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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS
COMITE EUROPEEN DES DROITS SOCIAUX**

19 November 2015

Case Document No. 5

Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE) v. Greece
Complaint No.111/2014

**SUBMISSIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT
ON THE MERITS**

Registered at the Secretariat on 19 November 2015



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF LABOUR,
SOCIAL SECURITY &
SOCIAL SOLIDARITY
GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT & E-
GOVERNANCE
DIRECTORATE OF
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SECTION I

Athens, 9/11/2015

Ref.No: 52185/1151

TO:

The Council of Europe
Directorate General of Human Rights
& Rule of Law
Directorate of Human Rights
Secretariat of the European Social Charter
F- 67075 Strasbourg Cedex
To the attention of Mr. Regis Brillat
Head of the Department of the ESC
Executive Secretary of the ECSR

COMM.:

- 1) Permanent Delegation of Greece
in the Council of Europe
21 Place Broglie, 67000 Strasbourg
- 2) Ministry of Foreign Affairs
D3 - Directorate for the Council of Europe
Vas. Sofias 1, 10027 Athens

SUBJECT: Collective Complaint No111/2014 – Observations on the merits

Dear Mr. Brillat,

We have the honour to inform you that we hereby forward to you the written observations of the Greek Government on the merits of the Collective Complaint No111/2014 “Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE) v. Greece” and we kindly request that you forward them to the European Committee of Social Rights.

THE MINISTER



GEORGE KATROUGALOS

**OBSERVATIONS OF THE HELLENIC GOVERNMENT
ON THE MERITS OF COLLECTIVE COMPLAINT 111/2014**

In accordance with the decision of the European Committee on Social Rights, dated May 19th 2015, on the admissibility of the Collective Complaint No111/2014 filed by the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE) against Greece regarding violation of articles 1, 2, 4, 7, 30 of the ESC, as well as of article 3§1 of the 1988 Additional Protocol to the 1961 ESC,

We lawfully submit the present memorandum with the observations of the Hellenic Government on the merits of the said Complaint:

The Greek economy is still suffering from the devastating effects of harsh neoliberal policies that have resulted in an unprecedented dismantlement of the welfare state. The former governments of Greece, in the framework of adjustment programs agreed with its institutional creditors, under a compelling need of financing, applied a mix of fiscal austerity, cutbacks in public spending, reductions in wages and pensions, layoffs of public employees, privatizations of valuable state assets, and extended deregulation of the labour market.

As it should have been expected, not only did the above policies create immense levels of unemployment and poverty but, also, failed to establish a competitive market that would attract investments and promote sustainable and inclusive growth. Specifically, unemployment climbed to 26%, and over 55% for young people, poverty rose over 27%, while investment and consumption plummeted with the Greek economy losing more than 25% of its GDP in a 6-year period. On top of that, the above policies did not manage to ensure the sustainability of the public debt, which was the central target of the bailout programs, but, nonetheless, soared from 109% to 175% of GDP over the past six years.

During its first term in office, the current Greek government made enormous efforts, throughout its negotiations with the European institutions and the IMF, in order to replace the austerity programs with expansionary economic policies, as well as to establish a fair distribution of financial burdens across the social spectrum and restore labour and social rights.

In addition, the government made extensive endeavors to halt the systematic deregulation of the labour market and the continuous deterioration of the bargaining position of the employees both in the collective, as well as the individual level.

Moreover, the government tried to bring remedies to the ongoing humanitarian crisis that has inflicted a devastating blow on a large portion of the society, and insisted on the creation of social safety nets to provide support to the most vulnerable. The current government of Greece, in its second term, remains unequivocally opposed to any violation of or limitation to employees' individual and collective rights that, needless to say, did not achieve the goals of strengthening the competitiveness of the Greek economy and tackling the soaring unemployment.

The Government of Greece is determined to respect its international obligations, such as these rising from the European Social Charter, in tandem with its membership in the EU and the Eurozone and the subsequent obligations.

The protection of the European Social Model and the return to the "European normality" of social dialogue, collective agreements and social rights constitute its primary objectives.