



The Global Initiative

for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

**Parallel Report submitted by the
Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR)
to the Pre-Sessional Working Group
of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
on the occasion of the consideration of List of Issues related to the
Second Periodic Report of Greece
during the Committee's 55th Session**

Submitted January 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR) is an international non-governmental human rights organization which seeks to advance the realization of economic, social and cultural rights throughout the world, tackling the endemic problem of global poverty through a human rights lens. The vision of the GI-ESCR is of a world where economic, social and cultural rights are fully respected, protected and fulfilled and on equal footing with civil and political rights, so that all people are able to live in dignity.

2. The mission of the GI-ESCR is to strengthen the international human rights framework through creative standard setting, so that all people, and in particular marginalized individuals and groups, are able to fully enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights, and are able to do so without discrimination and on the basis of equality; provide innovative tools to policy makers, development actors and others on the practical implementation and realization of economic, social and cultural rights; enforce economic, social and cultural rights through international, regional and national mechanisms and seek remedies for violations of these rights, with a focus on creating beneficial jurisprudence aimed at transformative change; engage networks of human rights, women's rights, environmental and development organizations and agencies to advance the sustainable enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights at both national and international levels; and work with advocates, social movements and grassroots communities at national and local levels to more effectively claim and enforce economic, social and cultural rights, including by engaging international mechanisms for local impact.

3. In 2014, the GI-ESCR participated in a fact-finding mission to Greece with FIDH and contributed an economic, social and cultural rights analysis to the report by FIDH and its member organisation the Hellenic League for Human Rights entitled *Downgrading Rights: The Cost of Austerity in Greece* (November 2014). The report can be found at: <https://www.fidh.org/International-Federation-for-Human-Rights/europe/greece/16675-greece-report-unveils-human-rights-violations-stemming-from-austerity>

2. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the context of austerity measures.

4. The FIDH and Hellenic League for Human Rights report entitled *Downgrading Rights: The Cost of Austerity in Greece* examined the impacts of austerity measures on the right to work and the right to the highest attainable standard of health under the Covenant. The report found that enjoyment of these rights were eroded on account of austerity measures.

5. As articulated by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in its *Report on Austerity Measures and Economic and Social Rights*, submitted pursuant to UN General Assembly resolution 48/141 (2012), austerity measures must meet certain criteria to remain within the human rights framework. These criteria lay out five broad areas that must be taken into consideration to prevent human rights violations in the implementation of austerity or otherwise retrogressive measures.

First, austerity measures must only be considered to address the existence of a compelling State interest; second, the necessity, reasonableness, temporariness and proportionality of austerity measures must be considered; third, there must be no other feasible alternative or less restrictive measure that could respond to the compelling State interest; fourth, the measures must be non-discriminatory; fifth, the protection of a minimum core content of each right must be a component of the measures; and finally, there must be genuine participation of affected groups and individuals in determining the measures and considering these criteria.

3. Suggestions for List of Issues and Questions to State Party

6. What steps has the State Party taken to ensure that it abides by its obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the context of retrogressive measures taken within austerity measures?
7. What steps has the State Party taken to ensure that any retrogressive measures are justified under the totality of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights?
8. What steps has the State Party taken to ensure that it has met and continues to meet the criteria laid by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in its *Report on Austerity Measures and Economic and Social Rights*, submitted pursuant to UN General Assembly resolution 48/141 (2012)?
9. What steps has the State Party taken to ensure that other States, including as members of inter-governmental organizations, abide by their extra-territorial obligations under the Covenant regarding decisions and actions that impact Covenant rights in Greece?

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