

“Climate Crisis and Social Dialogue towards Sustainable Transition”

International Conference

27 June 2022 Athens, Greece

CONCLUSIONS

Climate change and its now evident impact has undoubtedly become one of the most urgent and pressing problems in the world, forcing international community to focus closely on identifying and addressing the challenges it has brought to the fore.

The International Conference organized by the Economic and Social Council of Greece, in Athens, June 27th, recorded a wide participation of countries and social actors from different places all over the world and highlighted the common increasing concern for the future of the planet, as well as the common will to cooperate internationally and find common and sustainable solutions in the field of climate change, just green transition and sustainable development.

It is really promising that a large number of high-level representatives of international and European organizations and institutions accepted the invitation of the ESC Greece, honoring with their presence and active participation this International Conference, delivering specific recommendations, good practices and proposals on the issue of climate change. This proves the high level of awareness of societies and institutions of social dialogue in all countries, regardless of geographical or economic origin and specific interests.

It is now clear that without immediate action and particular initiatives undertaken towards coordinated climate change policies, as the keynote address by distinguished Professor Ch. Zerefos has shown, the risks will increase, the casualties will multiply, and the planet will be in a dangerous orbit of climate imbalances and non-sustainability.

It is noteworthy that all the representatives of the civil society organizations and institutions that participated agreed on the need to take immediate initiatives and actions to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis. On parallel, they pointed out the perils of the climate crisis, in addition to the obvious consequences on the ecosystem and human activities, to revive new crises (refugee, energy, food), as the planet's potential for production and consumption is deemed to be finite.

The ESC Greece, being the institutionalized guarantor of the social dialogue in Greece, he undertook the initiative to organize this International Conference on Climate Change in Athens, with the aim of deepening and highlighting the common global concerns and extensions related to climate change.

The value and usefulness of the social dialogue on the climate crisis agenda has begun to emerge even more recently, along with the energy crisis. As green transition programs and initiatives at the international level are still at the level of declarations, while large sections of society are suffering from the effects of the climate crisis, it is clear now that economic environmental and social policies need to be swiftly reoriented and focused on sustainable green development and transition goals.

The purpose of this event was undoubtedly to identify the existing challenges and to formulate, through an open channel of consultation at the international level, concrete proposals for tackling climate change and the consequences of adaptation policies. In view of this, in the context of the International Conference of ESC Greece for the Climate Change that took place in Athens on June 27, 2022, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- It is recognized that without an immediate response to the challenges posed by climate change, a phenomenon of overlapping crises will be revived at the level of migration, energy, employment insecurity (especially for those employed in precarious work positions), and even in the field of food production.
- It is recognized that we need greater involvement of citizens and social actors in decision-making process and the expansion of public consultation on critical issues such as climate change, with a view to safeguarding international peace, prosperity, economic and social stability, cooperation at cultural, political, and economic level, guided by the principle of equality and a vision of mutual understanding cooperation.
- It is reckoned as important factor the exploration of certain policies for the adoption of legislative frameworks and policies to mitigate or even eliminate the effects of human activities that contribute to global climate change at both national and global levels.
- It is recognized that the diplomatic resolution of regional conflicts, based on the values of democracy and reciprocity, leads to less uncertainty concerning the peaceful coexistence of nations, but also leads to a balanced coexistence between mankind and nature.
- It is agreed that commonly accepted policies are needed to strengthen the resilience and response capacity of all countries to the risks of climate change and natural disasters come from it (with specific protection measures for developing and less developed countries), as well as actions to ensuring sustainable energy, reducing the environmental impact of cities, and promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns, in line with the agenda of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Dealing with the climate crisis dictates a significant overhaul of the economic welfare and development model, as well as production and energy standards by formulating medium- and long-term policies with an emphasis on improving the environmental footprint and preventing inequalities in the transition process to a new model.

The green transition must take place in such a way that it leaves no room for exclusion or discrimination within citizens, households, and businesses, thus, to create conditions for productive reconstruction, ensuring social cohesion, and offering new development and growth opportunities. In this context, it is imperative to plan and implement actions on mitigation issues related to the following sectors:

a) regulation of the energy market, b) facilitation of employees' mobility, c) quality, adequacy and food safety, d) adaptation of consumer standards and (e) promoting new financial products in such a way as to enable citizens, businesses, and states to mitigate the effects of climate change while saving resources.

The measures and policies that will be adopted are needed to provide the guarantees for a green transition that is fair and inclusive, while also guiding the protection of vulnerable groups. They should encourage competitiveness and business on a level playing field, considering the needs and specificities of small and medium-sized enterprises, to enable a climate-neutral primary activity with best green practices, must, in this context, being able to support more socially and environmentally sustainable investments by effectively redirecting funding tools and opportunities. Equally important is the establishment of an effective institutional framework, as well as the design of policies, actions, and instruments to ensure a fair and equitable energy transition and the achievement of climate neutrality at national and international level.

The above conclusions are only the most indicative fraction of policy recommendations and remarks discussed in the conference and define a general framework of directions, which, however, constitute the essence of the social dialogue that takes place nowadays in a wide international spectrum. We are looking forward that our meeting today and the results of our work will be an additional incentive to strengthen the role of social dialogue and let the opening of a more extensive deliberation for global cooperation to address climate crisis severe risks.