



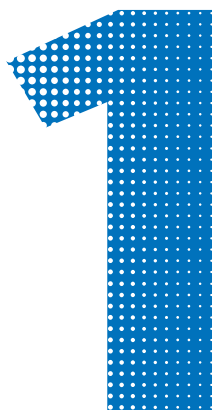
HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Presidency of the Government



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FRANCE22
FRENCH PRESIDENCY
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION



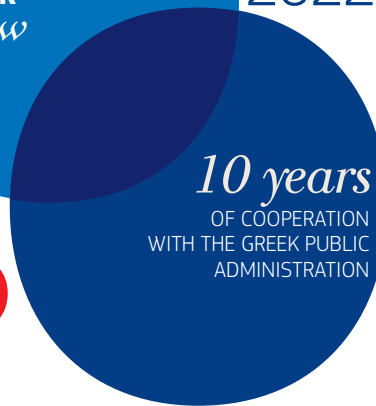
TOGETHER
we Change
TOGETHER
we Grow



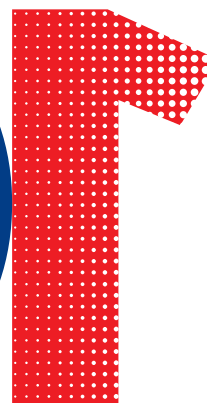
2022



2012



10 years
OF COOPERATION
WITH THE GREEK PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION





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Together, We Change - Together, We Grow

*10 years of cooperation
with the Greek Public Administration*



10 YEARS OF COOPERATION WITH THE GREEK PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



**Daniele Dotto**

Deputy to the Director – DG REFORM
Head of Unit – Governance and Public Administration

In the last ten years most EU Member States, confronted with unexpected events, undertook profound, radical and unprecedented reforms to address these events and, probably even more importantly, to be better prepared for the management of future crises.

Greece was among these Member States and, like its peers, it deployed exceptional energy and commitment to ensure the resilience of its economy and its people. Reforms were designed and implemented in critical areas ranging from the agro-industrial sector to tourism, from public financial management to labour market, from health to transport, to mention a few. The Greek authorities focused a large part of their reform efforts on the modernisation of their public administration. The effort addressed the organisation of the state at large and the way in which its human capital could be valued. The main interventions took place in the area of the organisation and coordination of the State; in the relations central/ local levels; in the area of human resources; in the area of digital governance; and in areas like justice and public financial management. The efforts on the overall modernisation are now visible: for example, thanks to the digitalisation of the country, Greece successfully passed the “Covid stress test”.

Hundreds of officials and experts of the Commission, France and other Member States and International Organisations, but also from national agencies and private companies, supported Greece in its endeavour. The intensity of this effort that Greece, the Commission and France deployed in a coordinated manner in the period 2012-2022 is unprecedented and totally innovative in its conception and deployment. It was therefore our ambition to collect short testimonies from the main actors present on the ground in this historical decade to allow them to share their recollection and analysis of events. It is our way to acknowledge their contribution to this amazing collective reform effort and to thank them for the time and energy spent for Greece and for Europe.

Thank you all ; merci à toutes et tous ; σας ευχαριστούμε πολύ!

10 YEARS OF COOPERATION WITH THE GREEK PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION





Elisa Ferreira

Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms

The last few years have been a dramatic lesson, in the importance of public administration. We saw this in Covid, where administrations, including local administrations, had to manage emergency public health measures, and protect the economy, while still maintaining essential public services. We saw this in the response to floods, fires and earthquakes, where public administration played a key role. And now we see this in the response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, where public administrations play a key role in welcoming civilians fleeing the war and coping with the economic impact of the war and high energy prices.

But in the coming years, the role of public administrations will loom even larger. They will provide new services while still maintaining the full range of classic services. They will take the lead in future-oriented investments and reforms, from renewable energy to economic diversification to making education fit for the future, while at the same time digitalising and reforming themselves. In a changing world, they will continue to keep the economy and society going forward, while preserving our shared European values.

For all of this, public administrations will need institutional and administrative capacity. Therefore, I am encouraged by the unprecedented modernisation of Greek public administration these last 10 years. Working together with DG REFORM, French authorities and other international partners, you have made 23 key reform projects.

These projects have been broad in scale, involving 54 partners, from national ministries to local authorities. And these reforms have been broad in scope. To name just a few examples:

- 8 reform projects in the area of digital transformation of public administration, saving citizens and businesses from walk-in appointments and long queues. By June 2022, 1200 public services were available online.
- 3 reform projects in the areas of governance and better regulation, helping to make policy more evidence-based and more coordinated across ministries.
- 4 reform projects in the area of public finance, including the introduction of green budgeting, the modernisation of tax and customs administration, and the establishment of a Tax and Customs Academy.

We know this has been a difficult road, but we are pleased to have walked it with you, and are impressed by how far you have come. I am grateful for the trust and close cooperation we have established over the years.

We will of course remain available to support future reforms you will embark upon to face the new challenges we are being faced with. However, your administrative capacity and preparedness is now much different for the better. I urge you to share the expertise gained over the last 10 years, which can surely benefit others across Europe. Together we will always remain stronger.



Bruno Le Maire

Minister of Economy, Finance, and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty



Stanislas Guerini

Minister of Transformation and Public Service

France's support for Greek reforms

began 10 years ago, when Greece called on the European Union for assistance in strengthening its administrative apparatus. A “partnership protocol for the implementation of reforms in Greece” was signed in 2015 between the two finance ministers. Many experts have since travelled to Greece, to support reforms in areas as diverse as government coordination, human resources, digital technology, taxation, customs, public accounting, exports, digitization economy, public health...

France, which has always been a friend of Greece, has taken care to accompany this European support with bilateral support, in particular, of welcoming Greek inspectors to the National School of Public Finances and now to the Customs School, cooperation with the tax and customs administration, or a partnership between the National Center for Public Administration & Local Government (EKDDA) and the French National School of Public Administration (ENA) - now the National Institute of Public Service (INSP).

In a context where the European Union is facing multiple challenges, I am convinced that our cooperation must continue and even increase in new areas, as we announced with Ministers Staikouras and Georgiadis in the declaration of intent signed in 2020 in Paris. We therefore wished to update the 2015 Partnership by calling for cooperation on climate change and the environment, energy, tourism, agriculture, green and inclusive finance... The European recovery plan constitutes moreover a tremendous opportunity for Greece.

I therefore wish long life to this fruitful cooperation between our two countries, in supporting the Greek public administration and the economy.

I congratulate the 10 years of the cooperation Greece-France-EU on reforms.

France is proud of its contribution to important reforms, in favor of an efficient and modern administration, simplified, at the service of the citizens, and which values the public servants.

This cooperation has also made it possible to strengthen the historical ties between France and Greece in terms of public administration. These links between counterpart public officials have a dual purpose. They benefit the Greek reforms of course, but also the administrations of origin of the experts, who return with the testimony of the successes as well as the difficulties encountered. It therefore seems important that DG REFORM relies in part on public experts and thus contributes to the proximity between public officials of the 27 Member States. I would like these ties to continue to deepen, in particular by strengthening public administration cooperation and exchanges among member states, a subject that we have raised within the framework of the transformation and public service component of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

I wish full success to the reforms already decided and to the cooperation in progress and confirm the availability of the French administration, itself engaged in a process of permanent improvement, to cooperate with our Greek colleagues.

**Patrick Maisonnave**

Ambassador of France to Greece

I am delighted that the European Commission and the Greek government are organising, together with France, an event which celebrates 10 years of technical support provided by France to Greece. This long and essential work of reform, carried out with the support of its European partners, contributes today, in Greece, to a renewed economic growth, to stability, to an improved business climate and, above all, to a renewed international image.

I am of course very grateful to the Commission, to the Greek government and, more broadly, to all of the European partners, for the trust that has thus been placed in my country for the implementation of this technical assistance. As a long-standing partner, France joined in late 2011 the Task Force for Greece created within the European Commission, first on the reform of public administration at the central level and the tax administration and customs, then on the digital economy and digital transformation, civil security, tax and customs administration, health but also the solidarity economy, budget management, human resources management in the public service or even the reform of the Greek Court of Auditors.

This technical investment by France, still in conjunction with the Greek authorities and the support of the Commission, was reinforced by the signing of a Franco-Hellenic protocol during the visit of President HOLLANDE (October 2015), by the opening of a permanent office of Expertise-France in Athens, in 2016, and more recently by the signature of a protocol relating to the support of the Public Bank of Investment (BPI France) for the creation of the Hellenic Development Bank, during the visit of Emmanuel MACRON, President of the French Republic, to Athens in September 2017.

I would like to express my gratitude to all my compatriots who, under the aegis of Expertise France, have provided and continue to provide valuable advice. This long-term technical assistance takes the form of the appointment of a senior official in charge of coordinating French technical support for Greece. These ten years of cooperation also mark a convergent voluntarism of our two countries in terms of the transformation of public action, an additional reason to continue our exchanges of expertise, know-how and good practices in a European and bilateral framework.



Mario Nava
Director-General

Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM), European Commission

The quality of public administration is crucial for the functioning of the Member States, for the deployment of European Union policies and for the European citizens' quality of life. Greece was forward looking when it embarked on an ambitious reform agenda in the area of public administration back in 2012. In cooperation with the European Commission and the French reform partners, Greece modernised its public administration and became a front runner in terms of digitalisation of its public services. This ambitious move proved pivotal to tackle the repercussions of the COVID-19 crisis: digitalisation supported the resilience of Greek institutions and allowed them to effectively manage the crisis.

The Greek experience of leading structural reforms has shown once again how crucial the quality of public administration is both in times of crisis and beyond. The Member States need to constantly optimise their institutions to ensure strength and resilience of national economies and lasting prosperity for their people. Efficient and modern public administrations are the core of all other reforms. This is why public administration and governance is a very important part of the Directorate General for Structural Reform support (DG REFORM) in the European Commission. DG REFORM was created building on the experience gained in Greece, through the Structural Reform Support Service; it now covers all Member States, with an office in Greece and local presence in Croatia and Romania. In fact, the Directorate General supports the Member States, upon their request, to carry out reforms by providing the most customised advice required. Given the importance of dialogue among public administrations in the EU we set-up the Expert Group on Public Administration and Governance, a platform to reinforce synergies in the area of public administration.

I am confident that our joint efforts in achieving concrete reforms will bear even more fruits in the near future. We are proud to have been part of this huge effort together with our Greek and French partners!



Jérémie Pellet

Director-General, Expertise France

This event marks the success of the technical cooperation between Greece and France, which is dear to our agency. Since 2012, Expertise France has been working on reforms reaching a wide range of state-building areas. These efforts have, I believe it, achieved their objectives and have accompanied a courageous reform movement, whose results can be seen today. These breakthroughs rely on a solid relationship of trust and a clear political vision of our Greek partners.

We are proud to make our teams and our experts available to the service of a quality and inspiring partnership. The work carried out with DG Regorm and with the support of our Embassy in Athens is the illustration of a common European will, the one of working in a spirit of solidarity for all citizens of the continent.



Thanasis Kontogeorgis

Secretary General for the Coordination of the Government

Over the past decade, Europe and Greece have faced a multitude of challenges that required planning, activation, development and coordination of European and national resources and public policies. Our country's priority has been and still remains to intensify our efforts in areas that can make our country stronger during the crises, i.e. to allow it to play an active role on the international agenda, to be economically prosperous and to ensure an environment of security and prosperity for its citizens. This process has required changes.

For about three years now, the government has been methodically structuring those mechanisms that allow us today to be able to argue that Greece is leading the way in terms of a balanced and sustainable economic and social development, despite the strong footprint left by the pandemic. Greece is for the first time in several years at the forefront of cutting-edge issues such as climate change, the digital state and social development. Its image and credibility as an investment destination is constantly growing. In this transformative course of the country, the Directorate-General for Structural Reform (DG Reform) has firmly stood as a valuable supporter for critical reforms, and for 10 years it has been supporting necessary reforms, in areas such as growth policies, tax policy and boosting of public revenue, labour policies and environmental policies. Of course, this effort was supported by Expertise France, in view of strengthening the executive role of the state, which envisions, designs, monitors and evaluates the policies, legislates on the basis of the principles of better regulation and liberates the human resources of the public sector from institutional and bureaucratic rigidities of the past, for the benefit of society and the economy. In this framework, the cooperation of the Secretariat-General for Coordination, as the National Coordination Authority for Technical Assistance, with the Directorate-General and the providers, is at an excellent level since our aim is to match the priorities of the government with the assistance provided.

I am certain that this cooperation will continue in the coming years, even more closely, in the trilogy drawn up today by the French Presidency regarding an autonomous European Union, a new European model of development, and a more humane Europe — a Union closer to its citizens.



Thanos Petralias

Secretary General for Fiscal Policy, General Accounting Office,
Ministry of Finance



Georgios Pitsilis

Governor of the Independent Authority for Public Revenue

The cooperation between the Ministry of Finance with Expertise France under the financial backing of DG Reform, although coinciding with the culmination of the health crisis, has left a very positive footprint, which will be a legacy for the next steps of the reform. The Accounting Reform, i.e. the adoption of the accrual accounting in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards, a flagship project of the Government, has found in the technical support experts the added value necessary in order to illuminate areas that have hitherto been unexplored.

The reform is not a 100 metres sprint but a marathon, in which the start, as in all endurance races, is of great importance. At this start, a joint group of people with complementary experience and know-how was created, and this group has and is still working with excellent efficiency. This osmosis is due to both professionalism and the mentality of the people of the two countries with friendship and cooperation persisting over time. This is also confirmed by the ten-year anniversary of Expertise France in our country.

Wishing those anniversaries to be multiplied in our country, I would like to convey the message to all those involved that the support of the political leadership should be taken for granted, stressing that the success of the project is a national goal. This is why, in this match, I invite you all to “wear the shirt” of the Greek national football team.

The cooperation between the Independent Authority for Public Revenue, DG Reform and Expertise France is a long standing one. With the support of DG Reform, we were able to plan and introduce substantial reforms in our Agency as part of our continuous efforts for improvement.

In this context, we have introduced significant reforms on the organizational structure, mode of operation, as well as innovative approaches to human resource management.

The latter is probably the most significant one and has been realized with the continued support and valuable input from DG Reform and Expertise France. Our new HRM system is based on specific and elaborate job descriptions, appraisal, and performance that ultimately affect and shape the payroll, bringing us thus to the forefront of the Greek public sector in this area.

The professionalism of the experts along with their knowledge and willingness to cooperate and share their know-how and expertise gave us a powerful tool towards the achievement of our goal, to become a modern, innovative administration that renders high quality services to citizens and businesses while safeguarding public interest.



Olga Gerovasili

Member of the Hellenic Parliament, constituency of Arta, Secretary of the parliamentary group of SYRIZA-PS,
Former Minister of Citizens' Protection, Former Minister for Administrative Reconstruction,
Former State Secretary to the Prime Minister

In my capacity as Minister for Administrative Reconstruction

and later as Minister of Citizens' Protection under the government of SYRIZA in the period 2016-2018, I had the pleasure to work intensively with the French state and Expertise France, particularly as we were approaching the exit from the Memoranda.

In the crucial area of civil protection, within the framework of SYRIZA's draft law on the National Civil Protection Authority that we subsequently submitted as a bill, a programme of transfer of know-how from EU countries and, above all, from France for the civil protection system under way, funded by the EU Structural Funds technical assistance programme, was secured.

In the field of Public Administration, we implemented a very ambitious reform programme with the support of the French State, Expertise France and the valuable contribution of Ms Ioannou, Director of Expertise France in Athens and a number of experts, the former Ambassador Mr. Chantepy, and the continuous successful evaluation by the Institutions and the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) of the European Commission.

Our laws 4369/2016 and 4440/2016 brought about radical changes. Moreover, the «National Strategy for the Public Sector 2020» that we drafted fitted with the «National Digital Strategy 2016-2021», which is contrary to the logic of digitising bureaucracy. We implemented the Human Resources Management System (HRMS): recruitment planning, goal setting, evaluation of entities and services, digital organisational charts, job descriptions, electronic evaluation of civil servants, single mobility system for civil servants, register of line managers, calls for the posts of administrative secretaries, calls for the posts of managers gradually throughout the public sector, digital training in cooperation with the National Centre for Public Administration & Local Government (EKDDA), and many others.

Implementation is the measure of success. And these reforms were embraced by the public administration. Who would have thought that today we would have almost 2,000 public bodies registered in the Digital Organisational Chart of the Public Sector? Who would discuss about electronic evaluation in the public sector?

The aim of course is to take one step further: the digital organisational chart of the public sector should start interoperating with citizens, gradually offering unmediated electronic services for the entire public sector. I am certain Expertise France has the knowledge for that too.



Antonis Manitakis

Emeritus Professor of AUTH.

Former Minister of Administrative Reform (2012-2013)

The most significant reform, to which I would like to refer, is the evaluation of all ministries' structures, as this is how we assessed the efficiency and structure of directorates and departments, as well as any overlaps of responsibilities. I will also mention the latest administrative reforms involving the executive state and the most recent ones on staff evaluation and effectiveness, as well as the job descriptions.

During my time as Minister of Administrative Reform in 2012-2013, I worked closely with members of the French technical support team, including domain leaders Pierre Lepetit and Sébastien Renaud, and the Commission's representative Alain Scriban. Direct contact with team members helped me in understanding the reform process and its detailed planning, always based on a road map. I'd also want to acknowledge Mr Sébastien Renaud's participation, and thank in particular Mr Pierre Lepetit for his genuine interest, outstanding collaboration, compassion, and extremely important advice, which he has provided me on a regular basis, verbally and in writing.

Overall, I learnt to build and formulate public policies based on "technical-statistical data," "objectives," "available means," and a "road map" from working with the technical assistance, which was provided through the Task Force for Greece. I regard the Task Force's support for structural administrative reforms, which was offered to me at the time under the auspices of France, to be quite valuable and vital. It was fruitful because it relied on the technical support members' constant direct, personal contact and cooperation with the administrative staff and Directors, and it was supported by the Commission official, Sébastien Renaud, being transferred for one year to the office of Minister as my direct collaborator.

I believe that if I didn't have such support, I would not have even begun the reform process, because neither I, the Administration, nor the Government had devised a reform plan. Instead of dismissals, which the IMF, lead by M. Thomsen, pushed on, they came up with their own scheme for civil servant mobility. Unfortunately, neither the then government nor the Administration supported or got ownership on the Ministry's idea. And that is one of the reasons why that effort did not continue or conclude as planned.

Je voudrais à ce propos remercier de tout mon cœur et exprimer toute ma gratitude aux personnes de la Task Force et de l'Administration française, qui nous ont offert sans récompense et avec plaisir leurs aide sous la direction de M. Reichenbach. Je garde un souvenir très aimable et inoubliable de notre fructueuse collaboration.



Georgios Patoulis
Regional Governor of Attica

The multiannual and multifaceted cooperation with the French state on public administration issues is one of the success keys of the reforms carried out with the support of the European Commission at a critical time in order to lead the country to a sustainable future, leaving definitively behind the weaknesses of the past.

I had personally the pleasure of working closely with executives of Expertise France both during my mandate as Mayor of Maroussi and President of the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE), and as Regional Governor of Attica, on issues of internal audit, a key issue not only for local authorities, but also for the entire Greek public administration.

The specialised experience of its executives and the valuable know-how they transferred laid solid foundations in order to chart a new course in local and regional authorities, fully in line with the needs of the era and based on the principles of openness, transparency and inclusiveness of society.

At a time when the model of multi-level governance is increasingly expanding with great success in Europe and the whole Western world, it is necessary to develop a new institutional framework that will contribute to enhancing cooperation and the quality of public administration at central and local level.

The conditions for a bold reform that will promote the functional unification of the control mechanisms at the two levels of local authorities are now ripe, with the central state intervening on an ancillary basis rather than limiting their administrative and financial autonomy. Both the local authorities and the government have the will and readiness to move in this direction and through our partnership with such reputable partners, such as Expertise France, I am sure we will succeed.

I deeply believe that it is only through such partnerships that effective reforms can be achieved, which shall be easily enforceable, with immediate measurable results and especially with the consent and acceptance of the entire society.

**Alain Scriban**

Former Director of the Task Force for Greece (September 2011 - October 2015)

The technical assistance set up in 2011 to help Greece in crisis to implement its reform program was a strong, founding act. Under the impetus of the European Commission, the best expertise in other States has been mobilized, symbolizing a Europe at the service of States and citizens.

The reform conditions then set for Greece stemmed essentially from budgetary objectives, which were sometimes unrealistic or unattainable in practice or within the deadlines, aggravating misunderstandings and frustrations.

Strategy and assistance via the Task Force for Greece were then developed on few simple but proven principles based on experience that cannot be ignored: (1) No reform will be effective and sustainable without listening to and understanding the local context, with a prior shared and substantiated assessment of the difficulties, weaknesses, strengths and assets; without developing together a vision that the State and its main actors will have to take ownership of (2) This should result in clear objectives, priorities endorsed at the highest level and action plans defining responsibilities and deadlines. (3) No change will happen in Greece without the establishment of real inter-ministerial coordination (4) No high-level assistance will be developed without mutual trust with strategic, political or administrative leaders at all levels and without ensuring that expertise is sought and credible. (5) No rapid, coordinated and effective mobilization of other States will be achieved without involvement of the European level.

Assistance for administrative reform has thus been the spearhead of a new mode of cooperation between States and mobilization of expertise. From my first trips to Paris, both the Presidency of the French Republic and the Prime Minister's office responded present, a high-level coordinator appointed, and experienced actors mobilized. Witnessing this commitment, other States then followed. In Greece, a few, at first discreet but courageous, and then more and more numerous, felt understood and supported in overcoming opposition and seizing the opportunity to undertake themselves the sustainable reforms their country needed. How far we have come since then! An innovative approach that illustrates this Europe expected alongside States and citizens.



**POLICY MAKING,
COORDINATION,
BETTER REGULATION**





Akis Skertsos

Minister of State responsible for the coordination of Government policies, Hellenic Republic

With Greece's exit from the enhanced surveillance regime in August, we will have closed a painful chapter in our recent history, which began in 2010 with a dual debt and competitiveness crisis and ended 12 years later with the country entering a new virtuous cycle of political regularity and, at the same time, economic, social, and institutional convergence with the European acquis.

What we have learned in these 12 years is that insisting on an introverted, low-productivity economy, without domestic and foreign private investment, dynamic exports and a strong presence in international value chains, is simply unsustainable, as it only succeeds in mortgaging the future of younger generations by leaving them with worse living conditions and prospects than ever before.

We also learned that a compromise with a state characterised by malignancy and institutional backwardness, a state that had no idea what it owed and to whom or what future obligations it assumed through the fragmented Insurance system, a client state, opaque and dysfunctional, without targeting, evaluation, or accountability, saw the foundations of democracy itself and the citizens' trust in the judicial system eroded.

Finally, we have learnt that achieving convergence with the European acquis requires not just legislation but also national ownership of important changes and, of course, delivery. And that without technical assistance, without systematic support in the design, monitoring, ex ante, and ex post evaluation of each promoted change, we cannot measure and evaluate the results of our work.

The reform effort in Greece in recent years has been significant, constant, and difficult, with visible improvements in the structures and services of the state and the economy. The contribution of European technical assistance has been catalytic in this. Particularly in recent years, when Greece has taken full ownership of the required changes and reforms.

Of course, our country still has a long way to go until it converges with the European average on key indicators, but it is important starting in 2019 it is a champion in leveraging all available technical support from the EU.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reforms (DG Reform) is assisting in this reform process. Our collaboration has been very productive and I am certain that it will continue to be so in the future.



Panagiotis Alexopoulos

Special Secretary for Financial Control of the Ministry of Finance
Former Special Secretary MIS for Monitoring and Evaluation of the
Government Program, Presidency of the Government

As Special Secretary of the MIS for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Government Program of the Presidency of the Government, I have worked together with Expertise France in the framework of the Technical Support Action “Support Public Administration Reform and its Digital Transformation” and in particular on issues related to the creation of an institutional mechanism for policy coherence with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The implementation of the SDGs at international and national level is a cross-cutting project aimed at shaping integrated and holistic development policies, with a view to optimally balancing the economic, social environmental and institutional aspects of sustainable development and their effective integration into all public policies (strategies, action plans, legislation), based on the principles of transparency, accountability, quality documentation, and broad engagement. In addition, the Council of the European Union conclusions adopted on 22 June 2021 (9850/2021) on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) once again highlight the importance and position of the SDGs in the political agenda of the EU institutions and several countries. Expertise France, with its excellent staff and associates and Greek and foreign international experts deployed the development of the project deliverables, helped the Greek Government to acquire tools and methodologies that will make it possible to implement the whole project of planning and designing the strategic priorities and objectives of the government as well as coordinating the implementation of the overall work of the government in order to achieve sustainable development.



Carlo Viviani

Senior Expert - ECOFIN Counsellor – European Commission

A constant element The deep transformation of the Greek public administration has two sides, one quantitative and one qualitative. It is indeed necessary to ensure that the administration is financially sustainable, but it is at least as necessary that it is equitable, with a transparent set of rules which is applied to all employees, and gives them the opportunity to have their efforts recognised and their aspirations fulfilled.

I still remember vividly the first meeting I attended at the Ministry, chaired for Greece by the late Dimitris Stefanou. It was September 2013, and everybody’s attention was still focused on the quantitative side, in the effort to bring the cost of personnel to more manageable levels. But there was already the realisation that it was necessary to better integrate the qualitative side, and thus to design and implement structural reforms, into the work that we were doing. This started effectively between 2014 and 2015, when an organic reform was conceived, based on four main pillars: the modernisation of wages, new rules for the appointment of managers, a more effective performance assessment scheme, and real mobility of staff across the public sector.

I left my job on Greece in October 2017, and the reforms I helped to design have now largely and successfully been implemented by Greece, with the decisive support of the colleagues from the Commission and from Expertise France. My take, though, is that the reforms were successful not so much because they were technically good, but because they were equitable. They were transparent, recognised merit, and gave new opportunities, without threatening the employees. And this only happened because reforms had one fundamental objective, which is that the administration should better serve the public. This is, to me, the real long-term sustainability. And I am particularly proud to have contributed to it.



Declan Costello

Deputy Director-General, Coordination of economic policies of Member States, European Commission



Pierre Heilbronn

Deputy Director of the Cabinet of the Minister of Economy and Finance (2014-2016), former Secretary General for European Affairs, former Vice-President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

My initial encounter with the provision of technical assistance in Greece was in 2010. Having been involved in the very first missions on the financial assistance and witnessed the huge scale of structural challenges ahead, I played a (admittedly very small) part in setting up the Task Force for Greece. When I returned to work full time on the Greek financial assistance programme in mid-2014, the situation had been transformed and a vast technical assistance programme and team was based in Athens.

The contribution which the Task Force for Greece, and subsequently DG REFORM, to the process of economic stabilisation and recovery in Greece is hard to overstate. Technical assistance played a decisive role in the design and implementation of key reforms in many areas including tax administration, public financial management, health care, social security reforms including social benefits, justice, land policy and cadastre and the list goes on. Much of the work took place against the background of an extremely fraught economic and political environment. Technical assistance helped keep discussions rooted in evidence and best practices on how to efficiently deliver public goods and services to Greek citizens. The role of technical assistance providers was beyond 'technical': they helped (re)build trust between Greek authorities and European partners.

Looking back, it is hard to understand why the European Commission only developed a technical assistance programme in 2010. Today, technical assistance delivered through the programmes of DG REFORM are an integral key tool in our economic governance and policy coordination framework. They support projects in all EU Member States on the most pressing public policy challenges. That is a worthy legacy of what began in Greece.

It is with happiness and pride that I look back on the ten years during which we have worked together to make the Greek public administration an asset for the development of the country.

This adventure began in 2012 with an initiative by Brussels, Athens and Paris, which came together to define the conditions for sustainable growth based on a public governance capable of deciding, organising and implementing.

With the French Prime Minister, we made a commitment from the first hours after the announcement of the establishment of Task Force for Greece on the provision of a complete offer of expertise in the transformation of the administration. This support, based on a long friendship between our two countries, was notably reconfirmed in 2015 when the technical assistance protocol was signed by Michel Sapin and his Greek counterpart in Athens.

Despite the difficulties encountered, we can say that this commitment was a resounding success: it was part of a balanced relationship made up of benevolence and high standards, based on the deep conviction that without a respected State, without an efficient administration, without motivated public service, there can be no lasting recovery of a country, development of its private sector, construction of an inclusive society.

Joint work has also enabled the construction of a more holistic approach to the reforms sequenced in a more realistic way, taking into account their political and social acceptability but also their compatibility with the trajectory of financial and economic recovery.

Through the commitment of which we are celebrating the 10th anniversary, we are celebrating the successes of Greece but well beyond, a Europe that defines individual responsibilities and collective solidarity in a balanced way.



Gabriele Giudice

Deputy to the Director, ECFIN.F – Economies of the Member States II; Head of Unit, ECFIN.F.3 – Croatia and Spain, Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs, European Commission

When I think about the reform of the public administration in Greece, my thoughts go to Dimitris Stephanou, the Secretary General who sadly died in 2014, while working incessantly to modernise an inefficient and oversized public administration. He was a prime example of the excellence available in the Greek public administration too often constrained by structures unfit for this century.

The reform of the public administration has been one of the most challenging of the assistance programmes to Greece. The initial steps have brought transparency with a census of employees across the public sector, accompanied by efforts to achieve consistency and sustainability of the overall numbers. What attracted most of the attention – and criticism – at that time was the strict turnover rules to downsize an administration inflated over decades by uncontrolled recruitments, and the controversial ‘mandatory exits’ meant to instil a sense of accountability in the administration.

In parallel, a deeper reform has advanced over the years, with valuable technical assistance provided by France (central administration) and Germany (local administration), coordinated by the Commission (Task Force for Greece and DG ECFIN) to ensure consistency with the priorities of the financial assistance programmes. This less visible but essential work underpinned a process of long-term regeneration. It has involved the rationalisation of administrative units, a reset of the managerial level based on merit, more independence of the administration, the definition of common wage grids and progressions for similar career profiles across administrations, voluntary mobility, and actions to enhance human capital.

As we often discussed with the French providers, the quantitative components of the reform were often seen as alienating the support of the employees, hence making the qualitative component harder to deliver. Still, both have been necessary.

This reform has been a long journey, requiring the relentless work of several Greek governments, determined to strengthen the backbone of society which is its public administration. The Greek people had to endure a difficult change, but now the fruits of such modernisation efforts are visible. This is a very valuable legacy of the support given in the past decade to Greece by its European partners.



Frank Van Driessche

Adviser for Revenue Administration, DG REFORM, European Commission



Susanne Caarls

European Commission, Coordinator Public Administration reform
(July 2016- July 2018)

Greece has engaged in a comprehensive reform of its public administration from 2012 onwards, first with the Task Force for Greece and now with DG REFORM. The challenge was immense, the journey to success long and the goal was in each step. Building on the expertise from Member States an astonishing technical support effort helped to advance multiple and complex administrative reforms.

One of the first and most challenging reforms was improving revenue collection. It had become increasingly evident that the institutional framework in place was not capable of absorbing the necessary reforms. A fundamental change to tax administration was needed if enduring improvements were to be achieved.

The Independent Agency for Public Revenue (IAPR) became operational on January 1, 2017. This significant change was followed by a comprehensive reform agenda, including an ambitious human resources management reform, modern tax payers services, and fair and transparent dispute resolution. Building trust in public authorities had become the key challenge. A new sentiment of optimism had permeated the administration creating a healthy climate for further reforms

Ten years of technical support resulted in a sea change. Greece has significantly enhanced the capacity of its public administration and has the ability to cope with new reform challenges. All these years, the excellent cooperation between Commission, Greece and the French partners was instrumental. It was a most interesting period in my professional life and I am very grateful to all colleagues with whom I had the privilege working with.

What I remember most of my two years working on public administration reform in Greece was the great cooperation between the then called Structural Reform Support Service and the Greek administration. I had the opportunity to work closely with Secretary Generals and their staff who were all committed to getting the reforms done. Of course, there were moments when we had our differences and I remember having vivid discussions at times. However, we always we able to have an open debate and work towards a solution together.

My experience in Greece also taught me a few things. For example:

- the way of living (it is ok to not always think about work),
- patience (never panic, the Greeks are champions in fixing everything 10 minutes before the deadline) and
- of course, the great Greek hospitality, (unlimited!)

I would like to thank the Greek colleagues as well as Expertise France and their experts for their excellent collaboration; we managed to get a lot done. I wish you all the best for the future!

Thank you & Good luck!



Prof. Helen Xanthaki

UCL Dean, Postgraduate Laws Programmes, University of London Worldwide; Member of the Quality Assessment Committee of the Legislative Drafting Process, Presidency of the Government

It is hard to believe that ten whole years have passed since the beginning of the formal cooperation of the Hellenic Republic and France in the area of Public Administration, with the support of the European Commission. One can only begin to accept the passage of this length of time only if one looks at the depth and extent of reform already achieved or at least already planned. For a legislative expert the crown of the cooperation lies with legislative reform.

The Hellenic Republic has finally introduced the concept of the executive state in its strategic foresight, thus linking evidence based policy making to legislative action to post legislative scrutiny to implementation. This enlightened approach to modern governance derives from and nurtures greatly the EU's Better Regulation Agenda, which places efficacy and effectiveness at the core of law-making. The process of application, monitoring, and implementation of the concept of the executive state in the Hellenic Republic was strongly supported with know how and assistance of the European Commission, with Expertise France at the spearhead of expert identification, strategic structuring, and implementation of wide reform in public administration.

Results are already visible in the legislation on the executive state, in the restructuring and goal setting for Ministries, in the centralisation of law-making within the General Secretariat for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, and in the scrutiny of all legislative drafts by the newly established Committee for the Scrutiny of the Quality of the Law-Making Process. The manuals for the Quality of Law-Making and for the Analysis of Legislative Effects have proven valuable tools for the standardisation of reforms on the ground.

But the job is not yet done. There are continuing initiatives building on the existing reforms, such as the training of public officials of the executive state both professionally and at the School for Public Administration. Parallel training of existing civil servants and education of future generations are the way forward in ensuring that reforms are not just radical. But highly sustainable. There is a lot of work ahead. But the eagerness of the Hellenic government under the coordination of the Minister of the State Prof. Dr. Georgios Gerapetritis, in combination with the substantive and imaginative support of the European Commission via the technical support of Expertise France are a good enough excuse to continue working towards the realisation of the dream: a modern, enlightened, independent Public Administrative for the service of the Hellenes within the visionary umbrella of EU values.



Matthieu Laurent

Assistant to the Legal Advisor at the General Secretariat for European Affairs (SGAE)

I had the pleasure of working on European issues during a two-year mission to Greece as part of this important project led by Expertise France. More specifically, I intervened on the issues of interministerial coordination and the implementation of EU law. It is therefore with a view that is certainly biased that for me the most important reforms have been the undeniable strengthening of the coordination capacities of the Greek authorities, having resulted in the creation of the Secretariat General for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and the establishment of robust procedures to monitor the transposition of directives and manage any infringements detected by the European Commission.

This type of projects is in fact of great added value for the EU and all of its Member States. It enables the development, “in Europe”, of skills on site but also within the team of experts who, in turn, benefit their structures. These projects create and strengthen links between administrations of the different Member States and thus develop a very strong community spirit which then irrigates our relations within the institutions and facilitates our cooperation and our work.

One of the most significant advantages is the trust that has been established between the various ministerial contact points, as well as with our excellent colleagues in the Hellenic Parliament. This confidence has made it possible to move forward on the reform projects and of course to establish more solidly the inter-ministerial coordination.

As an anecdote, during a study visit in Paris, we carried out a real administrative and institutional treasure hunt to find a good practice put in place by the French authorities... but lost from sight, a real hunt “for the committee of liaison”, fortunately found since.



HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT





Makis Voridis

Minister of Interior, Hellenic Republic

The transformation of organizational and human capital is the central pillar of the Ministry of Interior's reform endeavour.

Our objective is to not only attract, in a targeted manner, individuals who are qualified for every position, and who have the knowledge, drive, and desire to contribute to society, but also to “invest” in their skills

At the same time, we want to foster a culture that encourages initiative and innovation within a larger context of collaboration and synergy, all for the benefit of citizens who will benefit from improved services.

In order to successfully accomplish our goals, in recent years we have developed, in cooperation with the technical support of the French state and with the support of the Directorate-General for Structural Reforms, a Roadmap for Reform Actions that interact in a complementary way.

The modernisation of recruitment procedures through the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP), the reform of the list of qualifications, the updating of the generic and specific job descriptions which serve as a reference point for the activities and functions of Human Resources Management, the redesign of electronic systems for recruitment integrating goal setting, the introduction of teleworking, the management of employee performance in terms of continuous improvement, the integration and training of new employees in conjunction with the establishment of “career paths,” and the upgrading / empowerment of executives serving in positions of responsibility are all examples of what is at the heart of our interventions for quality public administration and local self-government.

Our proposal takes a holistic approach that focuses on the processes that shape the “life cycle” of the State's human resources, while also improving the Administration's organisational aspects of policy formulation and implementation, aiming for an extrovert, citizen-centred approach with a focus on public sector results.

The Public Administration's quality and seamless operation ensures quality services to the citizens and offers a stable foundation for the country's financial growth.



Vivi Charalaboyianni

Secretary General for Human Resources of Public Sector, Ministry of Interior

Over recent years, public administration has encountered a new normality, crises management and constantly changing conditions, where it has to fulfil its mission.

In this context, human resources should act as a pillar of stability and also as a driving force, and be able to face the challenges of this new reality. Therefore, public administration would need personnel with wide-ranging skills and competencies, able to contribute to its purpose and adapt to the changes, through new standards of organisation of the work.

From this perspective, recruitment of new executives should guarantee the application of the principles of meritocracy, of equal opportunities and of the right pairing between employee and position. In this respect, we have built a single and simplified process of assessment, which includes cognitive, as well as specialized skills and work efficiency tests, outlining the profile of each candidate in relation to the requirements of the position.

At the same time, we reformed the job classification system of “branches (kladoi)”, with the support of Expertise France that contributed substantially to the codification of the branches in public administration, now ending up in a small and flexible format. An achievement that also contributes to the “internal labour market”, the unified mobility system, a tool that seeks to assess and appraise the competencies of each employee in relation to the needs of each public service for personnel.

In parallel, in collaboration with our “reform” partners, the Directorate General for Structural Reform Support and Expertise France, and with the aim of improving efficiency, we are launching a series of interventions regarding modern methods of human resources management, such as the development of career paths, the induction of newly appointed public servants and the dissemination of innovative practices.

In the light of the above, our primary concern is to develop a suitable working environment, so that employees could improve their performance and contribute substantially to the achievement of the goals of the public organization.

Undoubtedly, all these actions are essential improvements for a modern, sustainable and productive Public Administration, which would be a key component for the competitiveness of the Greek economy, on the one hand, and which would listen and fully meet the needs of the citizens, on the other.



Evi Dramaloti

President of the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA)

The transformation of the Greek public administration has shown remarkable progress in the last decade. I will refer to my personal experience from the many years of cooperation with the Directorate General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) of the European Commission and the French Republic, through Expertise France.

I had the pleasure of working with the staff of Expertise France and experts of the former French ENA, now Institut National du Service Public (INSP), initially, for a number of years as head of the External Relations Department of the General Secretariat of Coordination and later as President of the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA). My best memory is the moments of persistent work and mutual effort that led to the cultivation of relationships of appreciation and respect. What struck me most, however, was the citizens' reaction to the proposed changes, which they embraced with an unprecedented sense of confidence, a fact that was reflected in both the consultation process and their discussion in the Greek Parliament.

A few words about some recent changes we promoted: with the support of Expertise France and INSP, the admission exam of the National School of Public Administration and Local Government (ESDDA) was reformed in the direction of strengthening excellence and technocratic administration. In addition, with the support of French expertise, a special training programme was developed for the preparation of those wishing to join the branch of executive managers in the implementation of the law on the executive State. The recent regulatory initiative of the Ministry of Interior - which was promoted following a proposal by EKDDA's Board - created new paths of professional development for public sector executives in three new specific areas (law drafting, policy analysis and digital policy analysis). It is worth noting the way of selection / admission of participants in the programme, which presupposes success in a very demanding competition of knowledge and skills.

It is equally important to mention the Greek-French cooperation in the field of public sector innovation, through visits of ESDDA students to INSP, via the organization of innovation workshops, as well as through the realization of special summer educational activities among ESDDA, INSP and Universities.

More experienced, more mature, more optimistic we can continue even more vigorously with new ambitious initiatives.



Maryvonne Le Brignonen

Director of the National Institute of Public Service



Marisol Touraine

International expert for Expertise France
and former French Minister of Social Affairs and Health

Developing the skills of civil servants is a determining condition for the success of public transformations. As part of the technical support to the Greek public administration, the National Institute of Public Service (INSP) has been contributing since 2017 to the implementation of training actions for Greek public officials. Through a dynamic cooperation with the National Center for Public Administration & Local Government (EKDDA), our intervention aims to meet priority needs in terms of training civil servants.

The training sessions that we co-organized were particularly rewarding thanks to the remarkable mobilization of the participants. This experience also illustrates the know-how and the high potential of the Greek civil servants who participated in the sessions.

The cooperation framework offered by the European technical assistance programme of DG Reform promotes the concentration of actions around the priority issues of administrative reforms. The coordination work carried out by the Expertise France team considerably facilitates the understanding of needs and the deployment of technical expertise. We are very grateful for the trust of all partners and I hope that this cooperation will continue to bring concrete and lasting results for administrations, public officials and citizens in Greece.

Like many European countries, health in Greece is historically linked to hospitals and care. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Greece had decided to strengthen its public health policy, making prevention and health promotion its new priorities. This global health crisis has at least served as an accelerator for the reforms already undertaken: I am thus fortunate to participate in the team of international experts mobilised by Expertise France, which supports the Reform of the Greek Public Health System. Greece can count on high-ranking university professors and doctors, professional engagement and strong political will. However, the whole organisation of the system needs to be reviewed, as the adoption of multiple pieces of legislation and regulations has led to a real administrative labyrinth. In terms of public policy, the elaborate complexity of French gardens is rarely desirable, but the efficiency of the administration can be improved by helping managers to better define priorities in order to prepare concrete action plans. The main thing is to allow Greek citizens to find the right answers to their questions and needs. Contributing to this project fills me with both honour, and happiness: I can't resist the beauty of Athens!



Andreas Pottakis
The Greek Ombudsman



Grigoris Theodorakis
Executive of the Public Administration
Former Secretary General of the Ministry for Administrative Reconstruction

The Ombudsman's collaboration with Expertise France began in the fall of 2016, when the Authority was given the opportunity to develop a comprehensive model of institutional mediation, as a process of out-of-court settlement of citizens' disputes with the public administration. It was quickly mutually agreed that this cooperation could make a decisive contribution to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Ombudsman's services.

With the valuable support of Expertise France executives in Athens, a study visit was organized to the French counterpart, the Défenseur des Droits, who already in 2011 had carried out brave structural changes of its institutional framework, its organization and operation. This bilateral cooperation with the counterpart institution of France, through the technical support of Expertise France, was utilized in the reform of the Rules of Procedure of the Ombudsman in 2018¹ in a more functional and compact model.

The Authority's excellent cooperation with Expertise France focused also on the elaboration of the Ombudsman's strategic planning, a process that included a risk analysis study, consultation with stakeholders, internal consultation with the Ombudsman's staff, and a workshop². The exchanges of know-how with experts, with officials of the French Public Administration, such as Mr. Edouard Leroy³, as well as with executives of the Défenseur des Droits, Mr Daniel Agacinski and Ms Nepheli Yatropoulos, were very significant. The result of this cooperation was the issuance in 2019 of the Strategic Plan of the Ombudsman, which outlines the Authority's strategic objectives, priorities and vision for the protection of the rights of all the inhabitants of the country and for an improved response to the multifaceted issue of impartial and fair solution to citizens' problems, as well as to the distortions and complexities in the operation of public services.

I have closely worked with the relevant services of the European Commission and Expertise France in providing technical assistance to Greece, during the period when I was Secretary General of the Ministry for Administrative Reconstruction from December 2016 to July 2019.

At first I was quite wary about this cooperation. The fact that the Greek public administration would cooperate with representatives of another country who may not have been aware of the specificities of the Greek State made me wonder about the outcome of the project. Any reservations were dismissed relatively quickly as I found that the executives of Expertise France are characterised by high professionalism, good knowledge of the subject and sincere willingness to cooperate constructively with the executives of the Greek public administration.

In the course of this collaboration, very important reforms were planned and implemented, such as the creation of digital organisational charts, job profiles, the implementation of the single mobility system, the implementation of important digital projects, etc.

The culmination of this effort was the presentation of the updated National Strategy for Administrative Reform, at the Benaki Museum, in August 2017, in the presence of the then Prime Minister, the then Minister for Administrative Reconstruction, many members of the Government, state officials and the Ambassador of the French Republic.

I personally feel very proud for the fact that by July 2019 when I left the post of Secretary General, a significant part of the reforms that were included in this strategy had already been implemented, laying solid foundations for the improvement of the functioning of the public sector in Greece.



Georgia Valatsou

Permanent Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior

It is with great pleasure that I received the invitation from the European Commission in order to share with you my experience after ten (10) years of cooperation between our entity and the French Republic through Expertise France. This is a partnership marked by the efforts of all of us to contribute with all our forces to the collective effort to improve the Greek Public Administration.

Although it is difficult for me to distinguish between the initiatives in which I participated, together with my French colleagues, I could not fail to mention the first attempt made to create/establish the entity that has largely served as the model for the functioning of the current Presidency of the Government.

During the period from November 2011 to May 2012, in my dual role both as a executive of the former Ministry of Administrative Reform and eGovernment and as a member of a team under the then Prime Minister Loukas Papademos and in close cooperation with the representatives of the French Government, i drew up, with the assistance of a team of young and dynamic executives of the Ministry, the service regulations of an entity with the role and responsibilities of a General Secretariat of the Government, after carefully studying the corresponding international good practices and models, and especially the French model, adapting them to the Greek reality.

I am particularly pleased today, being the Permanent Secretary General of the Ministry of Interior, to see that this important reform, which has taken place with the contribution of French experts, has not just been implemented but also form the cornerstone in the current government's effort to give Greece the place it deserves at the international and European level.



Efthymia Christou

Tax inspector, Independent Support Department of the General Directorate of Tax Administration of IAPR

It was the summer of 2018 when I was informed that, following an extremely challenging written and oral exam, I was selected to participate on behalf of the Greek public administration, namely the Independent Authority for Public Revenue (IAPR), in the training programme of the National School of Public Finance (École nationale des finances publiques - ENFiP) in Paris.

In particular, the programme concerned the training of inspectors of the French fiscal administration at the rank of tax inspector, and it was completed with an internship held in the region of Paris and specifically in the Directorate of Tax Inspections Support.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that in addition to the educational significance of the programme, the very experience of daily interaction with the French language and culture is equally important.

In conclusion, my participation in the postgraduate programme of the National School of Public Finance of France was an excellent experience, as I was given the opportunity to attend the fiscal inspectors' degree programme in a fiscal administration with a long tradition, and at the same time to come in direct contact with a different administrative, fiscal and social culture.



Yannis Spiliotopoulos

Councillor at the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP)
Former Director-General of Human Resources of the Public Sector



Ioannis Selimis

Executive Secretary, Region of Attica
Former Strategic Planning & Communication Coordinator
of the Secretariat General of Anti-Corruption

The year 2012, was a difficult period for Greece and especially for the public administration. The cooperation of the current Directorate-General for Human Resources of Public Sector with Expertise France began in a climate of stress and doubt, aiming at the transfer of know-how, so as to implement the necessary and mandatory reforms. This was a challenging experience both for myself and my colleagues. We had to assimilate knowledge and practices that had been tested in a different environment, suggest to the political leadership the changes that would have the best possible results for the human resources of the public administration and ensure, if not their acceptance, at least the minimum possible reactions due to the tense climate of the time. From all this long period I shall distinguish the time of the drafting of the job descriptions for the entire public sector. It was a difficult task whose success was absolutely necessary for the implementation of the single mobility system and the system for manager selection. Thanks to the constructive cooperation with EF executives, the dedication of my colleagues and the valuable assistance of the then political leadership, we managed in a relatively short time to have a positive result which is a valuable tool to date while obviously being open to improvement due to its dynamic nature. I also consider important our cooperation for the development and implementation of the structured interview provided for by Law 4369/16, which is a basic guarantee for the reliability of the system of manager selection, considering that until then the interview was not particularly well accepted by the public service and society in general.

I would like to thank all EF executives for the constructive cooperation and in particular Mr Jacques Roudière with whom, despite our different experiences, we have managed to develop over time a common code of communication.

The challenges faced by the Greek public administration are not only related to the need for structural changes in the state mechanism, but are mainly challenges of orderly operation, more effective action and daily practice. It is often difficult, the obvious and simple things to be done, because this would presuppose the daily struggle with a big consolidated system, which has learned to live, move and act for the sake of itself, in order to survive.

In this context, the cooperation with Expertise France and the transfer of good practices, which were not imposed but proposed, after integrating the specific characteristics of the mentality and culture of the country, had a decisive contribution to the creation of an environment more suitable for the undertaking of initiatives and the development of these initiatives in a more favourable perspective for the administration, since the wider goal of the technical support was the assessment of the work of the services, the recording of the pathogens, and mainly the suggestion of suitable and realistic solutions for their treatment.

I had the pleasure to participate, as coordinator and representative of the General Secretariat of Anti-Corruption, in the action of the technical support provided by Expertise France in the field of Internal Audit, an action with very positive results that led to the legislation of a new framework in this field. This cooperation does not end here, it will continue in other areas of administrative action with multiplier results.

After all, the development of relations of mutual understanding and trust between the two sides, combined with the professionalism and the visionary approach of the people of Expertise France lead us to even better days.

We'll keep going...!!!



Sotiris Lantas

Employee of the Department of Development of Human Resources of the Ministry of the Interior
(Participant at ENA training programmes organised by Expertise France,
under DG REFORM technical support actions)

As an employee of the Ministry of Administrative Reform initially and currently of the Ministry of the Interior, I have worked since almost the beginning of the French Technical Assistance, so I also feel part of the 10-year successful journey.

The partnership was not only limited to the implementation of programmes for the administrative reform of Greece, but the French Technical Assistance has contributed decisively to the development and improvement of the knowledge and skills of the human resources of the public administration by transferring and utilising good practices already in place in other EU Member States.

This was the reason for the beginning of a cooperation with the National School of Public Administration in France (**École Nationale d'Administration - ENA**), which carried out training programmes focused on administrative reform of the public sector in order to develop the skills of trained civil servants.

I had the pleasure and honour to participate in the 1st training programme on the **“Introduction to Innovation in Public Administration”** in Paris, from which I have very positive impressions regarding both the innovative approach and the educational level.

This five-day intensive program had different subjects each day with the courses not only focusing on our theoretical training, but enriching knowledge with workshops, group work, outdoor activities, etc.

In addition, the fact that the trainees came from different countries is particularly important because this element introduced a multicultural dimension in the training and I believe that all participants got the feeling that despite cultural differences there is a possibility for successful cooperation.

Having mentioned the above, I am pleased to have participated in this training programme and I hope that cooperation with the National School of Public Administration in France (**École Nationale d'Administration - ENA**) will continue with other programmes, thus providing the opportunity to other colleagues to improve their skills.



Sébastien Renaud

Deputy Head of Unit for Governance and Public Administration, DG REFORM.
Formerly embedded seconded national expert of the Task Force for Greece – advisor of the Minister of Reform from February 2013 to July 2015

My years in Greece are moments I cherish. I learned to know a land, a language and a people that I now love dearly. I had the chance to work with ministers and civil servants that inspired me by their dedication and drive.

The French-Greek cooperation supported by the European Commission was a very concrete reality for me. In my day to day job of advising the minister of reform, I benefited from the best experts in their field. I could also rely on outstanding managers and reform partners to challenge and support me. In my role, the tripartite cooperation meant knowledge, guidance and friendship in these trying times.

The administrative reform in Greece has taught me so much on what makes a State function: the coordination by the centre of government, the design of an effective supervision, the links between budget, policies and people, the organisation of ministries or how internal control and audit can foster sound policies. Most of all I now see the importance of focusing on missions rather than on competencies and the importance of providing an effective framework to design and implement them. The issue was never the quality of staffing: the Greek colleagues I had the chance to work with were dedicated and competent. What we collectively had to address was the design an organisation, a coordination and a management system adapted to the Greek reality and focused on implementing the reforms needed to deliver quality public services.

Thinking back on these years I remember the violence, the endless hours of work and the struggle. I also remember the camaraderie, the joy and the pride for all that we accomplished and that I see bearing fruits a decade later.

“Έτσι σοφός που ξγίνεις, με τόση πείρα, ήδη θα τὸ κατάλαβες ἢ ἴθάκες τι σημαίνουν.”
Σωστά.*

* “Wise as you will have become, so full of experience, you’ll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.” Right

[C. P. Cavafy, Ithaka (Translated by Edmund Keeley)]



Jacques Roudière

International Expert for Human Resources Management in the Civil Service
Contrôleur Général des Armées, Former French Ministry of Defence Human
Resources Management General Director

The first time I came to Athens was in September 2012.

I had just spent 7 years as HR Director of the French Ministry of Defence and for 14 years I had been official of central administration in France. During all this time I have carried many reforms, always paying attention to what was being done in other countries.

In this way, I have been able to escort the Greek public administration with the reforms to be made, being:

- Moving from a formalistic, very legalistic management, to a skills-based management style
- Promoting an approach to HR management through the personal development of staff, evaluation, mobility, selection of executives, ethical framework
- Finally, the digitalisation that is needed in HRM,

For 10 years we have worked tirelessly on these topics, with successes, advances and then also failures or simply mediocre results.

But administrative reform is difficult. There is a need for commitment, courage and consistency. You have to constantly get out of your comfort zone and try to get other people also on board.

I found all these elements in Greece and I have tried to contribute from my side. We have come a long way, and we still have a long way ahead of us, because the transformation of the administration is a permanent movement.



Edouard Leroy

Inspector General for Education, Sport and Research, Ministry of National Education and Youth, Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Ministry of Sports, French Republic Expert with Expertise France

Without going back to Ancient Greece,

I place my remarks in the long term to acknowledge the contribution of the European Union to our societies, for all European citizens.

I knew Greece under the yoke of the dictatorship, worked, during my schooling at the French National School of Administration (ENA), at the French Embassy in Athens, in 2002, just before the 2003 Greek presidency of the Council of the European Union and the 2004 Olympic Games, and participated in intergovernmental or administrative cooperation actions in Greece in 2011, a critical time, then from 2018 to now with the team from the Expertise France office in Athens.

Thanks to the action of DG REFORM and the presence in Athens of Expertise France, we have engaged in moments of intense, multicultural work, in the field of public service, innovation, evaluation of the public action, interministerial governance. We had the opportunity, not to import this or that model into Greece, but to share and develop common administrative expertise.

In January 2019, while the Hellenic Parliament in Athens and the House of Commons in London were deciding on votes of no confidence in the respective governments of these Member States within these Parliaments, I have noticed the differences in scenography, in the place of the administrations, of the executives. Everything is the same but everything is different, hence the interest of our administrative cooperation in the service of popular sovereignty and the citizens, to respond to challenges so similar that must be overcome in such different contexts.

From these collaborations we come out changed, enriched. The conduct of projects in our respective countries is improved by these exchanges.





DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION





Kyriakos Pierrakakis

Minister of State and Digital Governance, Hellenic Republic

Greece, a country that can be entirely transformed.

The 200 years since the outbreak of the Revolution of 1821 provided us with the opportunity to think and listen to what history has to teach us about a safe and creative path to our future, which we must prepare. Because it is not only the past that defines the future but also the future the past, it is important to take into account how the future generations will see us in years, decades, and even centuries. How will people see Greece of the first decades of the twenty-first century, Greece for which we want to establish new starting points, new references, Greece that innovates, pioneers, and becomes a point of reference?

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis conveyed to all of us, his cabinet members, the citizens' demand to "rebuild the state". We work for the modernisation of the state, a state operating as part of a united Europe, in equality with all other member states. The challenge was huge, and there was no room for failure. Having himself worked in 21st-century-terms Administrative Reforms, and on the verge of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Prime Minister entrusted us with the new condition, which includes digital transformation as a necessary element for the country to advance administratively, financially, socially and politically.

After three years, and taking into account all the reforms accomplished in previous decade, we have every reason to be optimistic about the future, proud of a Greece that day by day is not only changing a productive model, but also setting new horizons. We will keep moving forward at the same pace, further developing our digital policy, which is a fundamentally social policy that reduces inequalities, and focuses on the needs of the citizens and the services offered to them.



Leonidas Christopoulos

Secretary General of Digital Governance and Simplification of Procedures

Every modern European country must have as its main goals the well-being and security of its citizens, the social cohesion and solidarity, as well as the strengthening of its democratic and administrative institutions. These goals are served and achieved by an effective public administration, which aims to support the improvement of living conditions of the citizens and the protection of the public interest. The reform of the public administration is a policy of key importance, because it allows the adaptation of the mechanisms of the State to the constantly evolving conditions, social and economic. In addition, it secures the most important resource for economic development and social prosperity, the trust of citizens in the institutions, since the breakdown of the public administration would not allow a normal economic activity.

The biggest challenge lies here: administrative reform is not a one-time policy. The constant changes in the socio-economic environment require the continuous adaptation of the state mechanisms, in order to respond effectively to the needs of the citizens. In short, ensuring stability requires constant change and adjustment. And that's going to be a major issue for policymakers for the years to come.

In this direction, therefore, of the necessary reform of the public administration, but also of the digital transformation of the State, the cooperation with the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM), in the last decade, is of major importance. Our goal is for Greece to become an attractive country and, at the same time, a competitive one in terms of the operation of the State and of course of the transparency and independence of its institutions.

Undoubtedly, the support of Expertise France in this endeavour has been an equally important pillar, especially in the light of the socio-economic challenges that all EU Member States have been called upon to face in recent years, including the great challenge of the covid-19 pandemic.

I am confident that our cooperation will continue to be constructive in the years to come, especially in the light of the substantial deepening of the strategic cooperation between Greece and France, in order to effectively address the challenges of today and tomorrow.



Konstantinos Dryllerakis

Head of Unit, Council of the European Union -
General Secretariat of the Council – SMART-Digital Services

I have fond memories of my time with technical support in Greece. I had the privilege to meet many bright, professional and committed civil servants and support them in their reflections to use “digital” to reform the way the administration operates to better serve its citizens and engage its workforce. Alas, the size and complexity of a public administration makes reforms by definition hard and, as is to be expected, they do not always succeed. It seems to me that the hardest part of a reform process is helping mindsets evolve towards a shared vision by fostering the discussion and the debate that is required. Making administrative processes more efficient and less complex for the citizen starts from a belief that an administration should always strive towards efficiency and service orientation.

Yet sometimes, *not* pursuing seemingly forward-looking reform ideas could be a better course of action. I remember when the General Secretariat for Digital Policy was reflecting on the potential introduction of “agile development” of IT solutions as the main future approach for the administration. Agile development, based on a dynamic collaboration between stakeholders, makes important promises for accelerated value realisation and higher predictability. Indeed, countries like Denmark have embraced it with some level of success. A seminar organised by technical support brought together over 100 civil servants with the Danish expert on the 400-page legal framework and representatives of the government agency using the methodology in practice. The presentations and discussions highlighted the intricacies of the legal framework and revealed an important key success factor: consider that some projects will naturally fail and that this should not give rise to legal proceeding against someone responsible. Participants were quick to realise the considerable cultural change that will be required to introduce such a radical approach locally. Decision makers no longer pursued the original idea in the current context.



Francisco García Morán

Special Adviser, DG REFORM, European Commission

Small contracts can also achieve high impact!!!

The Pension Fund Organization (OAED) called the former Task Force for Greece (TFGR), today DG REFORM, to help with a supplier lock-in problem on a couple of mission critical systems essential to pay pensions, subsidies and indemnities to thousands of Greek people.

I met the OAED manager who explained to me that they had “lost control” of the operations of the systems and they were in the hands of one supplier for the operations and any modifications or enhancements to the systems since he had full control of them and the related infrastructure.

OAED absolutely needed to take back control but, at that time, they did not have internal capacity to achieve it. Apparently, the IT department did not even have the necessary security credentials to manage the system and did not have neither the source code nor the database design; the supplier was in full control connecting remotely to the OAED’s internal network for the operations (what also represented a high security risk). There was no test or quality assurance environment; all the updates were done directly on the production systems what is a very risky and unsafe practice.

Furthermore, the existing supplier lock-in prevented the OAED to open the maintenance of the systems to competition.

With the help of Lazaros Tossounidis (a CEDEFOP official detached to the Ministry in charge of public administration), the Commission signed a low value contract with a small and specialised Greek IT company to reverse engineer the systems and gain full control on them.

Thanks to two very competent engineers (Petros and Georges) and the essential help of Lazaros for the on-site monitoring of the project, the operation was a success and the OAED gained back control of the systems what gave them the opportunity to open the maintenance and evolution to competition.

OAED warmly thanked the TFGR for the help!!!



Nancy Routzouni

IT Portfolio Officer, Directorate General for Informatics, European Commission
IT Expert in the Greek Government for the period 2010-2021

Expertise France's journey in Greece coincided with my work as an IT expert in the Greek government supporting the digital transformation of the state. Throughout this decade, I worked closely with Expertise France and DG REFORM executives to design and implement digital governance initiatives as well as manage technical support projects. Over this time, I have seen substantial progress in areas such as human resource management, digital governance, improving transparency and accountability, better regulation and change management.

During the implementation of the projects, the Expertise France team was frequently faced with significant challenges: changes in ministry leadership and senior management positions, redefined political priorities, difficulty in mobilising key actors in public administration, as well as the need to respond to unplanned reform requirements arising from crisis situations or other circumstances. In this challenging and demanding context, the team has consistently demonstrated professionalism, patience, perseverance, determination, hard work, respect and understanding, in order to identify the best solution that would serve the public administration needs. Without any hassle or tension during the negotiations, but also with no concessions on the quality of the deliverables.

Expertise France's most important achievement is that it has been able to develop and mobilise a solid network of executives in the Greek public administration, which I would refer to as REFORMERS. Recognising the institution's value, this network of executives is the driving force for new initiatives, ensures its continuity, supports the co-shaping of ambitious but realistic projects, and carries out the effective programme implementation.

Personally, I consider myself privileged to have had the chance to be part of this cooperation, as it was critical not only for the development of my professional identity, but also for the next steps in my career.

Thank you! Best wishes and many successes!



TOGETHER

We Change

TOGETHER

We Grow





Nathalie Berger

Director for Support to Member State Reforms,
Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support,
European Commission



Ioannis Hadjiyiannis

Head of Unit Horizontal Policies / Head of the Athens office, DG REFORM,
European Commission

Throughout the past ten years, the Task Force for Greece and now DG REFORM have supported Greece in its efforts to develop, modernise and improve public administration. Numerous reforms, projects and initiatives have been conducted in a complex and ever-evolving context.

The goal and purpose of the EU technical support is and has always been to build capacity in public administrations across the EU, responding to the needs of the Member States and ensuring sustainability. Governments should continue to invest in building capacity to adapt, learn and align to public services and citizen's needs.

International indicators show that Greece has improved the quality of its administration. Coordinated reforms took place across the government to build a capable, resilient, and effective public sector.

Two examples illustrate this drive for reforms in Greece. The establishment of the National Transparency Authority which aims to improve citizen's trust in public institutions and promote transparency in government. Also, the establishment of the Ministry of Digital Governance has brought together the necessary capacity and coordination to integrate modern technologies in the delivery of public service.

At the centre of a capable and effective public administration is the undisputed driver of efficiency and effectiveness: the management of human resources. Greece has made notable progress at all levels of government and enhanced the capacity of its public administration.

Ten years on, we can see that these structural improvements have given Greece an ability to keep up the momentum on reforms, which is critical in ensuring resilience and sustainability in view of upcoming challenges.

Implementing growth and resilience-enhancing reforms is challenging, since the impact of reforms often takes time to materialise. This is even more the case in the sphere of public administration where reform implementation necessitates not only political commitment but also a mentality change. Having witnessed Greece's ambitious reform journey over the last 10 years, I can testify that its commitment in reforming as well as the timely and efficient reform design and implementation has been crucial in strengthening the country's economic and social cohesion. With the support of the French Republic and the European Commission's DG REFORM, including through DG REFORM's office in Athens, Greece has built a solid basis for modernizing its public administration.

As clearly showcased by the Recovery and Resilience Plans, as a response to the impact of the Covid-19 crisis, multiannual programmes, combining reforms and investments are the key to resilience and growth. In that respect, Greece's ambitious and comprehensive reform agenda over the last years provides a convincing example for the European growth model of the future. Greece's reform success serves as proof for the exceptional Member State potential that can be unlocked when combining commitment to reforms with the deployment of targeted technical support. DG REFORM's technical support, which is fully funded by the Commission, tailor-made, deployed on the ground and covers the most important national and EU priorities, is a valuable European instrument at the disposal of all 27 Member States.



Nikolaos Kleniatis, Athina Manta, Phivi Haratsi, Adamantia Manta

European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support
(DG REFORM B2 Athens team)

It was back in 2011 when everything started with the Commission setting up the Task Force for Greece at the request of the Greek Government. The aim was to help the country undertake a series of reforms in all sectors of the economy, with public administration reform constituting one of the key reform areas. The task force was also mandated to help Greece more rapidly absorb EU funds targeting economic competitiveness, growth and employment.

Since then, a team of Commission experts was established on the ground supporting constantly Greece in its public administration reforms. The type of support provided has been adjusting to the respective needs, as appropriate, ranging from support for the design and coordination of reforms to direct support for the implementation of reforms, including the embedment of Commission experts in the Greek public administration.

All of us in this team feel proud for having actively contributed to this endeavour. We worked on several policy sub-areas, such as policy planning and coordination including better regulation; human resources management; digital transformation; transparency and accountability; and management and absorption of EU funds.

Being on the ground and working hand-in-hand with the Greek authorities has been an extraordinary experience, both rewarding and challenging. Presence on the ground has allowed the local team to acquire strong country knowledge, to ensure institutional memory and continuity of long-lasting reforms and to help deliver tangible results. In addition, the daily interaction with the Greek authorities facilitated the transfer and exchange of good practices between Commission experts and national officials, bringing the Commission closer to Greece.

It has been great honour and privilege for us to work on Greece's public administration reform together with exceptional colleagues from the Greek administration and the French technical support under the steer of our visionary management.



Melina Katsomiti

Head of Unit for Public Administration & Local Government Policies, SGCo
Responsible for Horizontal issues of technical assistance to the SGCo as National Coordinating Authority

The role of the Secretariat-General for Coordination, as the National Coordinating Authority, is crucial for the successful submission of critical requests for the modernisation of the Public Administration, corresponding to government priorities for reforms. During the last three years I have been involved in Technical Assistance, our work as the National Coordination Authority is deemed very successful as every year the use of resources of DG REFORM's technical assistance for Greece increases. I have had the great pleasure to work with many DG REFORM executives and experts of the French partner with whom we share the same principles for a resilient, agile and strong public administration.

The event for the "10 years of cooperation with the Greek Public Administration" gives a strong promise to continue the constructive cooperation between Greece, the European Commission and France for a strong European Union in the international scene.



Nana Filosidou

Head of Unit for Migration Policy - SGCo,
National Coordination Authority

Working in the Secretariat-General for Coordination, which is a Coordination Authority, I am fortunate to be involved in Technical Assistance in Greece, as I act as a link between the European Commission and the Ministries of my country, while at the same time I am given the opportunity to contact international organisations, public and private bodies and Commission staff and to inform the national authorities on the implementation of reforms aimed at improving resilience. The submission of requests through the assessment of the specific needs of our country and the examination of alternative options for designing support, in order to achieve the implementation of the reforms in the best possible way, is a challenging process. When this is carried out in cooperation with one or more authorities in another Member State, both sides are given the opportunity to communicate, exchange ideas, share the problem, implement practices and compare their results. Cooperation with DG Reform is a unique experience!



Anastasia Tsartsara

Head of the Department of Interior, Digital Governance, Justice and Institutions, SGCo and Member of the Working Group on Public Administration and Governance of the European Commission

With the recent establishment of the European Commission's Group of Experts on Public Administration and Governance, the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DGReform) aims to further promote cooperation between the Member States of the European Union in highlighting and co-elaborating proposals and solutions to address common challenges. These include the digital transformation of the administration, the role of new technologies, the design and delivery of citizen-oriented services based on citizens' needs and experience, the development of the skills of public administration human resources and the formulation of evidence-based policies for a resilient and agile governance. As a member of the Working Group, I have the pleasure of talking and working together with executives of European countries who share their rich experience and best practices of their administrations, through innovative methods and tools, in pursuit of a shared vision and values for a Europe that meets the expectations of its citizens.



Pierre Lepetit, Jean-Pierre Jochum, Claude Wendling and Vincent Lidsky
Reform Partners, Ministry of Finance, France

For 10 years, many French and European experts have come and gone to support Greek reforms. The main beneficiary was the central administration (government coordination, human resources management, digitization, taxation, customs, public accounting, exports, civil protection, mediation, public health), but also local authorities and the whole of economy (digitalization).

The objective of transforming the Greek administration seemed, then, extremely ambitious, and even unattainable to some. However, reforms have been effective. In addition, this cooperation between public executives, between peers, has helped to strengthen Europe, as well as the Franco-Hellenic partnership.

France has successively designated four “reform partners” coordinators, as provided for in the Franco-Hellenic protocol signed in 2015: Pierre Lepetit, Jean-Pierre Jochum, Claude Wendling and currently Vincent Lidsky. The dialogue with the Greek officials, and in particular the Secretary General for Coordination (post created within the framework of the reforms), now Thanasis Kontogeorgis, whom we would like to thank, makes it possible to identify the needs and with regard to the expertise available. We can also offer, in addition to European support, bilateral cooperation which can strengthen it (for example, the reception of Greek inspectors in the national schools of public finance and customs or assistance with “content management” within the tax administration).

Our thanks also go to DG REFORM, and in particular Alain Scriban and then Daniele Dotto. As well as to Expertise France, which was able to take over from ADETEF (the French governmental agency for international technical assistance in the economic and financial field) and the Belgian development agency.

In the context of challenges to Europe that we are experiencing, there is no doubt that our cooperation must continue and even expand in new areas, as announced in the declaration of intent signed in 2020, when the Prime Minister M. Mitsotakis visited Paris, by ministers Staikouras, Giorgiadis and Le Maire. This statement updates the 2015 Protocol by calling for cooperation on climate change, environment, energy. These are shared challenges, as are the opportunities, for example tourism, agriculture, green finance...



**Dimitra Ioannou, Gina Korella, Fotis Benekos, Marios Skiadas,
Pinelopi Strapatsaki, Mirka Snopčoková, Mirella Papantonaki**

Expertise France' team for governance and administrative transformation in Greece

It takes time for things to change. We, the Expertise France team working in governance and administrative transformation support in Greece, put ourselves every day at the service of the Greek authorities, doing our best to assist them in achieving their goals and priorities, and building capacity and competencies for the future. And we are not the only ones assisting with this effort. In all our projects, we mobilise highly skilled professionals from France, Greece, and many other Member States, who work in the private or the public sector, and are eager to contribute to our work. Over the years, we have had a productive and exciting time working together with our 190 associates, as well as with our Greek public administration and DG REFORM colleagues, making our small Athens office, never in shortage of our famous coffee and cookies, a place of conviviality, hard work, passion and excitement.

We feel so much privileged to share our commitment for change, for our generation and future generations, with equally passionate Greek civil servants and DG REFORM teams. When we are working on issues requiring a shift from deep rooted practices and challenge the status quo, we double down on our effort and perseverance, making it our daily bet to help things happen. And when we work on much-needed changes, like digital transformations or those prompted by the pandemic, which have a direct impact to the citizens and the society, we are proud to be part of this adventure of Greece and Europe.

We are growing, together with our colleagues in the Greek authorities, and we are even more happy and motivated each time they grant us the honour of being considered one of them. And we will never be enough grateful for the trust placed in us and for everything we have learned. We are proud to facilitate interaction between Greece, France and Europe, and to serve their unwavering commitment to the poet's universal inspiration: "I am your country; perhaps I am no-one but I can be just what you want"^{*}.

Together, we bridge the gap between planning and implementing the change.

^{*}*George Seferis, Three secret poems (Translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard)*

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