

**Address by H.E. the President of the Hellenic Republic Ms Katerina Sakellariopoulou
to the special meeting organised by the Hellenic Court of Audit
to present the output of its Annual Work Programme 2021.**

Transparency in financial management is a consistent demand of society and a key component of the Rule of Law. The Court of Audit, as transparency's constitutional guardian, timely recognising that the conventional means at its disposal are no longer sufficient to meet the particular challenges to the audit methodology posed by the new institutional fiscal framework established after 2010, reinvented itself. Following the repeal of the ex-ante audit of the legality of public expenditure, it upgraded its existing power to conduct targeted audits, developing them into thematic ones. In this context, ills in public management are identified and highlighted, their causes analysed and recommendations made to the relevant bodies, with a view to ensuring transparency in the trail of public money and the formulation of a sustainable fiscal strategy for the State.

The beginning was made in 2021 with the First Annual Audit Programme of the Court of Audit, from which I single out the audit in the banking system, which concluded that the latter does not adequately finance the real economy, as well as the audit of the real contribution of the operation of hostels for victims of gender-based violence under their protection, which highlighted organisational weaknesses and staff shortages in their building infrastructure and logistics equipment.

From the presentation of the annual audit programme for the year 2022 to the Special Permanent Committee on Institutions and Transparency of the Hellenic Parliament, of particular interest are the audit of public money made available for the prevention and combat of forest fires, the audit of tackling climate crisis, in view, also, of the allocation thereto of resources by the Recovery and Resilience Fund, as well as the audit of the respect of the internationally recognized animal freedoms.

It is therefore made clear that the Court of Audit, without departing from its institutional role, is no longer confined to the traditional areas of management, as one would expect from a financial court, but innovates, highlighting new areas worth scrutinizing, not only because these are funded from public resources, but mainly because they are of great interest to the civil society.

I am convinced that the recommendations made in the reports, which are drafted by the Court of Audit after the completion of its audits, will be heeded by both the legislative and the executive branches of government, adopting the necessary measures and actions, so that the effort made by the judges and all the personnel of the Court of Audit indeed bears fruit.