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EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

Ad hoc report on the cost-of-living crisis

submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF GREECE

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CYCLE 2023

Greece

1st Ad Hoc Report

“The Cost-of-Living Crisis”

Ministry of Labour and Social Security

December 2023

Please provide information as to whether and how the statutory minimum wage is regularly adjusted/indexed to the cost of living. Please indicate when this last happened, specifically whether it has been adjusted /indexed since the end of 2021

There is no automatic indexation of the minimum wage in Greece. The procedure followed for the determination of the minimum wage and daily wage is described in detail in article 103 of Law 4172/2013 as in force.

Please provide information on any supplementary measures taken to preserve the purchasing power of the minimum wage since the end of 2021

With regard to National measures to combat price increase of products due to the current financial situation, we would like to highlight 2 initiatives taken by the Greek Government concerning the issue, namely:

- a) the “household basket” measure¹ and
- b) the unfair profiteering legislation²

Measure 1: Household basket

The measure of the “household basket” was introduced into Greek legislation by virtue of Art. 87 law 4986/2022 and the respective implementing Ministerial Decisions. In essence, the household basket is a set of supermarket products protected from inflation. The measure is intended to be temporary.

The measure aims at ensuring low prices for categories of essential consumer goods, determined by the Ministry, while each supermarket chain is free to choose which specific product codes are to be included in the basket and their prices. Supermarkets shall include at least one (1) product from each product category and make it available at an affordable price. Prices of the products selected freely by supermarket chains shall remain unchanged for at least one week (or they might slightly increase and, in any case, less than the inflation rate of the product category).

The scope of the provision covers supermarket chains whose total annual turnover exceeds ninety million (90,000,000) euros per year. At regular intervals, (once a week according to the implementing Ministerial Decisions), these supermarket chains are obliged to send to the Ministry of Development the list of consumer products from a pre-determined product categories included in the household basket. The basket includes various ailments such as flour, pasta, meat, fish, dairy

¹ See Art. 87 of Law 4986/2022 and the implementing Ministerial Decisions.

² See Art.58 law 4818/2021 and the implementing Ministerial Decisions

products. It also includes beverages, cleaning products, hand sanitizers, personal hygiene products, disposable nappies, baby formula and pet food. The current categories of products are mentioned in the implementing Ministerial Decisions.

The prices of the products that make up each supermarket's "household basket" are posted each Wednesday on the official website of the Ministry: <https://e-katanalotis.gov.gr/householdBasket>. Consumers can search prices and products per supermarket.

Furthermore, the products included in the basket shall bear a special sign on the shelf. In addition, a list of the products included in the "household basket" should be placed in a prominent spot at the entrance of the store. Supermarket chains are responsible to ensure that the quantity of the products included in the "household basket" is sufficient. In the event that product supplies get exhausted, supermarket chains have to replace them with a corresponding product of equal or lower value. The Inspection Authorities have the power to impose fines from 1,000 to 50,000 euros if the "household basket" signs are not clearly visible, or the quantity of the products offered is limited.

According to the data we have collected, the price of the average basket dropped significantly. In addition, supermarkets' competition, as regards products not included in the basket, became more intense, having as a result an overall drop in prices.

Measure 2: Unfair profiteering legislation

Article 58 law 4818/2021 and the implementing Ministerial Decisions ban unfair profiteering. The provision is exceptional – and temporary in nature – aims to combat unfair profiteering, initially during COVID-19 and health crisis and now during the financial and energy crisis related to the Russian war against Ukraine.

According to the legislation for the period starting from the publication of the law 4818/2021 until December 31, 2023, all enterprises are prohibited from gaining a gross profit which exceeds the corresponding gross profit margin per unit they gained before 1/9/2021.

The above restriction to the gross profit margin applied initially to the sale of any product or the rendering of any service necessary for health, nutrition, living, transportation and consumer safety, as well as to the sale of agricultural products and food, in particular raw materials for the production of fertilizers, animal feed, raw grains of all kinds, flour, sunflower and vegetable oils (Art. 58 par.1). The scope of the products/ services covered was extended in order to also include a) household devices sold in the context of a program subsidized by the Ministry of Environment and Energy (Art. 58 par. 1A) and b) solid fuels of any kind used for space heating (Art. 58 par. 1B).

The competent Authorities have extensive inspection and enforcement powers in order to ensure compliance with the above provision. They can impose sanctions ranging from 5.000 euros to 1.000.000 euros.

According to the implementing Ministerial Decision, the reference period that has to be taken into account in order to determine if an unfair profiteering exists lasts the two months of July and August of the year 2021. or, in case there was no sale of product/service during this period, then the reference period that should be taken into account shall be the most recent two (2) months prior to 1.9.2021 during which sales of product/service took place. Different reference periods are set for the household devices and the solid fuels which were added subsequently to the provision, as mentioned above. The implementing Ministerial Decision contains detailed provisions regarding the inspection powers of the Authorities, the Competent Authorities, the applicable fines, the setting of maximum allowed gross profit margin, the maximum selling price regarding specific fuels, the judicial protection and the collection of fines.

Furthermore, as far as consumer prices (other than energy) are concerned, the Ministry of Development imposed, in November 2023, fines on the two largest multinational companies in the consumer goods sector in Greece (in accordance with the provisions of Article 54 of Law 5045/29-07-2023). The fines, amounting to 1 million euros (maximum fines) on each of the two companies, were imposed for breaching gross margin cap laws on more than 100 product codes, including detergents, household cleaners and personal hygiene products. Notably the ministry agencies are about to complete the probe on five more multinational companies and there is high probability of new fines soon³.

In addition, apart from the "Household Basket" initiative⁴, which is in place from October 2022, the Ministry of Development introduced in October 2023 an additional measure, namely the "Permanent Price Reduction", i.e. the commitment to reduce prices by at least 5% and for a period of no less than six months⁵.

³ See <https://www.mindev.gov.gr/κώστας-σκέρας-πρόστιμα-2-000-000-ευρώ-σε-πο/> (in Greek).

⁴ See ministerial decision 104093/31-10-2022. Also, see <https://www.mindev.gov.gr/kalathi-noikokiriou/> (in Greek).

⁵ See ministerial decision 92568/11-10-2023. Also, see <https://www.mindev.gov.gr/κώστας-σκέρας-233-προϊόντα-σε-21-βασικές/> (in Greek)

Please provide information on changes to social security and social assistance systems since the end of 2021. This should include information on benefits and assistance levels and the allocation of benefits

Institutional changes to social security systems

By virtue of article 25 of Law 4865/2021 (G.G. A 238/4-12-2021) an exceptional financial assistance was granted to vulnerable categories of pensioners (old age, disability or survivor's pensions) for the year 2021, depending on specific income requirements, while by virtue of article 53 of Law 4917/2022 (G.G. A 219/25-11-2022) and article 3 of Law 4997/2022 (G.G. A' 219/25-11-2022) an exceptional financial assistance was one again granted to vulnerable pensioners (old age, disability or survivor's pensions) during Easter and Christmas of 2022, respectively.

Moreover, article 80 of Law 5036/2023 (G.G. A' 77/28-03-2023) established a one-off financial assistance to pensioners to protect pensions against Inflation in 2022. This financial assistance is tax-free, non-transferable and exempt from seizure, by the state or third parties, notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, it cannot be blocked and offset against debts to the tax administration and the state in general, public law legal entities, Local Self-Government Agencies and their legal entities, social insurance funds or credit institutions and it is not included in the income limits for the payment of any social or welfare benefit.

The above mentioned exceptional financial assistance does not constitute an institutional reform of the social security system to tackle the rise in cost of living. They are one-off exceptional financial assistance.

As regards welfare benefits and their amounts, see reply to Question 9.

Please provide information as to whether social security benefits and assistance are indexed to the cost of living, as well as information in particular on how income-replacing benefits such as pensions are indexed. Please indicate when benefits and assistance were last adjusted/indexed

As regards how income-replacing benefits such as pensions are indexed:

a) By virtue of article 14 para. 4 (a) of Law 4387/2016, as in force, provision is made that the total pension amount shall increase annually as of 1/1/2023, by joint decision of the Ministers of Finance and of Labour and Social Affairs, based on a coefficient resulting from the sum of the annual percentage change in GDP plus the percentage change in the average annual general consumer price index of

the previous year, divided by two (2), and it does not exceed the percentage change in the average annual general consumer price index.

By virtue of article 18 of Law 4997/2022 the time frame is specified for the adoption of the Decision under article 14.4.a of Law 4387/2016 on setting the total amount of pension that shall increase annually by joint decision as of 1/1/2023, i.e., till the 31st of December of the previous year, based on the data included in the State Budget Explanatory Report. According to article one of Joint Ministerial Decision No. 126331/28-12-2022 (G.G. 6949/B/30-12-2022), the total amount of main pensions (old age, disability or survivor's pensions) granted by the electronic Unified Social Security Institution (e-EΦKA), the payment of which started up to 31/12/2022, shall increase as of 1/1/2023, by seven point seventy five percent (7,75%), while the coefficient of article 14.4 of Law 4387/2016 is set at 1,0775.

b) By virtue of article 95 of Law 5043/2023, G.G. A' 91/13-04-2023, as of 1/5/2023, an increase of eight percentage points (8%) was granted, in benefits granted to persons with disabilities by the electronic Unified Social Security Institution (e-EΦKA), for financial assistance to this vulnerable social group as an offset to the effects of inflation and cost of living.

More specifically, the following has increased:

- i. The monthly amount of the increase under article 4.2 of P.D. 334/1988 (A' 154), (Total disability benefit for pensioners of the former OGA who receive only the basic pension by the former OGA, provided they have received 100% disability rating for life),
- ii. The monthly amount of the benefit under article 54 of P.D. 169/2007 (A' 210) (illness and disability benefit for pensioners of the public sector)
- iii. The monthly amount of the non-institutional benefit under article 42 of Law 1140/1981 (A' 68)

c) In the case of prospective pensioners, Article 8 para.4a of Law 4387/2016 provides for an adjustment of the pensionable earnings considered for the calculation of the pension for the period up to 2024, according to the change in the average annual general Consumer Price Index of the Hellenic Statistical Authority. The increase in pensionable earnings, for the period from 2025 onwards, is based on the Wage Change Index, calculated by ELSTAT.

Furthermore, as regards the Guaranteed Minimum Income [GMI] (see under Question 9) cash benefit remains the same since the nationwide rollout of the program in February 2017. There are no indexation rules set for GMI. Though, the government has announced an 8% increase on the cash benefit, with effect from the beginning of 2024.

As regards the Housing Benefit (see also under Question 9), it remains the same since the nationwide rollout of the program in March 2019. There are no indexation rules set for it.

As regards the program “Housing and work for the homeless” (see also under Question 9), there are no indexation rules set for it.

Please provide information as to whether any special measures have been adopted since late 2021 to ensure persons can meet their energy and food costs, such as price subsidies for energy, fuel, and basic food items -

As regards the specific measures taken to cover energy and food costs, these include the following provisions:

- Article 67 of Law 4950/2022⁶, on financial assistance due to an increase in energy costs to contribute to the coverage of the cost of fuel consumption for the months of July, August and December
- Article 115 of Law 5007/2022⁷, on financial assistance from the State budget to cover part of the increased costs of the households due to the significant increase in the Consumer Price Index

In the corresponding Regulatory Impact Analysis on the draft law for the provisions:

- according to Article 115 of Law 5007/2022, it is stated, inter alia, that: “the provisions of the said article aim to provide financial relief to low- and middle-income households, particularly affected by the rising cost for the purchase of goods of all kinds from shops and neighborhood farmers markets (laiki agora) engaged in food retailing. Under the proposed provisions, each household is granted a financial assistance from February 2023 until July 2023 to cover part of the increase in the cost of purchasing goods of all kinds. The monthly assistance amounts to ten percent (10%) of the monthly number of purchases, which varies according to the number of household members (from €220 for a single person and €100 for each additional member and up to €1000). The money is credited monthly to a digital debit card. Alternatively, at the choice of the beneficiary, it may be deposited in the beneficiary’s bank account. If the bank account is chosen, payments shall be made quarterly, and the assistance shall amount to eighty percent (80%) of the above payments. According to Law 5045/2023 and Joint

⁶ Ministerial Decision No.4105/29-7-2022 (B’ 4091) by means of delegated acts under the said article.

⁷ Ministerial Decision No. 1170/19.1.2023 (B’242) by means of delegated acts, as amended by Ministerial Decision No.1425/17.2.2023 (B’ 914).

Ministerial Decision 147 (GG 5243/B'/29.08.2023), the extension of the measure for the months of August, September and October was established.

In the corresponding Regulatory Impact Analysis of the draft law for the provisions:

- of Article 67 of Law 4950/2022, it is stated inter alia that: “Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the consequent and continuing rapid increase in energy cost, the high price of fuel has caused a particular burden on households and professionals, and even more so on those with low and middle income who cannot afford to spend a larger part of their disposable income on fuel. The proposed regulation, with a view to avoiding significant economic and social repercussions, seeks to further support the beneficiaries of the subsidy by covering a percentage of the increase in the price of motor fuel, to normalize the daily life of citizens and contribute to preserving their disposable income. The increase in the limits of the declared family income by three thousand euros for each household member (spouse/civil partner/dependent children) widens the number of beneficiaries, while the option of using a digital debit card ensures a higher subsidy amount, enhancing the transparency and efficiency of the measure».

It should be noted that tax criteria are required for the above financial assistance, as described in the above institutional framework.

Please provide up-to-date information on at-risk-of-poverty rates for the population as a whole, as well as for children, families identified as being at risk of poverty, persons with disabilities and older persons. Please show the trend over the last 5 years, as well as forecasts for upcoming years

According to the Greek Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), the most recent available statistical data from EU-SILC 2022 (Reference year⁸ 2021) are the following:

Poverty Threshold

In 2015 the poverty threshold increased to 5.712 Euros (5.252 in 2021) per person annually and to 11.995 Euros (11.028 in 2021) for households with two adults and two dependent children under 14 years old.

⁸ The reference year is the previous calendar year from the one in which the survey was conducted

Table 1. Greece, poverty threshold (2017-2022)

Year	1 person	Households with two adults and two dependent children under 14 years old
2017	4.560	9.576
2018	4.718	9.908
2019	4.917	10.326
2020	5.266	11.059
2021	5.252	11.028
2022	5.712	11.995

Source: ELSTAT, Press Release May 2023: Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, 2022

In absolute numbers, households at risk of poverty are estimated at 742,235 out of a total of 4,049,102 households and their members at 1,945,199 out of a total of 10,399,329 people living in private households. The absolute numbers appear clearly reduced.

Table 2. Greece, population at risk-of-poverty (AROP)

Year	Number of households	Number of people	% of total population
2017	789,585	2.153.691	20,2%
2018	763.174	1.954.400	18,5%
2019	-	1.882.000	17,9%
2020	697.590	1.861.963	17,7%
2021	765.372	2.054.015	19,6%
2022	742.235	1.945.199	18,8%

Source: ELSTAT, Press Release May 2023: Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, 2022

In Greece, the risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2022 reached 26.3% and decreased by 3.2% compared to 2021.

Accordingly, the risk of poverty in 2022 decreased by 0.8%, reaching 18.8%, compared to 19.6% in 2021, similarly, both for the entire population and for each gender separately.

The percentage of the population in material deprivation amounts to 13.9% and appears reduced by 0.9% compared to 2021.

The percentage of the population aged 0-64 living in households with low work intensity decreased in 2022 by 2.6% compared to 2021.

Table 3. Greece, Population at risk-of-poverty or social exclusion (AROPE), 2017-2023

Rate	Total						Women						Men					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Population at risk of poverty or social exclusion	34,8%	31,8%	30%	28,9%	29,5%	26,3%	35,7%	32,6%	30,8%	29,9%	29,2%	27,4%	33,9%	30,9%	29,2%	28%	27,3%	25,2%
Population at risk of poverty	20,2%	18,5%	17,9%	17,7%	19,6%	18,8%	20,2%	18,5%	18%	17,8%	19,8%	19,4%	20,2%	18,5%	17,7%	17,5%	19,4%	18,2%
Population in material deprivation	21,1%	16,7%	16,2%	16,6%	14,8%	13,9%	21,2%	16,5%	16,5%	17%	14,5%	14,6%	21%	17%	15,9%	16,1%	13,2%	13,1%
Population 0-64 living in household with very low work intensity	15,6%	16,3%	15,6%	12,6%	12,1%	9,5%	17%	18,1%	17,3%	13,7%	12,9%	10,3%	14,2%	14,5%	14%	11,5%	11,4%	8,7%

Source: ELSTAT, Press Release May 2023: Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, 2022

The at-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers decreased by 0.8% for the entire population and for each gender separately, and by 1.3% for children aged 0-17 and by 1.7% for the 18-64 age group. In the 65+ age group, for men the increase reaches 2.6% and for women 2%.

Table 4. Greece, Population at risk-of-poverty (after social transfers) by gender and age group, 2015-2022

Age groups	Total							2022
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Total	21,4%	21,2%	20,2%	18,5%	17,9%	17,7%	19,6%	18,8%
0-17	26,6%	26,3%	24,5%	22,7%	21,1%	21,4%	23,7%	22,4%
18-64	22,5%	22,7%	21,7%	19,8%	18,9%	18,5%	20,6%	18,9%
65+	13,7%	12,4%	12,4%	11,6%	12,2%	13,2%	13,5%	15,8%
	Men							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	21,5%	21,2%	20,2%	18,5%	17,7%	17,5%	19,4%	18,2%
0-17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
18-64	22,6%	22,8%	21,8%	19,7%	18,7%	18,3%	20,9%	18,9%
65+	11,9%	10,0%	11,1%	10,4%	10,9%	11,0%	11,0%	13,6%
	Women							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	21,2%	21,2%	20,2%	18,5%	18,0%	17,9%	19,8%	19,4%
0-17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
18-64	22,1%	22,7%	21,8%	19,9%	19,2%	18,7%	20,4%	19%
65+	15,2%	13,8%	11,1%	12,6%	13,4%	14,9%	15,6%	17,6%

Source: ELSTAT, Press Release May 2023: Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, 2022

Material and social deprivation remained stable for the entire population in 2022, reaching 13.9% again, while it increased by 2.1% for children. The rate of material and social deprivation for people 65+ also increased by 0.5%, with a greater increase recorded for women.

Table 5. Greece, Material and social deprivation rate, 2020-2022

Age groups	2022	2021	2020
Total	13,9%	13,9%	14,9%
Men	13,1%	13,2%	14,3%
Women	14,6%	14,5%	15,5%
0-17	15,5%	13,4%	19,9%
18-64	14,6%	14,6%	15,3%
Men	13,8%	13,8%	14,4%
Women	15,4%	15,3%	16,3%
65+	10,8%	10,3%	10,6%
Men	8,8%	8,6%	9,2%
Women	12,4%	11,6%	11,7%

Source: ELSTAT, Press Release May 2023: Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, 2022

The risk of poverty for children aged 0-17 years, decreased by 1.3% compared to 2021 and reached 22.4% in 2022. Compared to 2013 (28.8%), which was the highest rate in the last 10 years, it decreased by 6.4 percentage points.

The material deprivation for children also decreased by 0.6% compared to 2021, recording a rate of 15.5%.

Table 6. Greece, Risk of poverty for children aged 0-17 years old (child poverty), 2008-2022

Year	Total
2008	23,0%
2012	26,9%
2013	28,8%
2014	25,5%
2015	26,6%
2016	26,3%
2017	24,5%
2018	22,7%
2019	21,1%
2020	20,9%
2021	23,7%
2022	22,4%

Source: ELSTAT, Press Release May 2023: Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, 2022

Table 7. Greece, Material deprivation rate for children (0-17 years), 2009-2022

Year	Total
2009	12,20%
2011	16,40%
2012	20,90%
2013	23,30%
2014	23,80%
2015	25,70%
2016	26,70%

2017	23,80%
2018	18,60%
2019	17,60%
2020	19,70%
2021	16,10%
2022	15,5%

Source: ELSTAT, Press Release May 2023: Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, 2022

Please provide information on what measures are being taken to ensure a coordinated approach to combat poverty as required by Article 30 of the Charter, and to diminish reliance on last-resort relief, such as food banks and soup kitchens

A. Guaranteed Minimum Income

The Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) is a tax financed welfare programme that is addressed to households living in extreme poverty and complements the policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

The programme combines:

I. Income support: cash benefit to a recipient unit.

II. Complementary social services, benefits and goods for the members of the household, if they meet the criteria for inclusion in each programme:

- free medical treatment of persons not entitled to health benefits by a social security institution;
- referral and inclusion in social care and support structures and services;
- inclusion in programmes and social structures for tackling poverty;
- inclusion in programmes implemented under the Fund for European Help to the Most Deprived;
- social tariff of power providers;
- social tariff of water providers;
- social tariff for Municipality fees and Municipal Enterprises fees.

III. Activation services: promoting beneficiaries, provided they are able to work, to actions aiming at the integration or reintegration into the labour market, including inter alia:

- acceptance of proposed employment position;
- participation in community work programmes;

- participation in vocational training programmes;
- participation in traineeship and internship programmes;
- integration or reintegration into the educational system and in second-chance schools.

The programme is centrally organised and entitlement is based on subjective right. To be eligible to the programme, households must simultaneously meet all income, assets and residency conditions laid down by the law.

❖ Income criteria

The reported income of the household, as calculated for eligibility purposes, in the six (6) last months prior to submission of the application, may not exceed six-times the amount of the guaranteed amount for each type of household.

The following examples are cited by way of indication:

Household composition	Six-month Income
One-person household	1,200€
Household consisting of two adults or a single parent family with one minor	1,800€
Household consisting of two adults and one minor or a single parent family with two minors	2,100€
Household consisting of three adults or two adults and two minors or a single parent family with three minors	2,400€
Household consisting of three adults and one minor or two adults and three minors or a single parent family with four minors	2,700€
Household consisting of four adults or two adults and four minors or a single parent family with five minors	3,000€

The reported income may not exceed the amount of EUR 5,400, regardless of the number of household members. The guaranteed amount varies according to the household situation (i.e. number and age of household members).

Specifically:

- for single-person households: €200 per month;
- for each additional adult of the household: €100 per month;
- for each additional minor of the household: €50 per month;

- in single parent household, i.e. where one parent (unmarried, widowed or divorced, or due to detention of the other parent in prison) exercises exclusively or by court decision the parental care of one or more minor children: the older minor member is counted as an adult;
- in households with unprotected child(ren): each unprotected child is counted as an adult.

The maximum guaranteed amount is €900 per month, regardless of the composition of the household.

GMI cash benefit remains the same since the nationwide rollout of the program in February 2017. There are no indexation rules set for GMI. Though, the government has announced an 8% increase on the cash benefit, with effect from the beginning of 2024.

B. Housing Benefit

Separate social assistance scheme aiming to help low income households who live in rented primary residences to meet their housing costs. The programme is centrally financed and organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and entitlement is based on subjective right.

To be eligible to the programme, households must simultaneously meet the following criteria on income, assets and permanent residence:

- the total annual income of a single-person household cannot exceed €7,000, while for each additional household member (adult or child) this amount is increased by €3,500. Irrespective of the composition of the household, the total eligible annual income cannot exceed €21,000.
- the total taxable value of the single-person household's property cannot be over €120,000, increased by €15,000 for each additional member of the household (adult or child), while the maximum total taxable value of the property cannot exceed €180,000. In addition to the above, the total amount of bank deposits or/and the current value of shares, bonds, etc. of the single-person household cannot exceed €7,000, increased by €3,500 for each additional household member (adult or child) and up to a maximum of €21,000.
- Greeks, EU nationals, beneficiaries of international protection, subsidiary protection beneficiaries and beneficiaries with a humanitarian status, must have been legal and permanent residents of the country during the last five years preceding the submission of the application. For third country nationals, who do not fall into the above mentioned categories, a permanent and legal residence of twelve years is required.

The amount of the benefit is fixed at €70 per month for a single-person household, while for each additional household member is increased by €35 per month.

The total amount of the benefit cannot exceed €210 per month, irrespective of the composition of the household. If the actual amount of the rent paid by the household is lower than the amount of the benefit, the total amount of the subsidy paid is equal to the actual rent. The application can be submitted electronically, either directly by the applicant or through the municipalities or community centres. The benefit is paid for six months from the date of first payment. After the lapse of the above period, the beneficiary is required to resubmit an application for inclusion in the program.

Housing Benefit remains the same since the nationwide rollout of the program in March 2019. There are no indexation rules set for it.

C. Housing and work for the homeless

A housing first inspired program for persons and families experiencing homelessness named “Housing and work for the homeless” is being implemented since 2015. Under the provisions of art.15 of Law 4756/2020, the program is implemented at least every two years with a total budget of 10.000.000€, thus acting as a permanent housing and reintegration policy for the homeless.

It aims to cover at least 600 households and 800 beneficiaries. It provides:

- Rent subsidy up to 250 euros per month for one-person households and 350 euros for multi-person households for a period of two years
- Rent subsidy for the 3rd year up to 75% and for the 4th year up to 30%-50% of the abovementioned subsidy amount
- One-off allowance of 1.000 up to 1.300 euros for household equipment.
- One-off allowance of 1.000 up to 1.300 euros for household bills
- Counseling and social support for at least two years
- Work subsidy (full minimum wage covering) for a period of 1 year and subsidy for non-salary costs for another 1 year

The above mentioned provisions set in the joint ministerial decision n. 42815/2021 remain the same. Also, there are no indexation rules set for these provisions.

Please provide information on steps taken to consult with, and ensure the participation of, the persons most affected by the cost of living crisis and/or organisations representing their interests in the process of designing of measures in response to the crisis

The General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Fight Against Poverty during the drafting period of National Strategy considered that it is necessary to strengthen and develop the cooperation and networking between the public and private sectors. For this purpose, the General Secretary for Social Solidarity and Fight Against Poverty set up 5 working groups for each of the following target groups: people with disabilities, children, the elderly, homeless people and people and families living in homelessness and Roma.

The groups meet regularly from June 2022, with wide participation (OPEKA, Social Welfare Centers, Ministry of Health, Ombudsman, Association of Social Workers of Greece, National Committee for Human Rights, Central Union of Municipalities of Greece, representatives of secondary and tertiary organizations for the defense of the rights of children, people with disabilities, the Roma, the Homeless). The working group contributes to the collection of all available information, the planning and redesign of actions and the joint submission and elaboration of proposals and policy measures.

Its work is structured in six (6) axes:

- Benefit policy - Income support
- Access to health services
- Access to education and training services
- Access to work
- Access to the housing
- Access to social life without exclusions.