

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**GREEK NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

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Contribution by

the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR)

to the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related  
international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights,  
particularly economic, social and cultural rights

in relation to

The impact of economic reform policies on women's human rights

5 April 2018

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) is the independent advisory body to the Greek State on matters pertaining to human rights protection. It was established by Law 2667/1998 in accordance with the UN Paris Principles. Thirty-two institutions whose activities cover the field of human rights are currently represented in the GNCHR (independent authorities, departments of university-level educational institutions, workers' and disabled persons' confederations, NGOs, political parties and ministries).

The Greek National Commission for Human Rights (hereinafter GNCHR) warmly welcomes the initiative of the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights to develop guiding principles for human rights impact assessments for economic reform policies, devoting in particular a specific report to the situation of women in the context of economic reforms, and would be more than willing to share input for the preparation of the report, which you will find hereto attached.

The GNCHR, which was established by Law 2667/1998 in accordance with the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (The Paris Principles) and is accredited with *A-status* by the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), is the independent advisory body to the State on matters pertaining to human rights protection. The GNCHR mandate covers the whole spectrum of human rights in terms of *ratione materiae* and, since its establishment, has dealt with a broad range of human rights issues, including the impact of the continuing austerity measures on human rights and in particular women's rights, as well the need to create a permanent mechanism which would evaluate and assess the impact of austerity measures -primarily but not exclusively- on both the enjoyment of and access to human rights (Human Rights Impact Assessment, HRIA).

Therefore, taking into account the tremendous financial and social impact of the financial crisis on the enjoyment of fundamental rights in Greece, the GNCHR would like to make the following contribution to the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights:

After eight years of monitoring the human rights situation in a country facing multiple crisis (i.e. economic, refugees, humanitarian), such as Greece, the GNCHR considers that the “cumulative impact” on human rights of the constant implementation of austerity measures and the “non-compliance with the judgments of the national supreme courts as well as the decisions and recommendations issued by national, European and international human rights tribunals and bodies” should be conceived as fundamental and autonomous parameters of HRIA.

In the context of the human rights monitoring and follow-up that the GNCHR has undertaken since the very first GNCHR recommendations in 2010, it has become quite evident that austerity measures and economic reform programmes, which often conflict with the human rights obligations of the States, have had a disproportionate impact on women's rights. The GNCHR has for this purpose addressed since 2010 several recommendations on how to reverse

the negative impacts. Some of the GNCHR Reports and material dealing with these issues are the following:

### **GNCHR on economic crisis and austerity measures**

Urgent GNCHR [Statement](#) on Labour and Social Security Rights in Greece (2017)

[Statement of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights \(GNCHR\)](#) on the impact of the continuing austerity measures on human rights (2015)

[The GNCHR Recommendation and decisions of international bodies on the conformity of austerity measures to international human rights standards](#) (2013)

[GNCHR Recommendation](#): On the imperative need to reverse the sharp decline in civil liberties and social rights (2011)

[The need for constant respect of human rights during the implementation of the fiscal and social exit strategy from the debt crisis](#) (2010)

### **Thematic reports**

[Recommendations](#) of the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) for Childhood Protection: «Health and Welfare» (2014)

[Protection of the rights of older persons](#) (2014)

### **Interventions before international human rights bodies**

[Observations submitted by the GNCHR](#) in view of the examination of the 27th Greek Report on the application of the European Social Charter (Articles 3, 11, 12, 13 and 14) and on the 11th Greek Report on the application of the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter (Article 4)(Reference Period 01/01/2012-31/12/2015) (2017)

Written [Information](#) submitted by the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) in relation to the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in Greece (2016)

[Submission](#) to the United Nations Human Rights Committee (The Committee): NHRI report on Greece's 2nd periodic report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (2015)

[Submission](#) by the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) to the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of Greece (2015)

GNCHR [Written Information](#) on the Second Periodic Report of the Hellenic Republic for the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (2015)

[Observations](#) on the 24<sup>th</sup> Greek Report on the application of the European Social Charter and on the 9<sup>th</sup> Greek Report on the application of the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter (2014)

### **Other GNCHR Contributions and Public Interventions**

[Submission](#) by the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) to the UN Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights, Professor Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky Guidance on human rights impact assessments for economic reform policies (2017)

Contribution by the Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR) to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the Implementation of Human Rights with regard to Young People (2018) (attached 1)

GNCHR Submission to the OEWG-Ageing (2017) (attached 2)

Cultural relativism and austerity measures: threats to human rights and democracy, Intervention delivered by Sophia Koukoulis-Spiliotopoulos, Chair of the Fifth Sub-Commission of the GNCHR for international communication and cooperation (2012) (attached 3)

Furthermore, a decisive step was taken towards preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence, since the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which has been pending since 2011 when Greece signed it, was sanctioned by law by the Greek Parliament in march 29, 2018.

The GNCHR remains vigilant when it comes to safeguarding the full enjoyment without discrimination of all human rights and is looking forward to the presentation of the guiding principles prepared by the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights in 2019, to the Human Rights Council.