

FIRST BRAZIL-GREECE CIVIL SOCIETY ROUND TABLE

Athens, 25-26 June 2013

Final Declaration

The Brazil-Greece Civil Society Roundtable was established in June 2012 by the signature of the Inter-institutional Cooperation Agreement between the Economic and Social Development Council (CDES) and the Economic and Social Council of Greece (OKE), aiming at strengthening relations between the parties in order to disseminate a better understanding of political, economic and social issues in Greece and Brazil.

The Roundtable held its first meeting in Athens, Greece, on June 25th and 26th, 2013, and discussed the economic and social aspects of the current global situation and paths for the recovery of the economy, with inclusion, social justice and environmental sustainability.

The Brazil-Greece Civil Society Roundtable:

1. Is concerned with the economic and social consequences of the global crisis and urges Greek, Brazilian and EU political authorities to take all the necessary measures to avoid further negative effects in economic development and social inclusion.
2. Emphasizes that, to mitigate the effects of the global economic crisis, governments should protect first of all the real economy, encouraging investment and maintaining sufficient levels of income and demand. For this purpose, suitable macroeconomic and social policies are fundamental to decrease the current account deficit and the public debt and to stimulate employment and internal demand.
3. Underlines the importance of social policies providing a “safety net” for all citizens and as a crucial element for the desired economic development.
4. Underlines that strategic paths towards economic recovery, well being for all and quality of life should be focused to foster innovation, to support activities of small and medium-size enterprises, to strengthen the creation of decent jobs, to upgrade education and to support economy transition towards a low emissions economy.

5. Urges that new approaches and priorities should be developed at international, national and regional level with the aim of reigniting economic development and fostering social cohesion. Basic priorities at every level must be to boost employment, implement active labour market policies and step up efforts to protect the weakest groups of the population.
6. Draws attention to the vital role of the social partners, the importance of the social economy and the need for a holistic approach to the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Although the themes of social protection and social integration are first and foremost the responsibility of the national governments, the social partners and civil society organizations should also be fully involved on implementing and monitoring the relevant policies.
7. Emphasizes that to tackle the crisis, the reinforcement of social dialogue and the active and meaningful participation of the whole society are required. Concerted action and solidarity are key prerequisites for economic recovery and job growth. Only by gaining a broad consensus of the society, implemented policies will be able to influence real economy, limit the effects of the crisis and lead to its overcoming.
8. Points out that the organization of major cultural or/and sporting events like the Olympic Games, presents potential opportunities for the economy and society of the host country. Early overall design, as well as cost control are two crucial parameters for optimizing the result. Also of critical importance is the inclusion of these events in a more general development strategy and urban planning. This enables the use of multiplier effects that can potentially be very important, but are not given without systematic and continuous effort.
9. Calls for a closer collaboration between the two countries at all levels, including sharing experiences, ideas and good practices.

The Roundtable considers that:

1. The globalization of the financial system has substantially changed the nature and determinants of world economic dynamics.
2. The deregulation of financial markets and the free mobility of capitals limit the effects of national macroeconomic policies on one hand and on the other they are responsible for both the frequent imbalances of the balance of payment as well as for crises of financial solvency and liquidity.

3. The current global governance is not efficiently responding to economic and political variables of the current global socioeconomic crisis.
4. The crisis has affected all countries but especially the poorest and the less developed. The crisis has spawned new factors that have seriously exacerbated poverty and income inequalities and have led to a rise of unemployment in the world, especially among young people.
5. The current crisis and austerity measures that have been implemented in the euro zone have more negative than positive social and economics effects even in the countries with high level of social protection.
6. Embarking on a path of simultaneous austerity programmes in a number of countries reinforces the downward spiral, adds to the bleak outlook for growth and unleashes a vicious circle of uncertainty for investment, including investment in education and training, research and innovation, employment and consumption.
7. The only way out of such a crisis is not only by means of austerity measures but through growth. It is therefore essential to make sustainable investments in skills, infrastructure and products and to promote investment in the social economy, social enterprise and social services.
8. This context is a chance to enhance the political agenda on the issues of development model, taking into consideration all the necessary economic, social, political and environmental aspects.
9. A global development model efficiently responding to the current economic crisis and at the same promoting social inclusion, social justice and environmental sustainability, is needed.
10. The above mentioned is possible only through social dialogue, bringing together government, employers associations, trade unions and the civil society as a whole. The social dialogue among governments and all the various stakeholders can achieve mutual goals and equal opportunities for all.

The Roundtable sums up that a new model of global governance is needed. This should include new institutions and participatory processes and should meet the financial targets and support development, through long-term collaborative processes.

Finally, the Roundtable points out that it is essential to strengthen efforts on negotiation and agreement about development policies globally, to ensure a new cycle of investment and growth with equity, environmental responsibility, boost of employment and fair income distribution in a framework of democracy and solidarity.