

# **Contribution to the Focus chapter of the Fundamental Rights Report 2022: Social rights and equality in light of the recovery from the COVID- 19 pandemic.**

**Country: Cyprus**

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**Contractor: University of Nicosia and Symfiliosi**

**Authors: Demetriou C. and Trimikliniotis N.**

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# 1 Measures implemented to foster social rights and equal treatment in the recovery from the pandemic

## MEASURE 1

<b>Name of the measure in English</b>	Establishment of home structures for children, adolescent with conduct disorders and persons with disabilities and people in need of long-term care (LTC)
<b>Name of the measure in the national language(s)</b>	Δημιουργία οικιστικών δομών για παιδιά, εφήβους με διαταραχές συμπεριφοράς, άτομα με αναπηρίες, και άτομα που χρειάζονται μακροχρόνια φροντίδα (€15,4 εκ.)
<b>Reference document for the measure</b>  <i>Include an url, where available</i>	<a href="#">Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026</a> , pp. 496-500
<b>Social rights covered by the measure</b>  <i>Delete as appropriate</i>  <i>Multiple answers possible, but preference should be given to measures that apply to one discrete right</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the rights of the child (Article 24),</li> <li>- the rights of the elderly (Article 25),</li> <li>- integration of persons with disabilities (Article 26),</li> <li>- equality between women and men (Article 23).</li> </ul>
<b>Population group(s) covered by the measure</b>  <i>Delete as appropriate</i>  <i>Multiple answers possible, but preference should be given to</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and youth;</li> <li>- People in need of care (homecare or in residential settings);</li> <li>- Children with a migrant background (migrant, asylum seeking, refugee children under the care of the Social Welfare Services)</li> <li>- Persons with disabilities;</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>measures that apply to discrete population groups</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women in situations of vulnerability, namely unemployed women with care responsibilities in the home, young women or girls who are pregnant or have infants;</li> <li>- Others: adolescents with conduct disorders; people in need of long term care.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary description of how the measure applies to the population group(s)</b></p>	<p>The project aims at increasing the capacity of Social Welfare Services to meet the hosting and care needs of unaccompanied minors and other children under the guardianship of the Director of the Social Welfare Services, to cover the special needs of adolescents with conduct disorders such as delinquent behaviour, use of addictive substances etc who live in an inappropriate family environment or who are under the care of the Director of Social Welfare Services, and provide persons with disabilities and people in need of long-term care (LTC including the elderly suitable, comfortable, accessible, family-type homes in the community. In particular:</p> <p>Women in situations of vulnerability: Unemployed women</p> <p>In Cyprus, women’s participation in the labour market is significantly lower than that of men (76,5% vs 87,1% for the age group of 25-54) in 2020 and unemployment amongst women for the age group 25-64 was higher to that of men of the same age group (7,3% vs 6,5%) in 2020. This is attributed to the fact that women are expected by society to care for the vulnerable members of the family, including disabled family members. The measure will establish structures for providing daily services to adolescents with conduct disorders, creating homes with supported living programmes for persons with disabilities and community-based care centres for people in need of longer care, thus enabling women who had been performing unpaid care work for family members in the house to seek paid employment in the open labour market.</p> <p>Pregnant young women and girls, young mothers</p> <p>The measure further provides for the establishment of a specialised hosting home for pregnant young girls and young mothers with infants, which will provide accommodation and specialised support to pregnant girls and young women and young mothers with infants including migrant women and victims of trafficking.</p> <p>Children under the care of Social Welfare Services:</p>

The number of unaccompanied minors entering Cyprus each year has increased from 114 in 2015 to 535 in 2019. The country's existing structures and programmes of four homes for 24-hour care and one programme of Semi-dependent living are overcrowded and overloaded.

The measure will set up small hosting units for children under the care of the Director of Social Welfare Services, particularly unaccompanied minors, the majority of whom are migrant or asylum-seeking children. In particular the project will establish:

- Eight homes for the 24hour care of children aged 15- 18 years, mainly unaccompanied minors, with a capacity of six to 20 children per home;
- Two State Homes for children aged 13-18 years, with a capacity of ten children each. One home will be for girls and the other for boys.
- One state home for children aged 5-12 years, with a capacity of 10 children.

#### Adolescents with conduct disorders

Adolescents under the legal care of the Director of the Social Welfare Services with complex behavioural issues such as substance dependence or delinquency, are now placed in child protection centres operated by of the Social Welfare Services who lack both the infrastructure and expertise to serve their individual needs. Adolescents with conduct disorders living with their families are also facing problems that cannot be addressed by their families. The phenomenon of children running away from families or from institutions has intensified in recent years, which suggests that the existing structures operated by the Social Welfare Services cannot address the conduct issues of minors.

The measure will establish hostels and day-care programmes for minors with conduct disorder issues, addressed to girls and boys aged 12-18 years. The hostels will accommodate minors showing symptoms of conduct disorders such as delinquent behaviour, use of addictive substances etc who live in an inappropriate family environment or who are under the care of the Director of Social Welfare Services. The infrastructure will support the day- care programme for providing support, education and treatment services to both the occupants of the hostel and to minors with conduct disorders who live with their guardians.

#### Persons with disabilities

De-institutionalisation and supported living are one of the priorities of the Cypriot National Disability Strategy 2018-2028 and Action Plans 2018-2020 and 2021- 2023, the European

	<p>Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 and the CRPD. This measure involves the purchase of five houses (infrastructure only) in different cities or communities of Cyprus and their renovation and adjustment to the accessibility needs of the persons with disabilities. The measure will offer the opportunity to persons facing a risk of institutionalisation and social exclusion to have their home in the community. In the framework of the National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Action Plans, the Council of Ministers has approved the scheme of homes and programmes of supported living in the community for which any person with a disability may apply. The applicant's needs for supported living are assessed and priority is given to persons with intellectual disability.</p> <p>Persons in need of long-term care</p> <p>The measure involves the establishment of one community-based care centre for specific groups of people who are in need for Long Term Care (LTC), such as the elderly and adults with conduct disorders due to long-term substance abuse. The infrastructure will support the provision of formal integrated care services and other services in living units that foster independent living, inclusion in the community and quality care.</p>
<p><b>Summary description of how the measure will impact (positively or negatively) social rights and equal treatment in the recovery</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The measure of creating homes in the community for persons with disabilities aims at providing a suitable, safe, comfortable, accessible, family-type environment in the community. Supported living in structures within the community which are of adequate size, location, accessibility and adjustability to their specific needs is a step towards the realisation of the right to independent living and assisted decision making. The disabled residents of homes in the community get to benefit from training programs and developing of skills that facilitate social and labour integration.</li> <li>- The establishment of new homes for children who come under the care of the Social Welfare Services will decongest the existing overstretched infrastructure and enhance quality of care, the safety and protection of vulnerable children and the provision social development services for them, supporting their transition to maturity, family reunification, school attainment etc.</li> <li>- Long-term care (LTC) expenditure in Cyprus accounts for only 0.3% of GDP, which is far from the EU average of 1.6%. At the same time, only 21% of the dependent population in Cyprus receives LTC services, while the EU average is close to 55%. The establishment of community-based LTC care centres will address the rights of for people in need of LTC to social integration and recreation and to social development services. At the same time, the measure will lift the burden of care responsibilities off</li> </ul>

	<p>women in the home and enable them to join the labour market or otherwise realise their potential. According to the latest Eurostat projections, the Cyprus old-age dependency ratio, i.e., the ratio of the number of people aged 65 and over to those aged 20-64, which provides a demographic measure of population ageing, is projected to increase continuously from 26.2% in 2019 to 50.7% in 2070. In other words, in 2070, it is expected to have approximately two working-age people for every person aged 65 and over. The measure will address the socialisation and specialised care needs of persons in need of LTC and at the same time enable the integration or re-integration into the labour market of the person caring for family members in need of LTC.</p>
<p><b>Summary description of the extent to which the measure foresees the provision of enabling social services</b></p>	<p>The measure for setting up homes in the community for persons with disabilities is implemented by the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities which assigns through public procurement to agencies in the private sector the operation of family homes for up to 5 persons with disabilities in each home. Seven new homes for persons with intellectual disabilities have already started their operation by NGO's and private companies since March 2020 and another 4 homes for persons with autism and intellectual disability have been contracted out and are expected to operate until mid-2021. In 2021-2027 the project included the establishment for additional 5 homes for persons with intellectual disability.</p> <p>The measure 'Homes and structures for the provision of Daily Services to adolescence with conduct disorders' will be implemented in cooperation with the Cyprus National Addictions Authority.</p> <p>State aid schemes will be developed for the operation of all these structures, targeting local authorities, NGOs and other organisations.</p>
<p><b>Entity or organisation responsible to implement the measure</b></p>	<p>The measure for setting up homes in the community for persons with disabilities is implemented by the Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.</p> <p>The rest of the measures are implemented by the Social Welfare Services.</p>
<p><b>Duration of the measure</b></p>	<p>From the second semester of 2021 through to 2026.</p>

<b>Budget allocated to implement the measure</b>	€15,4 million.
<b>Summary description of how any foreseen impact assessment of the measure will be carried out</b>	N/A

## MEASURE 2

<b>Name of the measure in English</b>	Child Centres in four municipalities
<b>Name of the measure in the national language(s)</b>	Ανάπτυξη κέντρων φροντίδας παιδιών σε Δήμους
<b>Reference document for the measure</b> <i>Include an url, where available</i>	<a href="#">Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026</a> , pp. 500-504.
<b>Social rights covered by the measure</b> <i>Delete as appropriate</i> <i>Multiple answers possible, but preference should be given to measures that apply to one discrete right</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Equality between women and men (Article 23);</li> <li>- The rights of the child (Article 24).</li> </ul>
<b>Population group(s) covered by the measure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children;</li> <li>- Individuals from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds (e.g. families with short and long-term unemployed members, low-income families, groups at risk of poverty)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Delete as appropriate</b></p> <p><b>Multiple answers possible, but preference should be given to measures that apply to discrete population groups</b></p>	<p>and social exclusion, single parent families, recipients of minimum income benefits, marginalised Roma communities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women in situations of vulnerability (e.g., unemployed women with young children)</li> <li>- Older person's access to the labour market (only as regards one of the four municipalities to benefit from the measure).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary description of how the measure applies to the population group(s)</b></p>	<p>The measure involves the establishment of four Child Centres in four municipalities offering quality childcare services and at the same time facilitating the participation and re-entering of workers with caring responsibilities in the labour market, in an effort to mitigate the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis and strengthen social protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The construction of the child care centre in the Ayios Athanasios Municipality aims to provide contemporary services for children between the ages of 2 and 6 and between the ages of 6 and 12. Priority will be given to children from families at risk-of-poverty and social exclusion and from deprived backgrounds, using specific socio-economic criteria.</li> <li>- The construction of a new public and community kindergarten and nursery school in the Ayia Napa Municipality, focusing on infants and toddlers from six months old to preschool age and the establishment of a child care centre in the Paralimni Municipality will provide professional child development services to young children and at the same time alleviate the impact of the pandemic on the local labour force which is mostly employed in seasonal jobs in the tourism industry.</li> <li>- The building in Ayia Napa Municipality will include 12 classrooms, special rooms, offices, kitchen, dining room, bedrooms, storage rooms, courtyard, enclosed room, parking spaces, a state-of-the-art courtyard with eco-friendly toys and an indoor multi-purpose space which can operate independently and can be used for hosting cultural events. The project also includes investment in digital equipment to support the provision of digital learning and skills in kindergarten and in fostering the digital skills of teachers and trainers and developing digital pedagogical content.</li> <li>- The current child care centre of Paralimni is currently hosted in a single classroom at a primary school serving just 50 children, which is insufficient for meeting the growing demand of 200+ applications per year. The new centre will address the catastrophic</li> </ul>

	<p>impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which jeopardised child care jobs, leaving hundreds of children without access to child care and parents forced to juggle work and family responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In the Municipality of Yermasoyia, an old primary school is transformed into a multipurpose centre with a kindergarten, an employment centre for the elderly and a multipurpose room, aiming to enhance social cohesion.</li> </ul> <p>Community day nurseries established and run by local authorities operate on a not-for-profit basis and the fees set are in most cases half the level of the fees that apply in the private sector with priority given to the most vulnerable groups, single parent families, poor and the unemployed.</p>
<b>Summary description of how the measure will impact (positively or negatively) social rights and equal treatment in the recovery</b>	<p>The residents of the areas selected for setting up the new child centres have limited access to affordable and quality childcare services. The lack of child care facilities has rendered members of the labour force, particularly women, inactive and isolated. This was further deteriorated as a result of the pandemic-related self-isolation measures, which had a disproportionate impact on people in precarious employment. The child care centres offer a suitable environment to children of all ages for social development and promote gender equality and equal opportunities for women with caring responsibilities to re-enter the labour market. The centres will at the same time create new jobs, mitigating locally the social and economic impact of the crisis.</p>
<b>Summary description of the extent to which the measure foresees the provision of enabling social services</b>	<p>The municipalities in all four regions will be responsible for the set up and running of the centres. The architectural plans have been assigned to private sector designers.</p>
<b>Entity or organisation responsible to implement the measure</b>	<p>Yermasoyia Municipality Ayios Athanasios Ayios Paralimni Municipality Ayia Napa Municipality</p>
<b>Duration of the measure</b>	<p>The project has started and is expected to be completed by end of 2024.</p>

<b>Budget allocated to implement the measure</b>	€5,5 million
<b>Summary description of how any foreseen impact assessment of the measure will be carried out</b>	N/A

### MEASURE 3

<b>Name of the measure in English</b>	Addressing skills mismatch between education and labour market (Secondary and Higher Education)
<b>Name of the measure in the national language(s)</b>	Αντιμετώπιση αναντιστοιχίας δεξιοτήτων μεταξύ εκπαίδευσης (δευτεροβάθμια και τριτοβάθμια) και αγοράς εργασίας
<b>Reference document for the measure</b> <i>Include an url, where available</i>	<a href="#">Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026</a> , pp. 452-459
<b>Social rights covered by the measure</b> <i>Delete as appropriate</i> <i>Multiple answers possible, but preference should be given to measures that apply to one discrete right</i>	- right to education (Article 14)
<b>Population group(s) covered by the measure</b>	- Children and youth;

<p><b>Delete as appropriate</b></p> <p><b>Multiple answers possible, but preference should be given to measures that apply to discrete population groups</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secondary and university students, young people that are identified as 'NEETs' (including and not limited to early school leavers)</li> <li>- employers, employees.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary description of how the measure applies to the population group(s)</b></p>	<p>Cyprus has a low share of pupils enrolled in vocational secondary education, with only 16 percent compared to the EU28 average value of 47 percent. Eurostat data shows that Cyprus has a significantly higher skills mismatch in the areas which require high levels of technical competency including computing, science and mathematics. Cyprus has the lowest proportion of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) graduates among 20-29-year-olds and the lowest PISA results for science and mathematics. The low level of vocational education for Cyprus is attributed to the fact that secondary education is orientated towards preparing students to enter tertiary education, rather than equipping them with specific skills to enter the job market.<sup>1</sup> Based on the ratio of tertiary education graduates currently employed in low-skilled jobs, Cyprus has the highest levels of over-qualification in the workforce, with many employees in occupations that are unrelated to their field of education.</p> <p>The measure will focus on providing students and other population groups, including ICT professionals, with the necessary skills and competences to be effective in the modern labour market, in line with current and future labour market needs. It will support initiatives in various levels and types of education to address the mismatch among the skills required by labour market and the ones currently provided in the Cypriot education system. In line with the European Skills Agenda, the Pact for Skills, the European Education Area and the Digital Education Action Plan, the measure will develop a national strategy to address the skills mismatch by continually monitoring skills needs and developing policies to meet identified needs so as to increase the employability of youth. The strategy will be translated into an action plan to form the premise of reforms in the educational system, with actions such as career counselling, modernisation of school programs and curricula to improve digital literacy, emotional intelligence and soft skills, entrepreneurship skills, the introduction of additional</p>

<sup>1</sup> [Cyprus Competitiveness Report 2019](#).

	<p>programs of study tailored on labour market needs, in-job shadowing programmes, training to teaching staff and students on latest technology and equipment and the upgrading of teaching rooms and school laboratories to provide access to latest technology and equipment relevant to the studies.</p>
<p><b>Summary description of how the measure will impact (positively or negatively) social rights and equal treatment in the recovery</b></p>	<p>The results of the measure can strengthen career guidance to help employability of school graduates and address youth unemployment, guiding students to make informed career decisions corresponding to the demands of the labour market, and equipping with skills to enhance their professional ability and competencies to succeed in their professional lives.</p>
<p><b>Summary description of the extent to which the measure foresees the provision of enabling social services</b></p>	<p>The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth (MOECSY) will seek to involve all Cypriot higher education institutions (the Cyprus Open University, private universities and institutions of Tertiary Education), as well as employers in the compilation of a study mapping the labour market in Cyprus as regards skills offered and the skills needed. The MOECSY will set up a Project Management Committee made up of representatives of stakeholders (MOECSY, employer and employee organisations, school and university representatives etc.), with a mandate to develop, implement and monitor a comprehensive plan to address the skills mismatch. During the preparatory phase of the project, as well as during the data processing phase, participating stakeholders will include higher education institutions, employers' representatives, the Human Resource Development Authority, the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the state Statistical Service and student unions.</p>
<p><b>Entity or organisation responsible to implement the measure</b></p>	<p>The Department of Higher Education (DHE) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MOECSY).</p>
<p><b>Duration of the measure</b></p>	<p>A pilot study is already in progress with a pilot questionnaire handed to graduates of the two public universities in 2020; the analysis of collected data and interpretation of results is pending. A field study will take place in spring 2022 which will involve the collection of data from graduates of all Cypriot higher education institutions, as well as from employers. Preliminary findings from the Field Study will be available in summer 2022. A detailed report with study findings and policy recommendations will be available by the end of 2023. The implementation of the National Action Plan is expected to be completed by end of 2025.</p>

<b>Budget allocated to implement the measure</b>	€12,6 million
<b>Summary description of how any foreseen impact assessment of the measure will be carried out</b>	N/A

## **2 Tools or mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of national schemes to foster social rights and equal treatment in the recovery from the pandemic**

There are no special tools or mechanisms foreseen in the Cypriot Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) for the monitoring of the effectiveness of national schemes to foster social rights and equal treatment. An *economic* impact assessment was initially performed by the University for Cyprus, contracted for this purpose by the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development, but no focus on rights was included. The monitoring mechanism foreseen in the RRP is also centred on the economic and financial dimension of the RRP and is the same as for all other EU funded programs.

<b>Name of the monitoring tool or mechanism in English</b>	CY RRP - Management and Control System (Annex 4 of the RRP)
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<b>Name of the monitoring tool or mechanism in the national language(s)</b>	Σύστημα Παρακολούθησης και Ελέγχου (ΣΠΕ) της εφαρμογής του Σχεδίου Ανάκαμψης και Ανθεκτικότητας (ΣΑΑ)
<b>Reference document for the monitoring tool or mechanism</b> <i>Include an url, where available</i>	<a href="#">National Recovery and Resilience Plan of Cyprus, Annex 4, Management and Control System</a>
<b>Organisation(s) involved in the monitoring tool or mechanism</b> <i>Delete as appropriate</i> <i>Multiple answers possible</i>	<p>At the time of writing, the monitoring mechanism for overseeing the actions under the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) were all governmental, with the exception of the ex post external audit, which is performed by the Auditor General of the Republic, who is by virtue of the national Constitution an independent officer, even though appointed by the President of the Republic.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Various bodies are set out in Annex 4 of the RRP as main actors of the monitoring mechanism, comprising mainly of representatives or officers of governmental bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Monitoring Committee</li> <li>- <i>The Coordinating Authority</i>, which is assisted by the Monitoring Bodies (public sector) and the Implementation Bodies (who can be bodies of the public or the private sector)</li> <li>- <i>The Horizontal Policy Authorities (governmental bodies).</i></li> </ul> <p>The Auditor General examines complaints, including from anonymous sources on issues within the competency of this institution; and the Ombudsman examines complaints from victims of injustice, maladministration or discrimination, under conditions.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Cyprus, Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, [articles 115-117](#).

<p><b>Summary description of how these organisation(s) are involved in the monitoring tool or mechanism</b></p>	<p><i>The Monitoring Committee</i></p> <p>This is a committee for the monitoring of the RRP, mandated with monitoring the progress of the implementation, with resolving issues and addressing risks likely to impact the smooth implementation of the RRP. The Monitoring Committee is headed by the Director of the Directorate for Recovery and Resilience, Directorate General for European Programs, Coordination and Development and consists of the Permanent Secretaries or other representatives of government ministries, namely the Ministries of Finance, Agriculture, Energy Commerce and Industry, Transport Communications and Public Works, Justice and Public Order, External Affairs, Labour Welfare and Social Insurance, Interior, Education Culture Sports and Youth, Health, Under Ministry of Research Innovation and Digital Policy, Under Ministry of Tourism, Under Ministry of Social Welfare). It convenes at least once every three months and extraordinarily when necessary.</p> <p><i>The Coordinating Authority</i></p> <p>This is a special unit of the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development was set up, namely the Directorate for Recovery and Resilience. It is mandated</p>

with coordinating all the competent departments of the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development and the Ministry of Finance, to ensure coordination of all EU programs and to avoid duplication of actions and double funding. This body is also the focal point with the EU and is mandated with the monitoring and certification of the implementation of the targets and compliance with milestones set out in the RRP. This body collects the findings of the auditing processes performed by the audit organisations and all cases of serious infringements. It is staffed by officers of the Recovery and Resilience Unit of the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development.

The Coordinating Authority is assisted by two more bodies:

- a. The Monitoring Bodies, which are central government departments mandated with monitoring the implementation of the actions and certifying whether the goals are achieved. These bodies are
  - The Under Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, which monitors all digital actions of the RRP and
  - The Control Directorate of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works which monitors technical and construction related actions of the RRP carried out under the health services.
- b. The Implementation Bodies, who may be governmental or non-governmental bodies, which may include local governance organisations, councils, public or private organisations. The Implementation Bodies are not yet listed in the RRP, as this mechanism was still under construction at the time of writing.

#### *Horizontal Policy Authorities*

A list of governmental bodies is mandated with checking compliance of actions foreseen under the RRP with horizontal national and EU policies, before the plan is submitted to the EU for approval. In this context, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order is mandated with opining on compliance of the entire RRP with the principle of gender equality; and the Labour Department

	<p>of the Ministry of Labour is mandated with opining on compliance of the RRP with the non-discrimination principle on the grounds of gender, race, national origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.</p>
<p><b>Summary description of the functioning of the tool or mechanism used to monitor the effectiveness of schemes adopted to foster social rights and equal treatment in the recovery</b></p>	<p>The monitoring mechanism for the RRP is the same as the one used to monitor expenditures out of the state budget. Ex ante controls are initially carried out to check the consistency of the proposed actions with the horizontal national and EU policies on public procurement and state aid. In particular, at the design phase, the Coordinating Authority will ensure that all necessary checks were performed to avoid double funding of actions and overlapping with other EU or national programs.</p> <p>The national treasury is the competent national authority for ensuring compliance with horizontal policies. It certifies that the RRP complies with the horizontal national and EU policies for safeguarding, protecting and improving the environment, equality and absence of all forms of discrimination. It also ensures that the principle of "Do no significant harm" is complied with in every action. The Budget Coordinator certifies the budget of the actions.</p> <p>Before any action starts, the internal audit mechanism is activated, which operates at the level of central government. This mechanism is staffed by the officers of the Treasury Office of the Republic, posted in the various competent Ministries. This mechanism ensures that double funding is avoided, monitors the lawfulness of every expenditure and checks the procedure for verifying the achievement of goals and milestones of the RRP.</p> <p>The ex-ante checks are then followed by two ex post audits, an internal and an external ONE. The ex post internal audit is performed by the Internal Audit Service of the Republic. The ex post external audit is carried out by the Audit Service of the Republic, an independent body performing the financial and compliance audit through a selected sample in accordance with the INTOSAI standard. A series of verifications and ex ante controls are foreseen in the plan, which provide for checks on whether a certain action complies with national and EU law, carried out before the decision to fund the action is made. The ex-post controls foreseen are of a financial nature and are intended to ensure the actions were implemented to a satisfactory level, the</p>

	<p>contract was duly executed, the prices and reasonable and justified and there is no risk of double payment for the same activity.</p>
<p><b>Summary description of the obligations, standards and benchmarks against which the effectiveness will be evaluated</b></p>	<p>The mechanism does not refer to any of the relevant EU instruments on social rights. The UN CRPD is referred to only in the context of the Ombudsperson’s mandate to investigate complaints. The European Pillar of Social Rights, the Social Scoreboard, the Child Guarantee, the Youth Guarantee, the EU Roma Strategic Framework are not referred to all.</p> <p>No specific indicators or benchmarks are foreseen, as the goals and milestones are essentially of an economic nature and references to indicators are vague:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The person in charge of the entity purporting to implement an action under the RRP which is pre-selected by the finance minister, must compile and submit to the finance minister an impact assessment including a feasibility study. The finance minister examines the economic viability of the action proposed and decides whether the action is eligible. The action proposed can be included in the budget only if it is estimated to offer financial return or meet the social and environmental criteria defined by the finance minister.</li> <li>- The implementing bodies must submit to the Coordinating Authority regular information on a special format setting out evidence of progress in achieving goals and milestones, evidence of progress in achieving the common indicators set out at European level and to which the intervention contributes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary description of what the tool or mechanism foresees when non-compliance with obligations and standards is identified, with a particular emphasis on enforcement and remedial action</b></p>	<p>The only provision for checking compliance with fundamental rights is the submission of complaints to the ombuds institution by a complainant personally affected by an act of a public officer or administrative authority. Complaints may refer to the Ombudsperson’s mandate as Equality Body or as Monitoring Body under the CRPD.</p> <p>Where the investigation of the complaint establishes that a person has harmed or was discriminated against, the Ombudsman can submit a recommendation to the competent authority for the restoration of the injustice and set the timeline within which the injustice must be restored. The Ombudsman is also empowered to instigate a consultation process with regard to the implementation of the recommendations issued and in the event that the competent authority</p>

does not respond, to refer the outcome of the Consultation to the Council of Ministers and the House of Parliament and to publish the refusal or failure of the competent authority to comply with the recommendations. Complaints to the Ombudsman may be submitted only by persons personally affected and provided the complainant has not at the same time applied to the Court for a remedy for the same act. The Ombudsman cannot investigate complaints against natural or legal persons of the private sector, such as companies or associations, or against the President of the Republic, the Council of Ministers, any government ministers for actions in their capacity as members of the Council of Ministers or in pursuance of government policy, the House of Parliament, the Attorney general, the Auditor General, the Central Bank Governor, or the Public Service Commission. Discrimination complaints under the laws transposing the EU Equality Directives may be investigated as against both the private and the public sector and where discrimination is established, the ombudsman has power to use decisions and sanctions which are binding. Like the Auditor General, the Ombudsman is also seen as an independent officer, even though appointed by the President of the Republic.

Complaints against public bodies for corruption, fraud, conflict of interest or misuse of public funds may be submitted to the Auditor General using the special complaints page on the Auditor General's website. Complainants filing complaints to the Auditor General do not need to identify themselves, nor do they need to prove that they are personally affected.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For more details, see the special page of the Auditor General's website [here](#).