective, accountable and transparent institutions and enhancing participatory and democratic processes, is pursued in Greece by expanding e-governance tools, fighting corruption, protecting human rights and enhancing strong partnerships within borders, between all stakeholders, and beyond borders.

**II. Protection and sustainable management of natural capital as a base for social prosperity and transition to a low-carbon circular economy - Analysis on the 5 SDGs under in-depth thematic review this year**

#### **SDG 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

endorsement of a National Action Plan on Circular Economy in April 2018

improvement in waste reduction, reuse and recycle for creating new jobs and increasing resource efficiency

application of a hierarchy approach in waste management

"closing the loop" of product life-cycles

supporting circular entrepreneurship by promoting “industrial symbiosis” and clustering of businesses

secondary use of by-products and waste in new production processes as raw primary materials e.g. re-utilisation of construction and demolition waste by enabling construction components’ recoverability

supporting circular consumption patterns through awareness raising and education

enhancing partnerships, synergies and communication between the various involved actors

emphasis on monitoring progress and results through indicators

#### **SDG 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

resilient and sustainable settlements aiming at regional and social cohesion

important progress on the full digitalization of land-uses across the Greek territory (in land and sea)

controlling urbanisation and facilitating investments

National Cadastre and Forest Maps

promoting sustainable urban mobility plans to improve quality of life, energy efficiency and decrease GHGs

**SDG 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss**

Greece an exceptionally rich biodiversity and one of the world's hotspots for endemism  
home to the 40% of the plant species and to the 18% of the animal species of Europe's biodiversity  
preserving and sustainably managing natural environment provide an important catalyst for achieving overall sustainable development objectives in Greece  
446 sites in the EU's Natura 2000 network of protected areas:  
terrestrial protected sites: 27.59% of land territory  
marine protected sites: 19.60% of territorial waters

**SDG 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**

fight against energy poverty for vulnerable citizen groups  
establishment of a reduced social residential electricity tariff  
support for "energy communities"  
important progress on energy efficiency and savings in the buildings sector  
a great potential for further increase RES penetration  
around 30% of total energy generation from RES (2015)  
in a good track to achieve a 20% of total energy consumption from RES, by 2020  
by 2030 aim at a 50% of power generation from RES  
by 2030 interconnect many non-connected islands to mainland's electricity grid to achieve climate change mitigation goals and reduce air emissions

**SDG 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

universal and equitable access to high quality drinking water to all  
full application of the IWRM principles considering social aspects and ecosystem needs  
emphasis on water savings  
cost and pricing structure of water services for all water uses, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups  
water and adequately treated wastewater re-use in the context of circular economy  
long-standing transboundary cooperation with riparian countries for cross-border IWRM

**III. Building strong partnerships beyond borders**

striving to be a responsible broker in promoting peace, religious tolerance and stability in Eastern Mediterranean and SE Europe

**IV. Capitalising on the VNR experience, next steps**

Next steps will include the elaboration, in 2019, of a National Implementation Plan for the SDGs, consistent with the National Growth Strategy, engaging all stakeholders at all stages, as well as the active involvement of the Hellenic Parliament in the overall follow-up and review process of the SDGs implementation.



**ECONOMIC  
AND SOCIAL  
COUNCIL  
OF GREECE**

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Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**Mr George Vernicos,**

**President of the Economic and Social Council of Greece**

The Economic and Social Council of Greece (ESC), which I represent, is the constitutionally established institution that conducts social dialogue in Greece. Our members' list consists of all the social partners and a wide range of civil society organizations, thus covering the whole of the productive and social players in the country. My role today is to underline the importance of social dialogue throughout the process of implementing Agenda 2030, as well as to present our contribution to the process so far.

The success of any policy depends greatly on the acceptance of society. Especially for a multi-level and complex plan such as the Agenda 2030, social dialogue and civil society involvement are vital to achieving increased consensus and mobilizing the entire economy and society. The effective implementation of the Agenda 2030 is a process that affects our present and our future and should therefore involve every citizen, in every part of the world.

The Greek Government, from the early stages of the whole process, has asked for the ESC to be actively involved with the aim of achieving stakeholder engagement and the highest possible representation of civil society. The ESC of Greece applauds this initiative and believes that it has been fruitful so far. Upon request from the Greek Government, the ESC issued an Opinion on the SDG's, thus providing input for defining the National Priorities. This Opinion also included a comprehensive set of proposals regarding the effective implementation of key economic, social and environmental aspects of the SDGs at national level, including SDGs 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Furthermore, the ESC 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 and has launched various events to disseminate relevant information.

What should really be stressed out is that Greece's commitment towards the implementation of the SDGs should be an essential part of an overall development strategy for the future. A strategy to re-launch the economy, to exit the crisis, to tackle inequalities and preserve the environment. It's within this context that the ESC has incorporated the SDG's into all its activities, most notably the open, structured dialogue amongst its members towards a National Strategic Plan for growth, social cohesion, social justice, inclusion and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources. We have already reached an Agreement that has lead to a Joint Declaration presenting the Central Development Goals as well as the Main Intervention Axes on which all the productive and social actors of the country agree. At this stage, we

continue the dialogue in order to come up with concrete proposals for each Priority Axis. Our goal is to deliver to the Greek Government and the Greek Parliament a complete National Development Plan in line with the Agenda 2030 which, unlike the respective Plans that have been occasionally presented by governments and political parties, will incorporate social consensus.

As far as the implementation of the Agenda 2030 is concerned, it is an ongoing process whose success will depend on various factors. From our part, I can assure you that the Economic and Social Council of Greece is strongly committed to actively participating in the next stages, such as the upcoming National Implementation Plan. The ESC will continue to conduct social dialogue in close cooperation with its members and organized civil society, in order to provide structured proposals to the Greek Government and the Greek Parliament. Proposals that will incorporate the views of society and will be useful to the effective implementation of Agenda 2030.

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

 **HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

16 July 2018

  
**HELLENIC REPUBLIC**  
Voluntary National Review on the Implementation  
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**SPEAKERS:**

Socrates Famellos, Alternate Minister of Environment and Energy, Greece

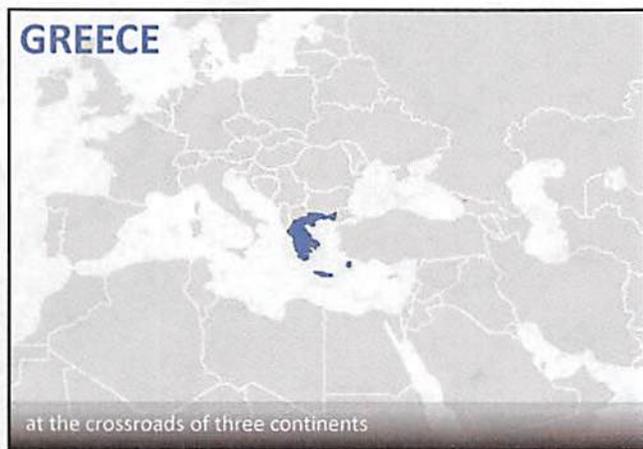
George Vernicos, President, Economic and Social Council of Greece

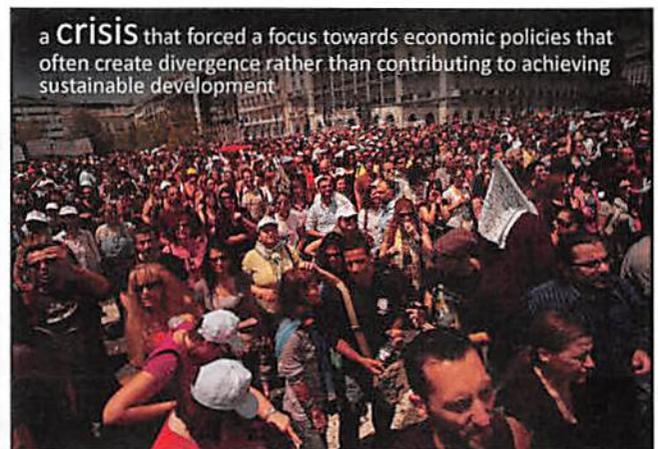
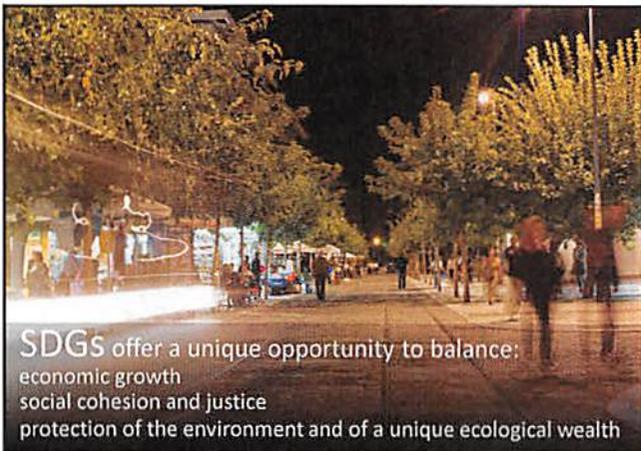
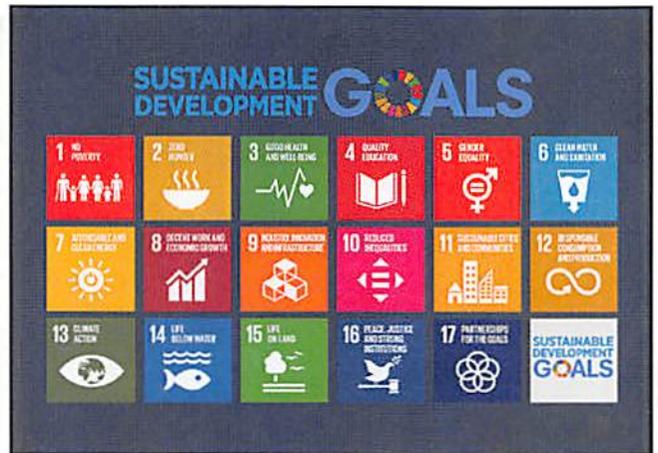
Aikaterini Inglezi, MP, President of the Special Permanent Committee on Environmental Protection, Hellenic Parliament

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**Socrates Famellos**  
Alternate Minister of Environment and Energy, Greece







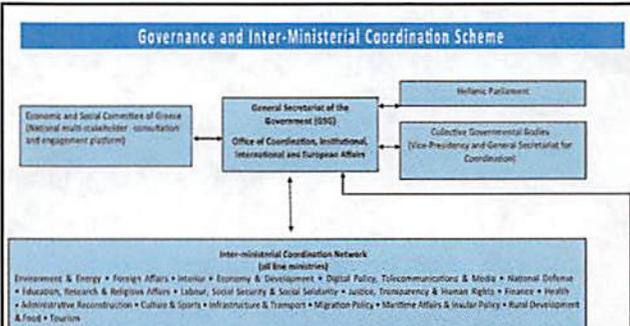
SDGs not just an element of the roadmap for exiting the crisis



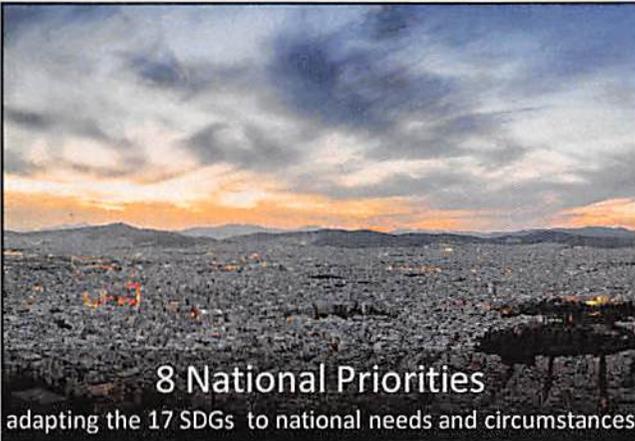
SDGs a means to reshape our economy, our society, our resources in a way that guarantees the wellbeing of all citizens and the environment, now and in the future



a robust long-lasting institutional mechanism to coordinate national efforts for achieving the SDGs: a strategic approach, anchoring sustainable development at the highest political level, ensuring ownership



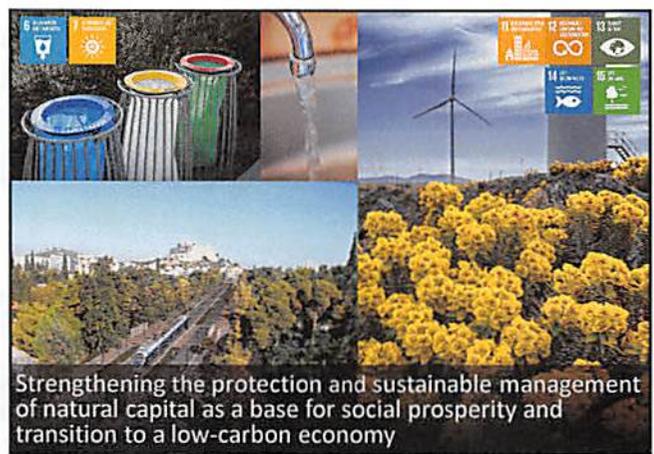
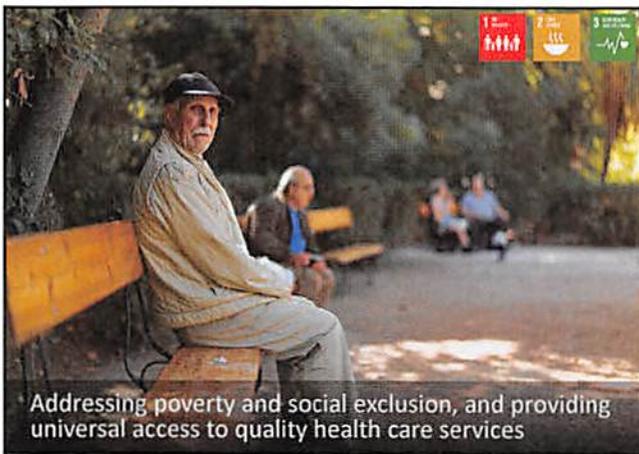
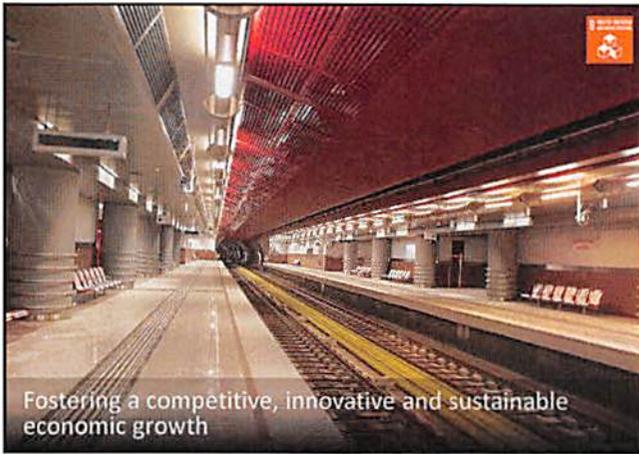
a whole-of-government approach  
a whole-of-society approach enhancing transparency, partnership and accountability



8 National Priorities  
adapting the 17 SDGs to national needs and circumstances



Outcome-oriented National Priorities	<b>People</b> Addressing Poverty and Social Exclusion and providing universal access to quality health care services Providing high-quality education
	<b>Prosperity</b> Reducing social and regional inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities for all Fostering a competitive, innovative and sustainable economic growth Promoting full employment and decent work for all
	<b>Planet</b> Strengthening the protection and sustainable management of natural capital as a base for social prosperity and transition to a low-carbon economy
Process-oriented National Priorities	<b>Peace</b> Building effective, accountable and transparent institutions
	<b>Partnership</b> Enhancing open, participatory, democratic processes and promoting partnerships



Ministry of Administrative Reform and E-Governance  
National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (E.K.O.D.A.)  
Open Government

Home Prime Minister Government

**OpenGov.gr - The Greek Open Government Initiative**

OpenGov.gr has been designed to serve the principles of transparency, deliberation, collaboration and accountability and includes three initiatives:

**Open calls for the recruitment of public administration officials.** Top level and mid-level openings in the public sector are available on the Internet. Applications are submitted on-line using a platform available on the opengov.gr website. See the latest Open Calls here (in Greek).

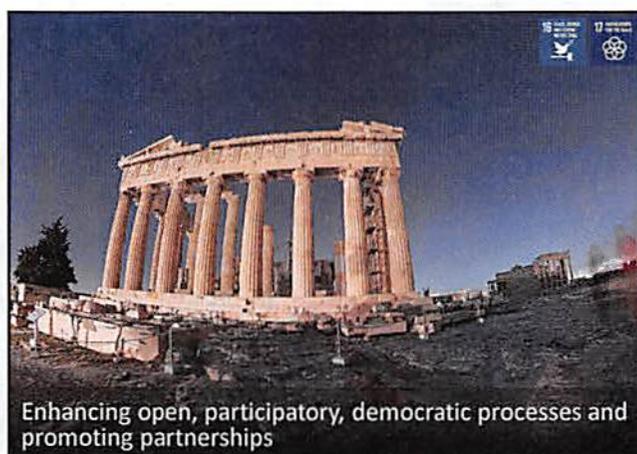
**Electronic deliberation.** Almost every piece of draft legislation or even policy initiative by the government, are posted in a blog like platform prior to their submission to parliament. Citizens and organizations can post their comments, suggestions and criticisms article-by-article. See the latest Electronic deliberations here (in Greek).

**Labs OpenGov.** An open innovation initiative that brings together ideas and proposals from citizens, the public and the private sectors. Labs OpenGov.gr attempts to release the power of decentralized knowledge and explore new ways to tackle modern public administration problems. See the latest Labs events here (in Greek).

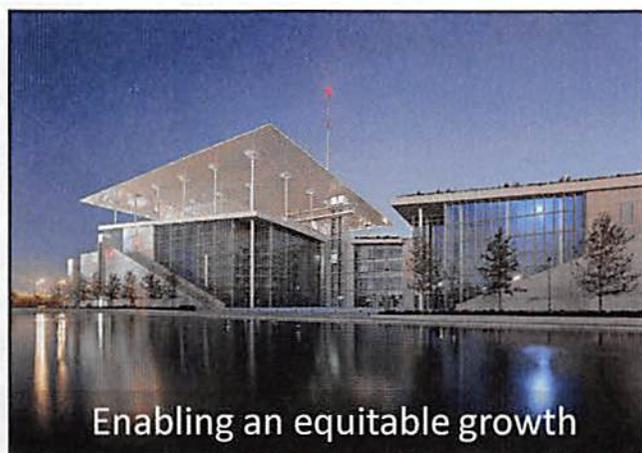
Read also:  
Open Government Initiatives

Ermlis Greece

Building effective, accountable and transparent institutions



Enhancing open, participatory, democratic processes and promoting partnerships



Enabling an equitable growth



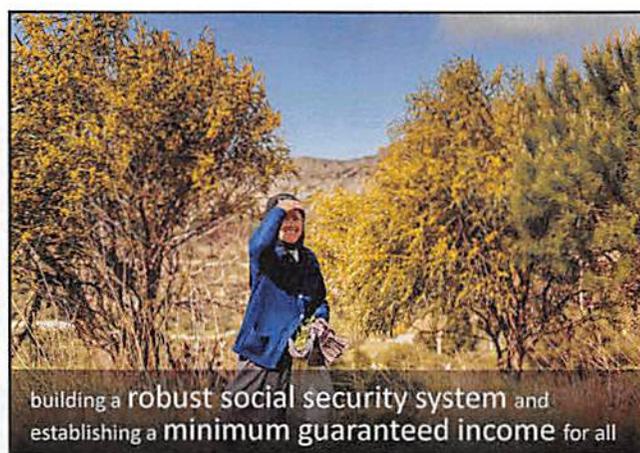
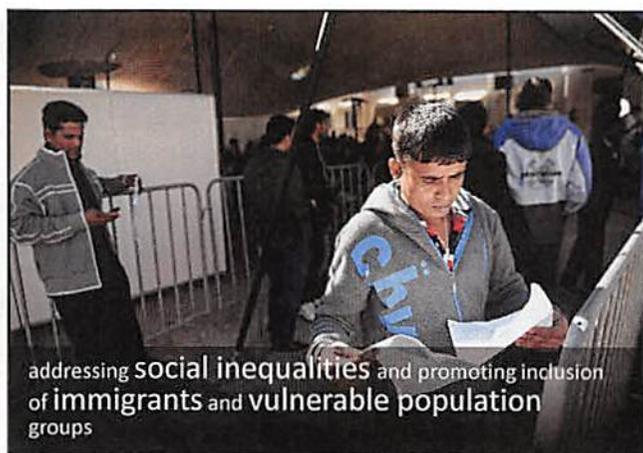
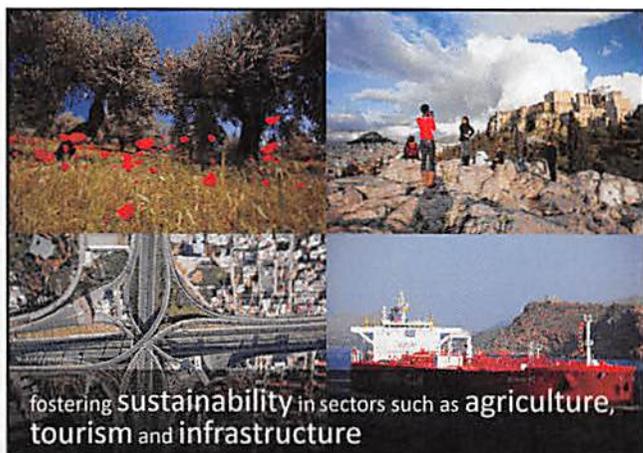
improving the business environment and encouraging investments



promoting social and solidarity economy



supporting human capital, research and innovation

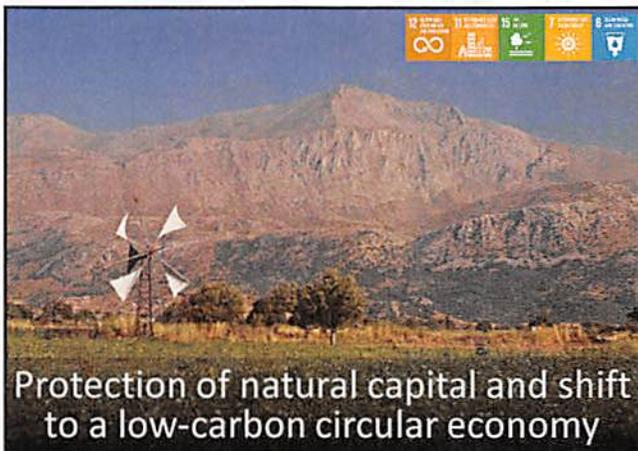




ensuring universal access to quality health care services



ensuring free access to quality education for everyone at all education levels



Protection of natural capital and shift to a low-carbon circular economy



SDG 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



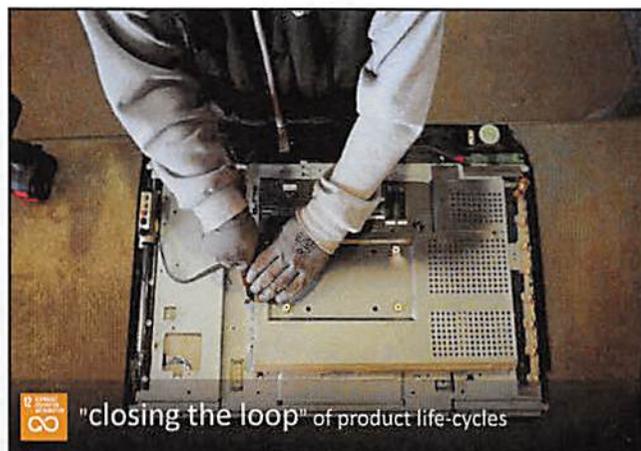
endorsement of a National Action Plan on Circular Economy in April 2018



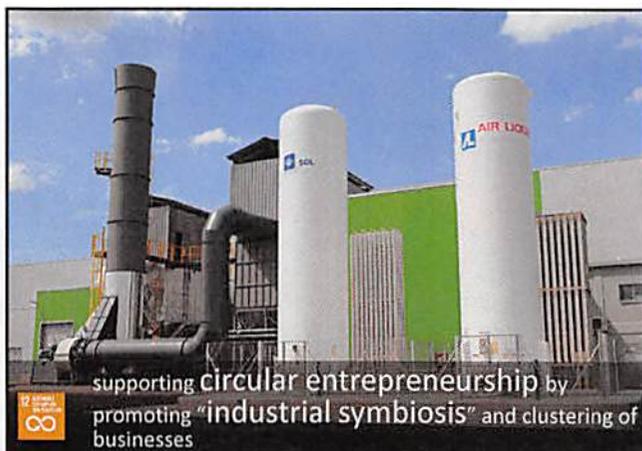
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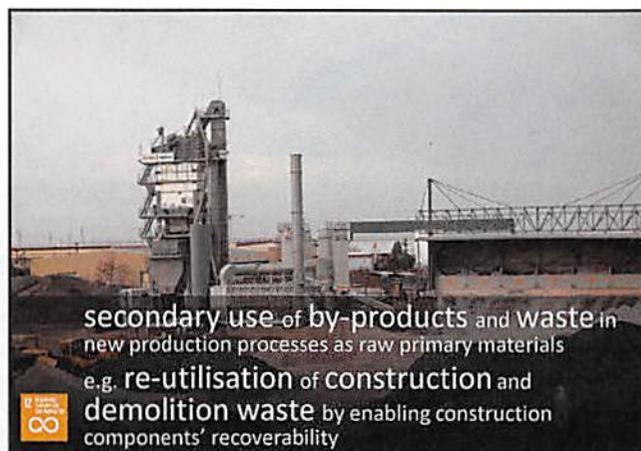
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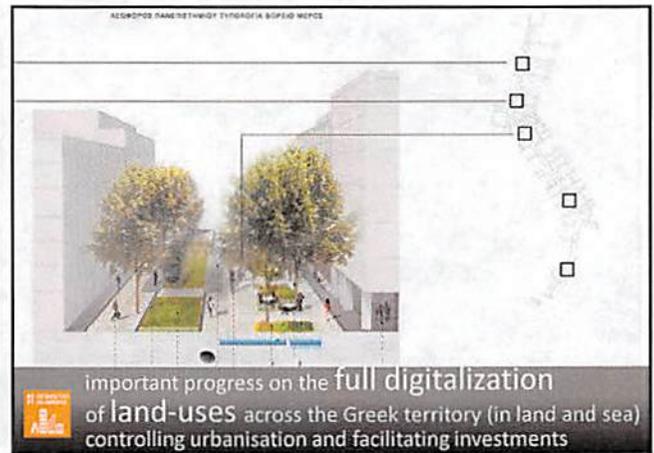
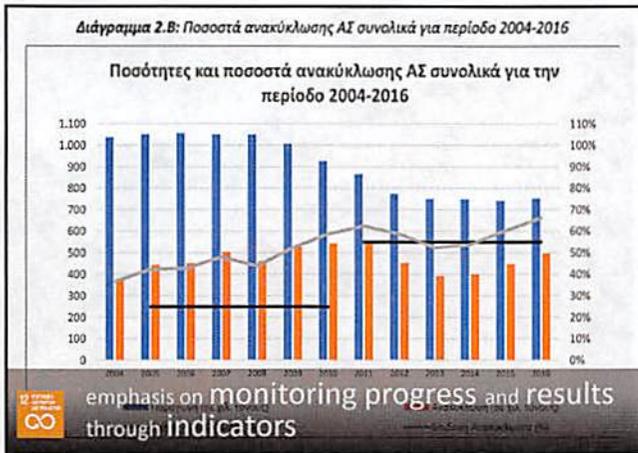
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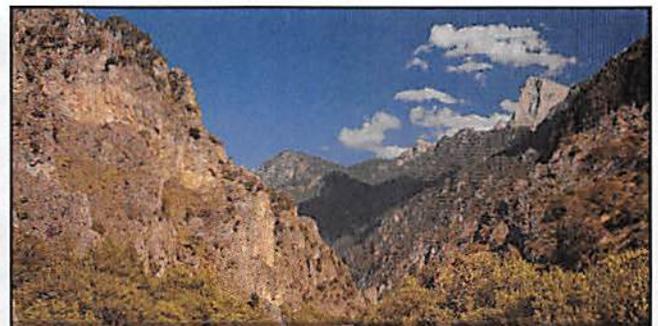

**SDG 15** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss




Greece, an exceptionally rich biodiversity and one of the world's hotspots for endemism




home to the 40% of the plant species and to the 18% of the animal species of Europe's biodiversity

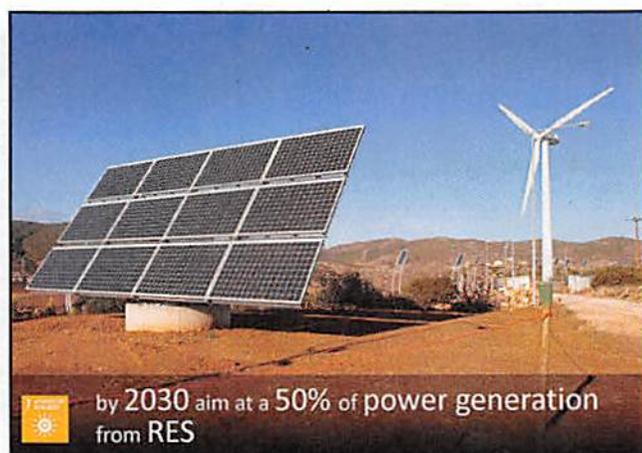
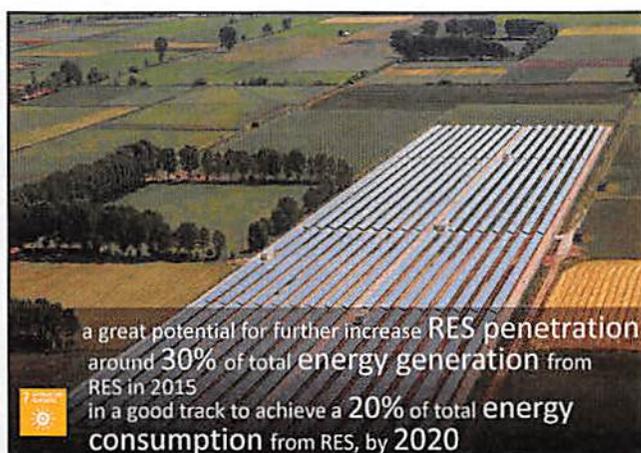
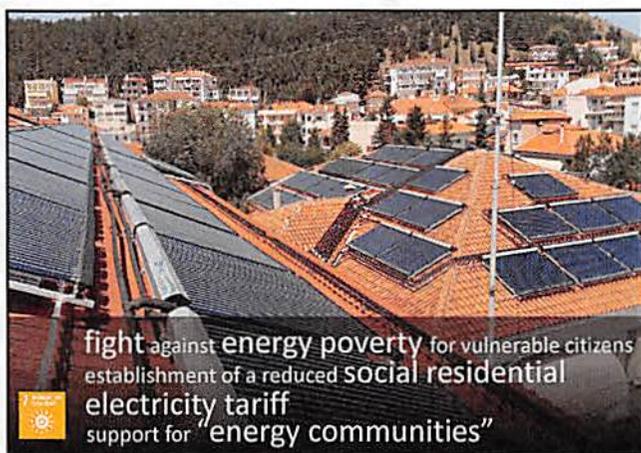
preserving and sustainably managing natural environment provide an important catalyst for achieving overall sustainable development objectives in Greece

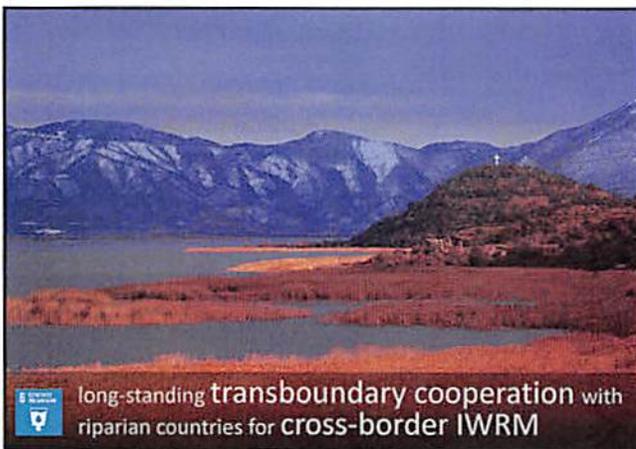
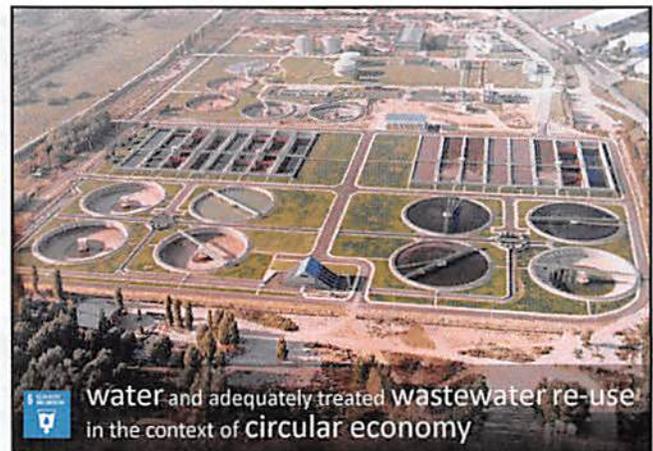
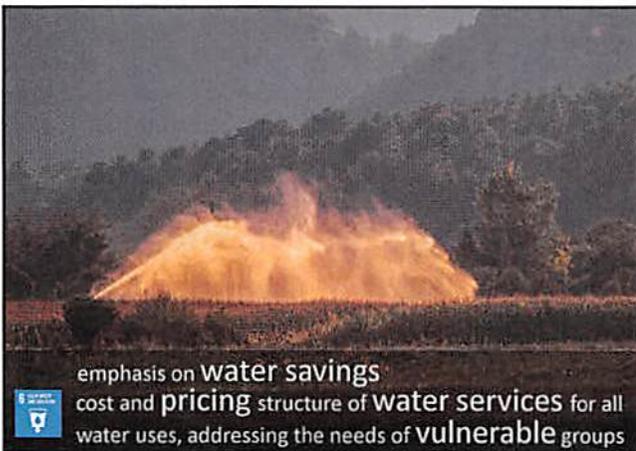
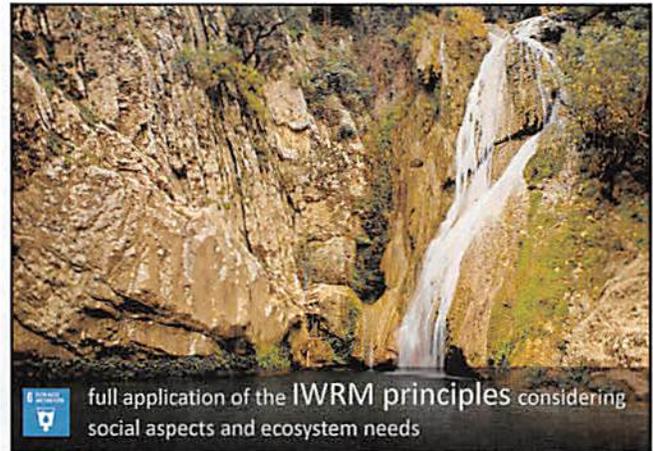
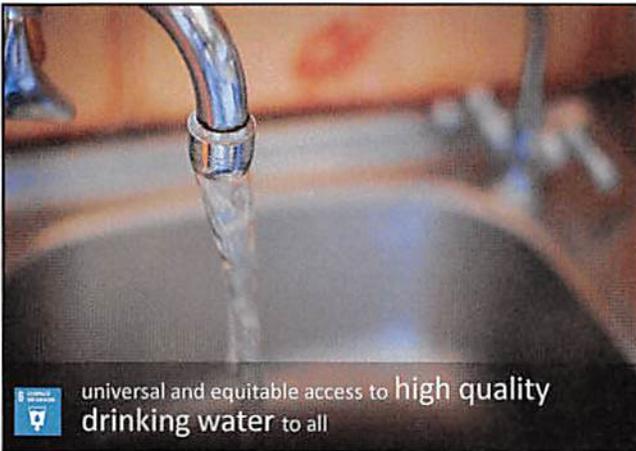



446 sites in the EU's Natura 2000 network of protected areas:  
 terrestrial protected sites: 27.59% of land territory  
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**SDG 7** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all







  
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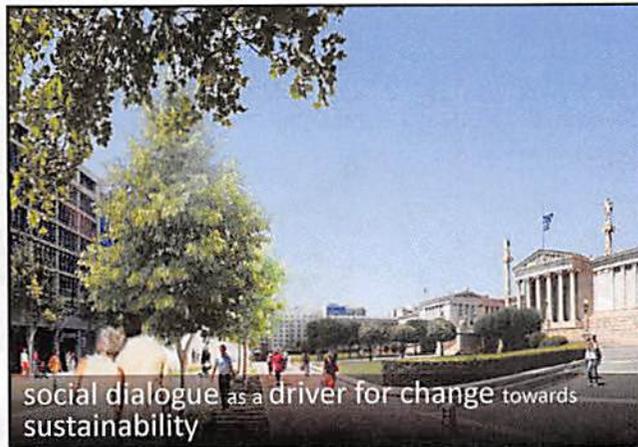


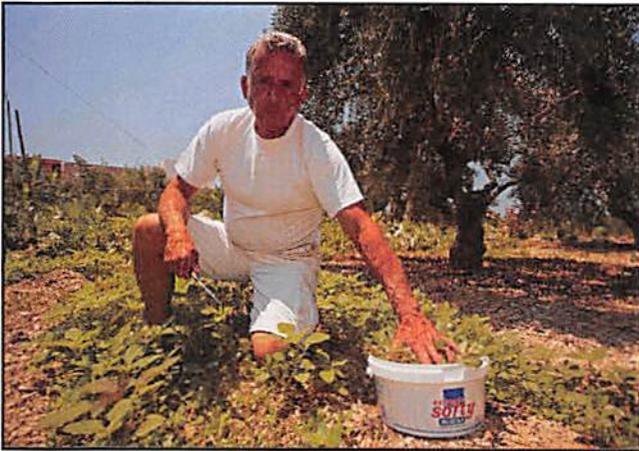
Economic and Social Council of Greece (ESC)		
Group A (Employers)	Group B (Employees)	Group C (Other Categories)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (DEV)</li> <li>• Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (OSEVEE)</li> <li>• Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (ESEI)</li> <li>• Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (SOTE)</li> <li>• Hellenic Bank Association (EET)</li> <li>• Union of the Greek Shipowners (EET)</li> <li>• Association of Greek Contracting Companies (SATE)</li> <li>• Hellenic Federation of Real Estate Developers (OMARCEE)</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 (PASSEGES)</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 (TTE)</li> <li>• Economic Chamber of Greece (OKE)</li> <li>• Geotechnical Chamber of Greece (GETEE)</li> <li>• Consumers</li> <li>• Environmental protection organisations</li> <li>• National Confederation of Disabled People (ESAE)</li> <li>• Organisations for gender equality issues</li> <li>• Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE)</li> <li>• Union of Greek Regions (ENRF)</li> <li>• Supreme Confederation of Multi-Child Parents of Greece (ASPE)</li> </ul>

**Economic and Social Council of Greece (ESC) members**

**ΚΕΚΕ** ΟΡΓΑΝΙΣΜΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΩΝ ΕΣΤΙΟΝ  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF GREECE  
COMITÉ ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL DE GRÈCE









monitoring the implementation of the SDGs at national level



  
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