

## An introduction to the "do no significant harm" principle

"Do no significant harm" (DNSH) is, deriving from the Green Deal, a new overarching principle for the use of the European Union's cohesion and internal security policy funds, as well as the recovery and resilience fund in the period of 2021-2027, and it applies to all areas of activity. When considering the principle of DNSH, the goal is to prevent economic activity from causing significant damage to the environment, thereby enabling the achievement of environmental goals.

The DNSH principle means that economic activities must not cause significant harm to any of the following environmental objectives:

- 1) **mitigating climate change** - a significant increase in greenhouse gas emissions must be avoided.
- 2) **adaptation to climate change** - an increase in the harmful effects of the current climate and expected future climate on the activity itself or on people, nature or assets must be avoided. The impact of climate change on the planned activity must be taken into account, as well as the impact of the activity on adaptation to climate change.
- 3) **sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources** - damage to the good environmental condition of water bodies, including surface and ground water and marine areas must be avoided.
- 4) **transition to a circular economy** - the activity must not cause significant inefficiency in the use of materials or the direct or indirect use of natural resources, as well as significantly increase the generation, burning or disposal of waste.
- 5) **pollution prevention and control activities** must not significantly increase the release of pollutants into the air, water or soil.
- 6) **protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems** - activities must not significantly damage the good condition and resilience of ecosystems or damage the protection status of habitats and species, including species of European Union importance (e.g., Natura 2000 areas).

It is necessary to consider both the direct effects arising from the implementation of the project or activity, as well as the primary indirect effects that manifest themselves during the later implementation of the project or activity. This means considering the entire life cycle, such as production, use and disposal. To reduce and prevent significant damage, if necessary, the effects of the planned activity must be mitigated through technical and technological solutions or alternatives with a lower environmental impact should be preferred.

If an economic activity can lead to a significant negative environmental impact on the aforementioned environmental goals, it means that the activity does not comply with the DNSH principle, and such economic activity cannot be supported.