



ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΩΝ & ΒΙΟΜΗΧΑΝΙΚΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ  
FOUNDATION FOR ECONOMIC & INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

---

## *Stakeholder Workshop on the implementation of the Recovery & Resilience Plan “Greece 2.0”*

*Organized by the European Commission and  
the Recovery and Resilience Facility Agency of the Greek Ministry of Finance,  
in collaboration with  
the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research - IOBE*

*28 November 2022*

*Executive Summary*

**December 2022**

The European Commission and the Recovery and Resilience Facility Agency of the Greek Ministry of Finance in collaboration with the Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research - IOBE organized a conference on Monday 28 October 2022, entitled "Stakeholder Workshop on the Implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan "Greece 2.0"" (webpage: <http://www.iobe-ec-conference.gr/2022/>).

---

This Executive Summary has been prepared by a team of IOBE researchers including Niki Kalavrezou and Georgios Gatopoulos, supervised by Nikos Vettas, General Director of IOBE and Professor, Athens University of Economics and Business. The judgments on policy proposals contained in this report express the opinions of researchers of IOBE and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members or the Board of IOBE nor of the European Commission or of the Recovery and Resilience Facility Agency.

The researchers would like to thank officials from the European Commission and the Recovery and Resilience Facility Agency for their valuable support and collaboration in the context of the conference's organization. In particular, the researchers would like to thank the DG ECFIN Resident Advisor in Athens, Chris Allen, and his team, especially Vasilis Nikitas, Eleni Polemidiotou and Irene Vlachaki. They would like to thank Kostas Valaskas from IOBE for his contribution to set up the workshop web page, administrative staff of IOBE for their precious assistance, in particular Katerina Xanthi, Maria Kavvadia, Fania Christidi and Nancy Roussia, as well as staff from Wave Technologies for their technical support. In parallel, the researchers would like to thank administrative staff of the Ministry of Finance and the Recovery and Resilience Facility Agency, Ioanna Efthymiadou, Voula Daskaroli and Christina Tseliou. Last but not least, the conference organizers would like to thank all guest speakers and panel moderators for their constructive interventions and all conference virtual participants who contributed to making this event a success. All remaining errors should be attributed to the authors alone.

The Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research - IOBE is a private, non-profit, public-benefit research organisation. It was established in 1975 with the dual purpose of promoting research on current problems and prospects of the Greek economy and its sectors and of generating reliable information, analysis and proposals for action that can be of high value in economic policy making.

Copyright © 2022 Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research

This report may not be reproduced in any form or for any purpose without the prior knowledge and consent of the publisher.

**Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research IOBE**

11 Tsami Karatassou St, 117 42 Athens

Tel. (+30210 9211200-10), Fax. (+30210 9233977)

E-mail: [info@iobe.gr](mailto:info@iobe.gr) - URL: <http://www.iobe.gr>

---

**Contents**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Scope of the stakeholder workshop.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Panels' executive summary.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Summary of workshop takeaways.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Annex A – List of sources.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Annex B – Workshop program.....</b>	<b>17</b>

## 1. SCOPE OF THE STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

---

The European Commission and the Recovery and Resilience Agency of Greece, in collaboration with the Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research - IOBE organized a Stakeholder Workshop on 28 November 2022, on the implementation of the Recovery & Resilience Plan “Greece 2.0”.

The workshop provided an excellent opportunity to take stock of progress made to date in implementing the Greek Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) following its adoption in July 2021. Greece’s RRP is funded through the NextGenerationEU, the EU’s recovery instrument to help repair the economic and social damage brought about by the coronavirus pandemic.

Greece received its first milestone-based instalment earlier this year following the successful completion of 15 milestones that covered reforms and investments in the areas of energy efficiency, electric mobility, waste management, labour market, taxation, business environment, healthcare, public transport, as well as Greece's audit and control system for the implementation of the RRP. A request for the second milestone-based instalment was presented on 30 September 2022 and a preliminary positive assessment was issued by the European Commission on 25 November 2022.

The workshop also focused on measures that are ongoing or planned in the Greek RRP. The wide set of investments and reforms is expected to contribute to economic growth, while promoting a more inclusive and sustainable growth model. The measures presented in the Greek RRP are especially targeted at addressing the large investment gap that has held back growth in Greece in the previous decade, while also facilitating the green and digital transitions and the modernisation of the economy.

The workshop consisted of four sessions:

- High-level remarks from the Vice-President of the European Commission, Margaritis Schinas and Alternate Minister for Finance of the Hellenic Republic, Theodoros Skylakakis.
- Presentation and discussion on the implementation of the Greek RRP with representatives from the Greek authorities, European Commission and other stakeholders.
- Discussion on reforms and investments aiming to facilitate growth and investments, while promoting social inclusion with representatives from the Greek authorities, European Commission, social partners and other stakeholders.
- Discussion on the RRP Loan Facility with representatives from the Greek authorities, European Commission, financial institutions and other stakeholders.

Information about previous years’ conferences on the European Semester and Greece, organized by the European Commission in collaboration with IOBE, are available here: <https://www.iobe-ec-conference.gr/2022/about.html>.

The conference attracted a large and diverse audience, exceeding 150 participants physically present and 1,400 online viewers, representing the academic, journalistic, diplomatic, social partner, and business communities. Among the high caliber speakers, the program hosted one

European Commissioner, one Greek Minister, senior representatives from other Member States, from the European Commission and other international organizations such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank and key stakeholders from the central and local administration, the private sector, the academia and think-tanks.

The executive summary highlights the key takeaways from the various sessions. Links to the conference presentations, the full program, and related sources are available in the Annex.

## 2. PANELS' EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an abrupt and severe recessionary hit in 2020 across Europe and the whole world. Monetary and fiscal authorities across the globe put in operation sizable stimuli packages to ease the crisis effects and accelerate the economic recovery, which has gathered momentum during 2021. The policy response at the EU level has been unprecedented in terms of magnitude and speed. Solidarity and coordination were key elements for setting up the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), making available €723.8 billion, or 5.4% of EU GDP in 2020, over 2021-2026 to Member States to support reforms and investments to overcome the crisis and facilitate the green and digital transition. For its part, Greece submitted in Spring 2021 its National Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) "Greece 2.0" to the European Commission. The adoption of the Plan in summer 2021, foresaw an inflow of €31.2 billion over 2021-2026, conditional upon the completion of milestones and targets in relation to specific policy reforms and investment projects.

Greece received its first regular instalment, €3.56 billion, in April 2022 following the successful completion of 15 milestones that covered reforms and investments in the areas of energy efficiency, electric mobility, waste management, labour market, taxation, business environment, healthcare, public transport, as well as Greece's audit and control system for the implementation of the RRP. Greece also received €3.96 billion, which were disbursed in pre-financing in August 2021. On 25 November 2022 the Commission adopted its positive preliminary assessment of Greece's second payment request, submitted on 30 September. As a next step, the assessment will be reviewed by the Council.

The second payment request comprises of 28 milestones and targets, reflecting a balance of reforms and investments in the areas of promoting the use of and investment in renewable energy, revitalisation of lignite-affected territories, re-organisation of the railways sector, modernisation of public bus transportation services, digital transformation of small and medium-sized enterprises, life-long learning, disability care, interconnecting payment terminals with the tax administration and encouraging electronic transactions, incentivising green and digital investments by the private sector, encouraging small companies to grow and export, enhancing the supervision of capital markets, creating new funding opportunities for basic and applied research, attracting strategic investments, and encouraging new investments in the tourism, manufacturing and agriculture sectors. Three of the milestones and targets concern the loan part of the Facility, including the signature of loan contracts worth at least €586.4 million between financial institutions and investors.

Once the approval process by the Council and Comitology procedure is completed, Greece is set to receive a further €3.56 billion under the second payment request. This will bring the total amount disbursed to €11.1 billion euro, which is 37% of the overall allocation of grants and loans for Greece under the RRP.

### The Opening Session

The **opening session of the conference** included high-level remarks on the implementation progress of the Greek RRP. A common underlying theme of the panel was that Greece has made striking progress so far in terms of planning and successfully submitting its plan and

initial payment requests. Main challenges ahead include effectively overcoming potential obstacles in terms of implementation speed and funding the right type of investments that will help change the country's economic trajectory.

The **General Director of IOBE and Professor at the Athens University of Economics and Business, Nikos Vettas**, inaugurated the discussion by noting that the focus has now shifted from the planning phase to the implementation phase. He also stressed the large, accumulated investment gap in the Greek economy, noted that Greece needs to safeguard continuity of reforms and avoid favouring State-dependent entrepreneurship, while flagged the country's previous sub-optimal performance in terms of absorbing EU funds.

In his welcoming remarks, the **Vice-President of the European Commission, Mr. Margaritis Schinas**, warmly congratulated the Greek government on its political will, its well-structured plan and timely implementation to date. He noted the substantial financial and reform opportunities that arise for Greece from the 16.6% of GDP contribution of RRF funds, and underlined that these opportunities extend to new market players that can develop and offer innovative goods and services. Greece has already begun implementing various ambitious reforms and investments in the four RRP areas (green transition, digital transition, inclusive growth and investments), such as programs for the energy upgrades for buildings, the digitalization of SMEs and of the public administration, training programs and reforms as well as its exemplary and innovative lending tool for boosting private investments.

Interviewed by Nikos Vettas, the **Alternate Minister of Finance of the Hellenic Republic, Theodoros Skylakakis**, reiterated that the implementation of the Greek RRP has moved speedily so far with a significant positive reaction from the market in terms of funding requests. The main challenge ahead will concern the successful completion of public investment programs without administrative and legal delays. Another challenge will be the absorption capacity of the market, as the latter is called to absorb funds that have more than doubled in the area of public investments, and more than tripled in the area of digital investments where human capital is also scarce. He highlighted that the variety of funding tools will cover a significant share of the investment gap. Further, he said that projects aiming to reduce Greece's fossil fuel dependency will have a permanent positive impact in terms of its GDP, noting that this is a strategic goal for the Greek government. He also underlined the successful front-loading of reforms in the Greek RRP. The speed of the new financing tools, coupled with relatively low subsidies, will help avoid State-dependent entrepreneurship. The overall goal will be to change Greece's productive model and to swiftly overcome negative political and administrative mentalities that have chronically hindered the country's growth.

### **Panel 1. Greece's RRP – Moving Ahead with Implementation**

The first panel discussion was dedicated on the implementation progress of the RRP. The **Head of Monitoring Directorate of the Recovery & Resilience Facility Agency, Mr. Dimosthenis Voivontas**, presented detailed information on the goals, figures, timeline and programs related to the implementation of the RRP. He firstly stressed the close collaboration with line Ministries, implementing bodies in auditing authorities, as well as the European Commission, to proceed with the completion of milestones (investments and reforms) and channel RRF funds. Over 66% of the total RRP budget has already been allocated to specific projects and

while payments started slow, their rate is now speedily increasing. Private and digital investments have the highest rates of activation, while private and green investments have the largest shares of allocated funds. He closed his presentation by presenting indicative programs and milestones.

The **President of the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE), Mr. Dimitris Papastergiou**, stressed the importance of ensuring the active involvement of the local and regional authorities in the RRP processes. He noted that the first fight for the local and regional levels to become involved in the preparation of the RRP plan was lost in Greece, as in many other EU member states. However, municipalities can still become part of the monitoring and implementation process. He highlighted the challenges of the pandemic in terms of decreased municipal revenues and increased spending for various services, as well as the key role that cities play in the green, just and digital transition through the development of projects relating to energy, transport, buildings and other areas, while efforts to engage citizens should also be central to any relevant efforts. He also identified a major challenge for local and regional authorities within the RRP implementation context, namely, the short submission window for projects which does not allow time to prepare or to "think outside the box" and come up with innovative proposals, given that municipalities also often face various shortages in technical and financial resources.

The **Head of Unit of the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs of the European Commission, Ms. Julia Lendvai**, highlighted that Greece is one of the largest RRF beneficiaries as well as amongst the frontrunners in terms of the submission of the plan, its adoption and the first two payments requests along with countries such as Spain, Italy and Croatia. She noted the very good progress in terms of disbursements (€7.5 billion so far or 25% of the envelope, projected to increase to €11.1 billion or 35% of the envelope after the second request has been approved), underlined the performance-based nature of the RRF and presented various initiatives, investments and reforms included in the RRP. The latter include the speedier investment licensing procedures for renewable energy, reforms in sustainable transport (railway reform, opening up of the public bus purchase market), the SMEs digital upgrade program, the overhauled lifelong learning framework, the personal assistant scheme for persons with disabilities which will be fully rolled-out over the next years, as well as institutional reforms such as a the interconnection of business tax registers to the tax administration to help reduce the VAT gap, business environment reforms (tourism licensing) amongst others. She underlined that overall there is a very balanced mix of reforms with good progress but, as the focus is shifting towards investments on the ground, coordination with local bodies is necessary to ensure continuous success and avoid implementation obstacles as the ones observed in the past.

**Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for Economic Issues of the Republic of Croatia, Mr. Zvonimir Savić**, made a presentation on the implementation progress of the Croatian RRP which includes 145 milestones/ reforms and 227 targets/ investments in total. The country has submitted its second payment request and is close to the second disbursement which will bring the total allocation for Croatia to 40%. The Croatian government has already fulfilled 35% of all reforms included in the RRP with a plan of reaching 50% of all reforms and 71% of all investments finalized by end-2022. Frontloading reforms and successful implementation of projects have been fueled by strong political motivation, as well as a centralized and intensive



monitoring and communication process between the Prime Minister's office and the Ministry of Finance on one hand and line ministries and the European Commission on the other. He underlined that both Croatia and Greece are RRF frontrunners and that the Greek dynamics have been a motivation for Croatia's good performance to date throughout the process.

**Research Director, ESEE - INEMY institute of the Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship, Ms. Valia Aranitou**, noted that the economic development model in Greece is characterized by a very big number of micro enterprises. Approximately 90% of Greek enterprises employ less than 9 persons and 85% less than 4 persons. However, the latter are often de facto excluded from NSRF and RRF financing due to outstanding obligations and exclusion criteria. Furthermore, third-party costs for participation in these schemes are very high which, coupled with the risk of non-approval, makes private loans potentially more attractive compared to NSRF and RRF financing. Moreover, the current RRP loans scheme was not designed for SMEs, except for the very large ones. In addition, Ms. Aranitou stressed the need for horizontal public initiatives such as the further reduction of bureaucratic burden (for instance, to reduce paperwork requirements when dealing with the administration or to improve internet speed which is very low, even in central Athens) as well as the need to improve specific programs (such as increasing the amount of the digital voucher for very small businesses).

**Mr. Giannis Lainas, Senior Advisor, Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV)**, briefly presented reforms under the green pillar and, in particular, progress with the adoption of urban plans and the spatial planning reform. Mr. Lainas highlighted the importance of prompt and trustworthy information on land use for businesses and noted how the spatial planning reform is crucial at both the local and national level for sustainable growth, construction, environmental protection and adaptation to climate change. Currently, institutionalized land uses are missing for 70% of the country. By the end of the reform, 80% of the country will have modern land uses that will clearly define construction areas and permitted uses, protection areas, regulations, restrictions and other crucial parameters. The RRP includes as milestones the completion of 30% of all contracts by end-2022 with a view of completing the process by the end of 2025, in addition to 4 special spatial plans for renewable sources of energy, tourism, industry and aquaculture by end-2025.

## Panel 2. Growth with Social Inclusion

The second panel discussion was focused on how the RRP addresses the social challenges of the Greek economy and how Greece can work further towards an inclusive and sustainable growth model.

**The Secretary General for the Coordination of the Government of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Thanasis Kontogeorgis**, opened the panel discussion. He noted that when the RRF was established, the Greek government had already undertaken various initiatives and institutional procedures for enhancing social inclusion through reforms and national action plans such as on disability, child protection, homelessness and other important social issues. However, given Greece's chronic underperformance in key international social and equality indicators, the RRF timing was ideal to help Greece stay on track after the pandemic. He noted that the social pillar of the RRF is complementary to the wider national reform program,

indicatively, through (a) reforming and rebranding the public employment agency, education and vocational training, (b) reforming all levels of the healthcare system and rationalizing pharmaceutical expenditure, (c) prioritizing groups under-represented in the country's social and economic life (women, the youth and the elderly, persons with disabilities or mental health problems, Roma people, poor children, the homeless, refugees and others), (d) strengthening early childhood education and care, home care and the prevention of disability, the personal assistant for persons with disability, (e) policies on gender equality and incentives for women to remain or enter the job market, amongst many others. Later in the panel discussion, Mr Kontogeorgis said that the Authorities were considering voluntarily adding a number of further reform measures into the revision of the RRP.

**The Head of Unit on Greece of the Directorate General of Employment and Social Inclusion of the European Commission, Patrick Paquet**, reiterated that the RRF is a huge opportunity. Greece was the very first country to adopt its partnership agreement for the new NSRF programming period just a month after submitting its RRP in July 2021. This is a good indication of complementarity, as the €12 billion for social inclusion included in both the RRF and the new cohesion funds will need to be coherently implemented. The importance of regional disparities in the cohesion framework was underlined. Greece has committed to ambitious targets in its European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan on employment, education and lifelong learning and the reduction of the number of people living in poverty or social exclusion. The reform of the public employment service (DYPA) is at the heart of the reform efforts. The quality of the programs (skills programs, individualized counselling services) will be crucial for their success, especially for the youth, women and other vulnerable groups. In view of the broad skills mismatches, the need to train the current workforce in digital and green skills was stressed. A strong skills' forecasting mechanism and the development of partnerships with the industry, academia and social partners will contribute to the efforts. Other important reforms completed or underway focus on the provision of quality early education and care, child protection and programs targeting vulnerable groups. The challenge going forward will be for line ministries to deal with the pressure associated with double funding and avoid implementation delays.

**The General Manager of the Greek Tourism Confederation Institute INSETE, Mr. Elias Kikilias**, noted that just €1 billion are allocated to training and labor force measures for both employed and unemployed persons in the context of the RRP. He stressed some of the weaknesses of the recent training programs designed in the context of the RRP including the broad and generic nature of the provided educational programs, the relatively low participation rate as well as some ineffective parameters related to the duration and cost of the programs which may be sub-optimal compared to skills programs offered in the market. He also highlighted that the programs were designed without adequately considering real labor market shortages and needs while the expertise of social partners was not taken on board. He closed his speech by calling for improvements to the system.

**Professor at the Polytechnic University of Milan and Head of the Greek and European Economy Observatory at ELIAMEP, Manos Matsaganis**, reiterated that the RRF represents a unique opportunity for Greece, noting Greece's investment gap (70% drop in investments and 62% drop in public investments during 2007-2019 as opposed to a slight increase for the European average over the same period). While he acknowledged that the Greek RRP was

competently drafted, he highlighted the clash between the large cumulative EU funding for training programs over 2005-2027 (€25 billion, including the new programming period), and the country's persistently poor performance in terms of skills in a variety of international surveys and rankings. This poor performance includes students' performance, adults and their skills, managers in Greek firms as well as limited training offered by Greek enterprises even when size is accounted for. He shared some of the criticisms expressed by the previous speaker in terms of risks of over-simplification, cream-skimming or adverse selection regarding the overhauled vocational programs and also stressed the need to increase the quality of the programs offered so that the emphasis is not on maximizing absorption but on making the best possible use of the funding opportunities that arise in the context of the RRF.

The **Research Director at diaNEOsis, Ms. Fay Makantasi**, noted that the country is in need of investments that can boost job creation, labor productivity and GDP while simultaneously increasing the stock of physical capital which has shrunk by €95 billion since 2010. She highlighted that an issue of special concern is the youth who entered the labor market for the first time during the peak of the recession and faced various difficulties. These young persons are now facing an unfair disadvantage compared to their counterparts who decided to leave the country and are now offered favourable tax treatment and other incentives for repatriation. Other issues stressed include the country's high unemployment, its low ranking in digital skills, the demographic problem which also impacts the education sector (in 20 years, secondary and higher education students will be reduced by approximately 20%) and the low attractiveness and social acceptance of vocational training compared to other European countries. In the healthcare sector, diaNEOsis has drafted a study with policy proposals for a massive overhaul of the Greek national health system and stressed that a holistic approach is required, similar to the reform leading to its establishment in the early 1980s. In the area of social inclusion, early childhood education and care was singled out as the most neglected but crucial tier of the educational system while the establishment of a reform observatory was proposed with the aim of objective reform evaluations and a productive political dialogue.

### **Panel 3. The Loan Facility – Facilitating Access to Finance for Greek Businesses**

The third panel was devoted to the Loan Facility, funding opportunities for businesses arising from the RRF and progress already made. A broader theme emerging from the panel discussion concerned the various safeguards of the Loan Facility in terms of financing projects that will provide real growth prospects for the Greek economy and minimize the risk of running new NPLs.

The **Governor of the Recovery & Resilience Facility Agency, Mr. Mantzoufas**, noted that Greece is the only European country along Italy having requested the full amount of the RRF loan facility, i.e., €12.7 billion. Greece however differs in that it is channeling the full amount towards private investments. The key reasons behind this decision are the country's very large investment gap, the potentially limited capacity of the public administration to absorb this level of funding (especially coupled with NSRF funds) and the specific fiscal targets the country has committed to. The three pillars of the Loan Facility were presented, namely, the equity investments platform (€500 million mainly through the HDB), the national compartment of the InvestEU program explicitly targeting SMEs (€500 million), and last but not least the largest envelope of €11.73 billion in loans covering all sizes of enterprises. With respect to the latter,

a very detailed work has been done of the eligibility criteria and parameters (50% maximum RRF loan, minimum 30% commercial lending and minimum 20% debtor participation) to ensure investors' "skin in the game" and minimize NPL rates resulting from the portfolio. The program is based on the Pari Passu principle, offers no guarantees but a very low interest rate compared to the market terms. Mr. Mantzoufas also presented the current state-of-play: within 4 months more than 241 loan requests have been submitted (41 contracts signed) with a total value of over €9 billion (€1.8 billion signed) and 35% of total requests coming from SMEs, even though a separate instrument targeting SMEs is running in parallel. In terms of the pillars, 43% of requests concern green transition, 27% digitalization, 27% extroversion and 3% innovation while a very positive sign is that 1/3 of requests concern the industrial production sector with many planned investments also in the digital and energy sector.

The **Head of Unit of the Recovery and Resilience Task Force of the European Commission, Ms. Felicia Stanescu**, focused on the important elements of the Loan Facility from the EC perspective. She noted that Greek loan instrument is the largest measure in terms of GDP amongst the measures included in all European plans. She presented the main reasons that make the instrument remarkable, namely, that it enables easier access to financing for firms and is a buffer against the high interest rate environment and its very important leverage effects: the main loan instrument is expected to lead to at least €24 billion of investments, while the InvestEU instrument from SMEs will lead to €2.5 billion of additional investments. The loans will contribute to the support of the green and digital transition with 37% of the envelope earmarked for climate transition and 20% for digital transition goals. The very important safeguards were also stressed, with an increased level of risk-sharing across stakeholders, the exclusive focus on new investments and multiple layers of ex ante and ex post auditing mechanisms leading to an effective and prudent lending instrument.

The **Secretary General of the Hellenic Bank Association, Ms. Charoula Apalagaki**, contributed to the discussion by presenting the banks' perspective on the implementation of the RRP. Banks have been in close cooperation with the Ministry of Finance since November 2021 and are doing their part in contributing to the green and digital transition of the Greek economy. The latter requires synergies between the public and the private sector which are present and significant in the RRF. The full and equal access to the e-platform for all stakeholders (State banks, companies, experts) was stressed as an element accelerating procedures and safeguarding transparency. It was noted that figures presented by co-panelists provide the best evidence for banks to proceed with the loan approvals while also following the legal requirements to ensure that the NPLs volume remains very low. Finally, efforts to support smaller businesses in the context of the RRP were highlighted.

The **Director for Greece of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Ms. Andreea Moraru**, presented the EBRD's operations in Greece. The bank (established in 1991) first started to operate in Greece in 2015 to help support the country's economic recovery and has invested so far approximately €6 billion across 94 investments with the portfolio between exclusively private and balanced between the corporate sector, sustainable infrastructure and financial institutions. The EBRD has three strategic priorities in Greece, namely, to improve the country's competitiveness by facilitating the expansion of the private sector, to support sustainable energy and to ensure the resilience of the financial sector. The main principles of their operations are based on the developmental impact and on that the

financed projects should be bankable, i.e., their operations are based on purely commercial principles. The EBRD was the first implementing partner to sign a partnership agreement with the Ministry of Finance and the European Commission and current projects have a total €1.2 billion envelope (€500 million from the RRF, €500 million from their own resources and the rest is covered by client contributions). One important element highlighted was that the EBRD applies the same eligibility criteria for the RRF projects as in their normal operations with the only difference being the RRF co-financing up to 50%. Green and extroversion/innovation pillars overlap with the EBRD's priorities while the RRF was characterized as very relevant given the current restrictive juncture due to the war in Ukraine leading to the current energy crisis and the adverse interest rate environment.

**Principal Advisor of the European Investment Bank, Mr. Christos Kontogeorgos**, made a short presentation of the history of the institution and its investments worldwide. EIB priorities include innovation, digital and human capital, sustainable energy and cities, SMEs and mid-caps. In terms of the RRF design and processes, emphasis is put on all pillars but particularly on green and digital transition. RRF funding is complementary to EIB financing (RRF up to 50%, EIB funding at least 30% and equity at least 20%), while appraisals are conducted as in standard EIB operations. The total portfolio is up to €5 billion and beneficiaries include private entities and SPVs as well as public corporates.

### 3. SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP TAKEAWAYS

---

The **Resident Adviser in Athens of Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs of the European Commission, Mr. Chris Allen**, summarized the workshop proceedings stressing the importance of the RRF financial transfers for Greece (more than 16% of GDP) as a chance for changing the country's growth model towards an environmental, digital and inclusive transformation through the RRF financial instruments and reforms.

- The **first panel discussion** showcased Greece as an RRF frontrunner along countries such as Croatia that also benefited from a large transfer relative to the country's GDP. The short time period for implementation up to 2026 required an efficient and centralized way of implementing the RRF and associated milestones. However, now that timely implementation had been firmly established, it was very important to open up a dialogue with stakeholders particularly local authorities and SMEs. It was also noted that municipalities will be much more involved in the context of the upcoming NSRF while SMEs will also be eligible for substantial additional financing through the recently signed EU Invest SME guarantee facility.
- The **second panel discussion** emphasized low labor market participation rates, mismatches between skills and labor market needs, low educational and skills outcomes and stressed the need to update Greece's social inclusion model. Some important reforms and pilot programs already implemented move towards this direction, while additional funds from the NSRF will further boost these efforts. Stakeholders had raised important criticisms of some of these pilots and it was essential to systematically evaluate and review the reforms in the skills and lifelong learning sector. The proposal from diaNEOsis to set up a Reform Observatory should also be considered

- The **third panel discussion** focused on the striking success of the Loan Facility so far which will help Greece get back on track in terms of investment rates. Mr. Allen also clarified that RRF funds are only the "tip of the iceberg" for SMEs and that upcoming EIF programs will foresee a total funding portfolio between €2.5 billion and €5 billion.

Mr Allen said that the workshop was the first step of an upcoming series of discussions that will focus on the RRP implementation. The debate provides an opportunity to discuss new perspectives and further improve implementation outcomes, while at the same time acknowledging Greece's highly positive performance to date.

## 4. ANNEX A – LIST OF SOURCES

---

### 1. NextGenerationEU and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)

- NextGenerationEU (hotlink: [https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://next-generation-eu.europa.eu/index_en))
- Recovery and resilience facility (hotlink: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility\\_en#the-recovery-and-resilience-facility](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en#the-recovery-and-resilience-facility))

### 2. Greece’s Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP)

- Website on the RRP “Greece 2.0” (hotlink: <https://greece20.gov.gr/>)
- Greece’s adopted RRP, in Greek (hotlink: [https://greece20.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/NRRP\\_Greece\\_2\\_0\\_Greek\\_280721.pdf](https://greece20.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/NRRP_Greece_2_0_Greek_280721.pdf)) and English (hotlink: [https://greece20.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/NRRP\\_Greece\\_2\\_0\\_English.pdf](https://greece20.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/NRRP_Greece_2_0_English.pdf))

### 3. Assessment of the Greek Recovery and Resilience Plan

- Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan of Greece and Annex ( hotlink: [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/public-register/public-register-search/results/?WordsInSubject=Council+Implementing+Decision+on+the+approval+of+the+assessment+of+the+recovery+and+resilience+plan+of+Greece&WordsInText=&DocumentNumber=&InterinstitutionalFiles=&DocumentDateFrom=&DocumentDateTo=&MeetingDateFrom=&MeetingDateTo=&DocumentLanguage=EN&OrderBy=DOCUMENT\\_DATE+DESC&ctl00%24ctl00%24cpMain%24cpMain%24btnSubmit=](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/public-register/public-register-search/results/?WordsInSubject=Council+Implementing+Decision+on+the+approval+of+the+assessment+of+the+recovery+and+resilience+plan+of+Greece&WordsInText=&DocumentNumber=&InterinstitutionalFiles=&DocumentDateFrom=&DocumentDateTo=&MeetingDateFrom=&MeetingDateTo=&DocumentLanguage=EN&OrderBy=DOCUMENT_DATE+DESC&ctl00%24ctl00%24cpMain%24cpMain%24btnSubmit=))
- Commission Staff Working Document: Analysis of the recovery and resilience plan of Greece (hotlink: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021SC0155&qid=1624627535718>)
- Factsheet: Greece’s recovery and resilience plan (hotlink: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/factsheet-greeces-recovery-and-resilience-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/factsheet-greeces-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en))
- Questions and answers: European Commission endorses Greece's plan (hotlink: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/questions-and-answers-european-commission-endorses-greeces-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/questions-and-answers-european-commission-endorses-greeces-plan_en))

### 4. Operational Arrangements

- Operational arrangements between the Commission and Greece (hotlink: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/operational-arrangements-between-commission-and-greece-02en\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/operational-arrangements-between-commission-and-greece-02en_en))
- Annex to the operational arrangements between the Commission and Greece (hotlink: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/operational-arrangements-between-commission-and-greece-01en\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/operational-arrangements-between-commission-and-greece-01en_en))

## 5. Payments

- Announcement for submission of Greece's 2nd payment request for €3.56 billion (hotlink: <https://greece20.gov.gr/en/submission-of-2nd-payment-request-for-3-56-billion-euros/>)
- Press release for disbursement of first payment of €3.6 billion to Greece (hotlink: <https://greece20.gov.gr/ellada-2-0-3-6-dis-evrw-apo-to-tameio-anakampsis/>)
- Press release: "European Commission disburses €4 billion in pre-financing to Greece" (hotlink: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_4068](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_4068))
- Preliminary assessment by the European Commission of Greece's 1<sup>st</sup> payment request (hotlink: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/preliminary-assessment-greece\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/preliminary-assessment-greece_en))

## 6. European Semester documents

- European Semester documents for Greece (hotlink: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/european-semester-your-country/greece/european-semester-documents-greece\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/european-semester-your-country/greece/european-semester-documents-greece_en))

## 7. Further information

- Presentation to the Council of Greece's recovery and resilience plan (hotlink: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/presentation-council-greeces-recovery-and-resilience-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/presentation-council-greeces-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en))
- Summary of the assessment of the Greek recovery and resilience plan (hotlink: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/summary-assessment-greek-recovery-and-resilience-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/summary-assessment-greek-recovery-and-resilience-plan_en))



---

## 5. ANNEX B – WORKSHOP PROGRAM

---

### 09:15 | Registration and welcoming coffee

### 10:00 | Introduction

**Nikos Vettas** | General Director, Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research – IOBE; Professor, Athens University of Economics and Business

### 10:10 | Welcoming Remarks

**Margaritis Schinas** | Vice-President for the European Commission (*via video*)

**Theodoros Skylakakis** | Alternate Minister for Finance, Hellenic Republic

**Moderator: Nikos Vettas** | Foundation for Economic & Industrial Research – IOBE

### 10:40 | Recovery and Resilience Plan – moving ahead with the implementation

**Dimosthenis Voivontas** | Head of Monitoring Directorate, Recovery & Resilience Facility Agency

**Julia Lendvai** | Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, European Commission

**Zvonimir Savić** | Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for Economic Issues, Republic of Croatia

**Dimitris Papastergiou** | President of the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece, KEDE

**Valia Aranitou** | Research Director, ESEE - INEMY institute, Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship

**Ioannis Lainas** | Senior Advisor, Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV)

**Moderator: Sotiris Nikas** | Bloomberg

### 11:40 | Coffee break

**12:10 | Growth with social inclusion**

**Thanasis Kontogeorgis** | Secretary General for the Coordination of the Government, Hellenic Republic

**Patrick Paquet** | Head of Unit on Greece, Directorate General of Employment and Social Inclusion, European Commission

**Elias Kikilias** | General Manager, Greek Tourism Confederation Institute, INSETE

**Manos Matsaganis** | Professor, Polytechnic University of Milan and ELIAMEP

**Fay Makantasi** | Research Director, diaNEOsis

**Moderator: John Papageorgiou** | Athens Municipal Radio, Head of Athens Digest

**13:20 | Lunch break****14:30 | The Loan Facility - facilitating access to finance for Greek businesses**

**Nikos Mantzoufas** | Governor of Recovery & Resilience Facility Agency

**Felicia Stanescu** | Head of Unit, Recovery and Resilience Task Force, European Commission

**Charoula Apalagaki** | Secretary General, Hellenic Bank Association

**Andreea Moraru** | Director for Greece, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

**Christos Kontogeorgos** | Principal Advisor, European Investment Bank

**Moderator: Eirini Chrysolora** | Kathimerini

**15:40 | Summary of conference takeaways**

**Chris Allen** | Resident Adviser in Athens, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, European Commission

**15:50 | - END -**