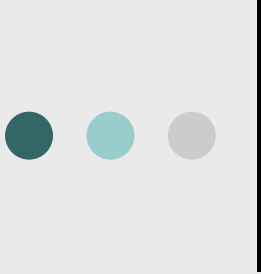


# Financial crisis in Greece and the impact on women



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The Lisbon “**golden recipe**” in 2000, set the target for the EU to become by 2010 the most dynamic and competitive knowledge society in the world, capable for sustainable economic growth, better jobs and stronger social cohesion.

Today, 12 years later, in the middle of a severe crisis, the “golden recipe” for the Euro zone are 2 risky scenarios:

- Exit of the weak and strengthening of the “powerful core”

OR

- Painful adjustment of the weak, through radical austerity plans, drastic internal devaluation and fire-sale of national assets.  
That is to say, establishment of a multi- and unequal - speed Europe.

**This is a “journey” towards a partial or total break up.**



# Greece's new labour market reality

3 years and 2 Memorandums later, the dead-end policies continue, economy falls deeper in recession and society falls in poverty and suffering.

- The **minimum salary** (guaranteed by the National Collective Agreement) reduces by **22%** and **32%** for young people 18-25 years old.
- **Unemployment** raises vertically to **23,6%** during the second trimester of 2012, whereas for **young people** up to 25 years old, unemployment reached **53,9%**. In this percentage 6 out of 10 are long-term unemployed.
- **ALL labour rights** and **benefits** provided by collective agreements are no longer valid following unilateral denouncement of a collective agreement by the employer or when the agreement expires and it is not renegotiated /renewed.
- The employer can **UNILATERALLY** convert a full time job contract to part time job contract.
- The employer's authority to **suspend** employees increases (9 months per year).
- The percentage for massive redundancies increases (from 2,5% to 5%).
- The **notice period** for dismissal reduces by half, with equivalent reduction of the severance pay.
- Main and supplementary **pensions** are drastically reduced.
- The **tax-free income** limit (for pensions and salaries) from 12.000 goes down to 5.000 €



# New radical demands of the Troika ...

The demands of the Troika for new radical reforms in the labour market are at present under discussion with the government while **recession** has reached **7%** :

- Further reduction of the minimum wage (today **€585** since early 2012) and by law introduction of a **“single-rate statutory minimum wage”** without any differentiation between skilled and unskilled workers, seniority and marital status.
- **Further reduction** by 15% of the unit labor cost until 2014. Just to mention that according to Eurostat, the second trimester of 2012 the hourly labour cost in the EU increased by 1.6%, but in Greece decreased by 11.5%!
- **Lay-offs** in the public sector.
- **Further shortening of the notice period** for employers to terminate a contract as well as reduction the lay off compensation by 50% (both were already reduced in early 2012).
- **Further reduction of pensions**, even of those at the lowest levels.
- **Extension of retirement age** by 2 years for all workers without any differentiations.
- Cut offs on the **lump-sum payments** for those who retire .
- **Reduction on the social security contributions** and other non-wage labour costs of the employers (already, the Minister of Labour announced a cut off of 1,1% on the employers contributions and another cut off of 3,9% is expected at the beginning of next year) .
- **Extension of the working week from 5 to 6 days** in all sectors (both private and public). The “flexible” employee can work up to 13 hour per day under the condition not to pass 11 hours of rest since the last shift.
- **Working hours** for employees will not be linked to the companies’ **opening hours**.
- **Working time** can be fixed by the employer **on daily or a weekly basis** (today on 6 months basis). Seasonal workers may take two consecutive weeks of leave, any time of the year.
- **Penalties for employers’ violations** shall be **reduced** and the pre-authorization for overtime work by the Labour Inspectorate shall be abolished.



# The impact on women

**Economic and social inequalities widened.** All research results, concerning the impact on women, of financial crisis' through the years, are fully confirmed and experienced at this moment in Greece.

## A. Employment and labour relations

### Dramatic increase of women unemployment

- Women unemployment rate reached **27.3%** during the second trimester of 2012 (comparing to 20% last year). This ratio is the second highest among 34 states members of the OECD.
- The unemployment ratio for young women is **62,1%**. This means, 6 out of 10 young women are jobless.

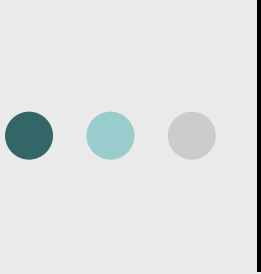
### Increase of the average duration of unemployment and the number of long term unemployed

- 6 out of 10 unemployed persons (59%) are unemployed for a long period. Among them, a large part are women at the most productive ages.
- Employers anticipate a decrease of the number of employees during the forthcoming months, which will mostly affect women, because it concerns sectors where women are a vast majority (commerce, tourism, processing, services).



## Deterioration of industrial relations

- Underemployment, part time employment, shift or rotation work upon unilateral decisions of the employer, is now the **new labour status** for women.
- The number of **unsecured** working women increases continuously (approximately 1 out of 2). Immigrant/foreign women work almost exclusively without any social security coverage .
- Unilateral conversion of contracts from **full employment to flexible forms of employment**, increased by 337%. Moreover, we have an outbreak of individual agreements.
- At the same time, during the last 10 months, 147.000 companies hired new staff almost exclusively on **part time basis** contracts.
- All protective clauses for women, included in the collective agreements, are no longer respected (reduced working hours, maternity leaves etc..)



## Significant increase in the number of poor and socially excluded women

- Unemployed women, single parent families with at least one child, and women over 65 years old, are population groups threatened by **poverty** and **social exclusion**.
- Reductions in salaries hit the income of women **unproportionally**, since the pay gap (which was already 20%), increases.
- 120.000 companies **delay payment of salaries** to their employees .
- Greece has the **lowest wage** comparing to other countries in crisis (7,72 Euros in Athens, 8,18 in Madrid and 15,13 in Dublin). But food products are much more expensive than in Berlin.



## B. Social welfare state

### Drastic cuts in public expenditure

#### Continuous austerity led to the collapse of the social welfare state:

- **Allowances** which support the family were either reduced or eliminated (maternity allowance, family allowance, allowance for three children etc.).
- Subsidies to **kindergartens** were reduced, which in many cases led to their closing down.
- Centers for the elderly closed down and **social care policies** reduced significantly (e.g. aid at home).
- There were serious cuts on the allowances to special population groups (eg. disabled persons) but also on **unemployment benefits**.
- Employees in social care structures (almost exclusively women) are left **unpaid** for long periods.





## Continuous austerity policies led to deterioration of the quality of life :

- The **social security system** changed radically. Pensions were cut off, retirement age extended, and the participation in medical care cost, increased significantly.
- Many women were “forced” to **early retirement**, upon early retirement schemes, with vertical reduction of their income.
- Public goods, such as **education and health**, suffered huge cuts on their budgets, resulting in their downsizing or deterioration of their quality.

## C. Social and psychological impact

The two basic conditions for equal participation of women are their **economic independence**, and the existence of **welfare state** and infrastructures to support the family. During the last three years those two conditions do not exist any longer. Personally, I belong to a small group of Greek workers which have two salaries in the family budget. This is a luxury in Greece nowadays.

- The position of women in society, achieved through hard struggle, is at stake. The **forcing and the pressure on women to return to the traditional roles** of mother, housewife and nurse, is their "political" response.
- Women, apart from the economic crisis, are experiencing an identity crisis, since they are excluded from the labour market, from professional fulfilment and financial security, with significant impact on their **mental health**.
- The number of **sexual harassment** cases at the workplace increased to alarming levels.
- During the last 2 years, the number of parents which turn to **institutions or hospitality centers for children**, and leave their children, as they have no means to raise them, doubled. 20% of those cases are single, unemployed mothers. This was unthinkable in the previous years.
- During the last 18 months, according to official data, we have an **increase of violence against women**. 79% of the cases concern domestic violence. The majority of abused women are 40-54 years old, unemployed mothers or with unemployed husbands.



# Revival of old ideologies and stereotypes

**We are now opposed to two fronts:**

- The first one, existed before the crisis and concerns labour issues and salary claims, such as equal pay, equal rights, equal career opportunities, equal participation in public life etc.
- The other front, due to unemployment and poverty, is the exit from the labour market and the return at home. The front of marginalization and social exclusion.



**IS THIS THE EUROPE WE  
WANT;**



# WOMEN OF EUROPE RESIST ..!

- **We will NOT go backwards!**
- On the contrary, women in the trade unions, we massively participate in hundreds of mobilizations during the last 2 years
- We participate dynamically in solidarity movements and all activities of RESISTANCE to the radical austerity policies which are imposed to us.
- We fight, so that GROWTH and EMPLOYMENT with equal opportunities for both genders, becomes THE political PRIORITY of Europe.
- We fight, to ensure the conditions, for a society based on DEMOCRACY, SOCIAL JUSTICE and EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES.
- And we DEMAND



# **CHANGE OF POLICY IN EUROPE NOW !**