

**Infrastructure developments in Greece - Giannis Kefalogiannis, Deputy Minister for Transport, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport of Greece**

Connectivity brings people, places and opportunities closer. It is of great importance to promote sustainable, comprehensive and rules-based connectivity. To further economic growth and social progress, we should create conditions for improving integrated intermodal transport and logistics with responding to the challenges of climate change, decarbonisation of the economy, environmental impact of transport sector, digitalization, as well as safety and security. In this context, the development of sustainable trade routes and corridors between Europe and Asia is substantial. Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T) sets priorities to promote cross-border and interoperable multi-modal transport.

Greece poses a unique geographical position in the South - east Europe, close to Suez Channel the main Maritime Freight Line. This fact provides the country with a tactical Advantage for freight heading to or originated from Asia, as well as MENA (Middle East - North Africa) Countries.

Our first priority is to restart the greek economy. We're aiming to strengthen entrepreneurship and creation of new jobs, to reduce bureaucracy, improve investment climate and promote transparency and rationality in public functions. Greece will regain growth driven by private investments, exports and innovation. In the field of Transport, there are many issues that we focus on. Investment in logistics and combined transport has a primary role. We would like to stress that it is very important for us to move forward the development of logistics networks and infrastructure and take advantage of intermodal capabilities. We are, therefore, trying to resolve long standing problems, with the aim of enhancing security and increasing capacity. For example, freight rail transport promotes linkages with industrial areas whose studies are at different stages of maturity. The challenge is to promote investments in road and rail infrastructure through open and transparent procurement processes.

On that basis, intermodal transport and logistics are key instruments for economic growth with strategic importance for Greece, mainly as a result of the country's geographical position.

Moreover, Greek ports are strategically located. They could easily be transformed into regional logistics hubs for goods that travel from Asia to the European Community. Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Igoumenitsa and Patra are core ports for Trans European Network of transport and major maritime connections to European Corridor of Orient / East Med Corridor that connects large parts of Central Europe with ports of the North, Baltic, Black and Mediterranean Seas. Since 2016, Piraeus Container Terminal has joined forces with international Airport of Athens in order to provide integrated intermodal transport services with project sea -n- air.

We would, also, like to mention that Strategic agreements have been concluded by railway undertakings with regard to the provisions of services concerning rail freight transport from the port of Piraeus to Central Europe and vice versa

Nevertheless, a big portion of freight transport heads from the port to Triasio pedio, the main logistic center in Greece, with the largest freight railway station in the Balkans and one of the largest in Europe.

In September 2017, Greece and Bulgaria signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the development of the Thessaloniki-Kavala-Alexandroupolis-Burgas-Varna-Ruse rail link. This project aims to connect the Mediterranean Sea with the Black Sea, in order to exploit the many advantages of intermodality, such as the protection of the environment.

In July 2017, Greece and Serbia signed A Memorandum of Understanding for the development of rail transport, aiming to cooperate on projects of mutual interest in the development of railway infrastructure and the facilitation of rail freight. Joint efforts are being made to rebuild and upgrade the rail infrastructure of common interest, particularly the Thessaloniki-Belgrade

route. The purpose of this cooperation is, inter alia, to take advantage of the prospects for rail transport from the forthcoming accession of the countries of the Western Balkans to the EU.

Furthermore, we have already completed the harmonization of the 4th railway package directives with the Greek legislation, including provisions on interoperability, security and governance. Especially, on the issue of governance, we have chosen to use full capacity of a Member State to liberalize national passenger rail transport in a coordinated manner, creating a market with rules and fair conditions for all participants.

We would, also, like to refer to Egnatia Motorway that extends from the port of Igoumenitsa in the west to the Greek-Turkish border, at the Greek border station of Kipi. It includes modern road infrastructure of high quality and a total length of 670 km. This highway is linked to the nodal ports of: Igoumenitsa, Thessaloniki, Kavala and Alexandroupolis and its strategic significance is obvious, taking into account that it serves as a vital road bridge between Europe and Asia, via Turkey.

The constructive cooperation of all parties, as a prerequisite for the development of sustainable transport connectivity with obvious economic benefits to the national economy, the creation of new jobs and the choice of the most environmentally friendly modes of transport are key goals for our government. New technologies and innovation are important enablers for the integration of transport modes and the better use of resources and infrastructures.

On that basis, efficient connections and networks between Europe and Asia through priority transport corridors and digital links will promote connectivity based on commonly agreed rules and standards and (will) enable strengthened international partnerships.