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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

**Ex-post evaluation of the Technical Assistance provided by the Task Force for Greece
(TFGR) 2011-2015**

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Executive Summary

The European Commission established the Task Force for Greece (TFGR) in July 2011, at the request of the Greek Prime Minister. The mandate of the TFGR was to identify and coordinate technical assistance to Greece, with the objective to deliver on commitments undertaken in the context of the economic adjustment programmes of the country. The TFGR acted upon demand of the Greek authorities.

The TFGR mandate included specifically the following tasks:

- 1) to provide technical assistance to the Greek authorities to support the delivery of commitments undertaken under the economic adjustment programme; and
- 2) to provide technical assistance to the Greek authorities for the acceleration in the absorption of EU funds.

In response to technical assistance demand expressed by the Greek authorities, the TFGR mobilised expertise or relevant support from Member States, international organisations or other specialist bodies that have relevant experience in implementing similar reforms.

The TFGR concluded its mandate at the end of June 2015.

The purpose of this ex-post evaluation is to focus on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value of the activities carried out and coordinated by the TFGR.

The evaluation follows a recommendation from the European Court of Auditors (ECA) issued in the context of the Special Report no 19/2015: “*More attention to results needed to improve the delivery of Technical Assistance (TA) to Greece*”. The ECA report raised two main questions: to reply to two key questions:

- 1) *To what extent was the EU technical assistance provided to Greece under the coordination of the TFGR managed effectively?*
- 2) *To what extent has the EU technical assistance provided to Greece under the coordination of the TFGR contributed positively to the process of reforms in Greece?*

1

The three economic adjustment programmes for Greece are out of the scope of this evaluation.

¹ European Parliament, Special Reports of the European Court of Auditors, 2017: “A Rolling Check-List of recent findings” [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/598604/EPRS_STU\(2017\)598604_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/598604/EPRS_STU(2017)598604_EN.pdf)

The ex-post evaluation of the technical assistance provided by the TFGR gathered information from three main source of information:

1. the desk research;
2. the online survey, and
3. the interviews with the stakeholders.

The data analysis led to the following conclusions:

- 1) The TFGR intervention **was overall relevant** in satisfying the needs, given the particular situation in Greece where immediate and wide-ranging actions were necessary to redress the financial and socio-economic situation. The TFGR intervened swiftly, mobilised the support from the Member States and the European Commission and adequately coordinated the requests from the Greek authorities for assistance with the available expertise.
- 2) The **specific objectives of the TFGR were largely achieved**. The TFGR succeeded to a high extent to detail the needs of the Greek authorities and to define concrete actions for reform implementation. The high-level meetings played an important role in elaborating and matching Greek authorities' needs with the technical assistance. The TFGR involved an extensive network of international organisations, European Commission representatives and experts for this purpose in order to be able to offer to the Greek authorities the needed support.
- 3) The detailed technical assistance **needs of the Greek authorities were timely identified**, given the swift operationalisation of the TFGR. Furthermore, identification and mobilisation of expertise was done in a very short period thanks to the direct support provided by the TFGR and by the European Commission staff, as well as thanks to the solidarity demonstrated by the Member States. The TFGR human resources and organisational set-up were efficiently deployed, making use of flexibility within the existing European Commission rules, specifically in order to enhance time efficiencies. The pace of implementation of the support for structural reforms in Greece was adequate, even if marked by contextual and institutional factors such as the political instability.

- 4) The size of **TFGR's budget was appropriate and proportional** to the type of intervention it was set out to achieve – integrating several funding sources to finance the actions of the TFGR. **Administrative burden was reasonable.**
- 5) Based on its mandate, the **TFGR intervention was in line with the commitments undertaken by the Greek Government under the economic adjustment programmes.** The coordination mechanism put in place at the level of European Commission services and in particular between the TFGR and DG EMPL (in the latter, through a dedicated financial team and the geographical unit in charge of Greece) focused primarily on avoiding potential funding overlaps. The TFGR actions contributed then to a coherent implementation of EU law and policies.
- 6) The **TFGR provided significant EU added value** by achieving better results than what could have been achieved solely by the actions of the supported Member State, by leveraging on the high-level and senior expertise of various DGs of the European Commission and of the involved Member States.
- 7) The **TFGR contributed to the development and implementation of solutions that addressed national challenges that have an impact on cross-border or Union-wide challenges.** In addition, the TFGR supported the promotion of **EU values**, in particular **solidarity within the European Union.** Both the European Commission and EU Member States provided expertise and financed the cost of such expertise. Good practices were exchanged extensively in almost all policy areas both to support the planning of needed reforms, as well as to develop and/or pilot specific solutions for reforms. Out of the solutions implemented in Greece, several could be identified as **transferable good practices** (e.g. trade facilitation roadmap in business environment, the realisation of job descriptions with respect to administrative reform at central level). Finally, most of the stakeholders recognized the EU added value of the TFGR intervention, either by its direct or coordinated technical contribution or by its contribution to triggering some organisational and functional changes at the level of Greek authorities.