

## *Preface*

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While Greece's economy is slowly moving towards recovery, many people in Greece remain doubtful about the future. After the long years of economic adjustment, they are wondering whether this economy will be for everyone or just for the lucky few.

This question is important. After all, closed markets and feeble innovation have held back the Greek economy for a long time. Barriers to competition, often put in place to favour vested interests, have contributed to this weakness.

Competition is an essential part of a more sustainable economy. For consumers, it makes the pay check last longer and widens their choice range. For businesses, it spurs innovation. As prices fall, more people can afford to buy the products, and well-run businesses can take a bigger slice of the market, leading to expansion and generation of new jobs.

Competition also supports a level playing field. It allows everyone to have their fair share of the benefits of growth. Removing barriers to competition and ensuring that everyone plays by the same rules show that public authorities are taking care of the interests of people, and not just of big business.

This is important in both Greece and the rest of Europe. Competition policy is a key tool in our collective efforts to boost growth and jobs, which is the first priority of the European Commission. As President Juncker highlighted in his 2016 State of the Union speech, Europe stands for a fair playing field, where consumers are protected against cartels and abuses by powerful companies.

This report makes an important contribution to this agenda in Greece. Based on the collaborative effort of a large team of experts from the public administration, the Hellenic Competition Commission, the OECD and the Structural Reform Support Service, it lays out actions to remove barriers to competition in e-commerce, construction, media, manufacturing and wholesale trade. For example, strengthening consumer protection legislation, rendering public tendering procedures more transparent, ensuring legal certainty in the legal framework for radio stations, reforming the pricing policy for pharmaceuticals and removing geographic obstacles to competition in wholesale markets can provide a level playing field in these key economic sectors and support the recovery.

I would like to express my great appreciation for the fruitful and rewarding cooperation with the Greek national authorities and the OECD. The Structural Reform Support Service stands ready to assist the Greek authorities in reaping the benefits of this important project.



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