GREEK PORT POLICY & TRANSPORT NETWORKS

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Transport is a vital sector which has a major contribution to the development of a wider Europe and the connection of Europe with other regions of the world.

The challenges and opportunities of the new environment require a new vision for the future transport policy.

In this regard, the construction and development of integrated, interoperable, reliable and effective transport networks became a real necessity.
TOWARDS TO A NETWORK APPROACH (2)

- For this reason, transport infrastructure projects can be considered as the backbone of economic growth and commercial relationships of the countries of Europe, Africa and Asia.
- At the same time, a key issue is the elimination of cross-border barriers and the minimization of relevant delays and costs.
- These issues need urgent attention by all countries of the wider region.
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THE PORT INDUSTRY IN GREECE (1)

- Ports must respond to a totally new reality, formed through the ongoing globalization process, new transport needs, as well as major economic and technological changes.
- The traditional port-gate has been replaced by the port logistics centre.
- The continuing growth of the world trade, increased significantly the demand for transport services, while the advantages of seaborne transport in terms of economic efficiency, security and safety, as well as environmental protection are obvious.
- Ports are facing significant challenges that require both productive and organizational restructuring.
Political developments in Central and Eastern Europe, the EU enlargement, political stability and rapidly growing economies in the East Med and the Black Sea, indicate the importance of the extension of Trans- and Pan-European Transport Networks and the development of Short-Sea Shipping.

The economic potential of many African countries makes the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Network a very attractive perspective.

The mid-term revision of the White Paper on Transport and the Green Paper on the Maritime Policy of the EU reflect the need for a bigger proportion of seaborne transport in the EU transport sector, as well as the necessity for an integrated approach of the policy.
The above mentioned developments change the traditional role of the Greek ports, transforming them into nodal points in the Mediterranean basin, as well as into potential network hubs of the East Mediterranean transport system, linking sea and land transport modes.

Greece has a strategic geopolitical position in the freight transport system of the Mediterranean area and in this respect a great interest for the further development of seaborne and intermodal transport.
THE GREEK TRANSPORT POLICY (2)
FREIGHT FLOWS
GREECE AS A NODAL POINT IN THE EAST MED
THE GREEK TRANSPORT POLICY (3)

- The creation of adequate and effective transport networks of high quality port services is therefore among the basic aims of the Greek transport policy.

- For this purpose, there is a constantly increasing need for modernisation and development of the infra- and superstructure of ports and port connections with the land networks.

- Investments must be promoted in order to achieve the interconnectivity and the interoperability of the transport networks. The networks should be developed in a balanced way to the benefit of all countries of the region.
The Greek port system consists of:

- 12 port authorities (12 major Greek ports)
- 39 state port authorities
- 32 municipal port authorities
- more than 100 private port installations
- more than 500 fishing ports, marinas etc.

Regarding the 12 biggest ports:

- 2 port authorities S.A. are listed in the Athens stock Exchange (Piraeus and Thessaloniki)
- the State is at the present the only shareholder of the rest 10 port authorities S.A. (Alexandroupoli, Kavala, Volos, Rafina, Lavrio, Elefsina, Patra, Igoumenitsa, Kerkyra, Heraklion).
As far as the national road infrastructure transport network is concerned, the main objective is the completion of two axes, which constitute the backbone of the Greek road network and are priority project No 7 of the Trans-European Transport Network:

- Patras–Athens–Thessaloniki–Promachon (PATHE-Motorway)
- Egnatia-Motorway, one of the largest road construction projects in Europe running across Northern Greece and connecting the ports of Igoumenitsa, Thessaloniki, Kavala and Alexandroupolis, with a total length of 680 km. So far 65% of the total length has been constructed and given to traffic as a 4-lane motorway, while the rest 35% will have been completed by 2008.
In the rail sector, one of the main objectives, is the completion of the railway Axis Patras–Athens–Thessaloniki.

These railway axis play a significant role in the Greek transport system, both for passengers and freight, since it connects the most economically dynamic regions of Greece, namely the wider Athens area (Athens – Piraeus), with Thessaloniki and Patras, a keyport in Western Greece.

The upgrading projects along this axis will be completed by 2011.
ROAD AND RAIL SECTOR (3) – STEPS

- Greek policy seeks to connect the Greek transport infrastructure network with that of the neighboring countries, in an efficient and coordinated way, with agreed common timetables for the implementation of the relevant projects.
  - MoU between the Ministers of Transport of Greece and Bulgaria for developing the rail and road Corridor Thessaloniki – Sofia, which constitutes also part of Pan-European Corridor IV.
  - Agreement with Turkey for the development of the road and rail Corridor Thessaloniki – Istanbul, which connects the two countries with the wider area of the Black Sea Region, creating an efficient Euro-Asian Link.
  - Development of the Pan-European Corridor X, which connects Thessaloniki with Skopje, Belgrade, Zagreb, LUBLJANA and Villach in Austria, together with Branch B connecting Belgrade with Budapest.
Construction of the Railway Corridor Kozani–Kalambaka–Ioannina–Igoumenitsa until 2012, as a priority project of the TNT, establishing the so-called “railway Egnatia” and interconnecting the Greek with the Italian railway network.

As far as the connection with Albania is concerned, main priority is the development of the road axis Siatista–Kristallopigi–Korca–Pogradec–Kafe Thane, which interconnects the main transport infrastructure networks of the two countries, namely Egnatia Motorway with the main horizontal Corridor in Albania, providing access to the port of Durres.

Creation of an intermodal corridor, which links the two most important ports in Northern Greece, namely Thessaloniki and Alexandroupolis, through the Bulgarian ports of Burgas and Varna with the Euro-Asian links in the Black Sea area. This project aims at connecting important urban centres and ports of south-east Europe and Black Sea Area with the Mediterranean region.
The twelve most significant Greek ports undertake investment programs, which include the improvement of infrastructure and superstructure, the purchase of modern mechanical equipment, information technology projects, personnel training programs etc., aiming to offer high quality port services and improve port competitiveness.

Elimination of bureaucratic procedures and modern operational structure of ports, as well as computerization, use of electronic data processing systems etc. are considered as fundamental conditions for port development and competitiveness.
PORT POLICY AND RECENT INITIATIVES (2)

- The Greek government, in order to meet the challenges of the new environment in the world transport market, has planned an ambitious investment programme for the development of the Greek ports in the period 2006-2015 of an amount currently estimated at 6 billion EUR.
- The programme includes the construction and improvement of infrastructure and superstructure, as well as the improvement of the hinterland connections of the major Greek ports.
- A Financing Protocol between the Ministry of Mercantile Marine and the European Investment Bank has been signed, according to which the Bank will provide loans for investments in ports up to the amount of 3 billion EUR.
The attraction of private capital for investments in port infra- and superstructure and the partnership of the public and private sector are top priorities of the Greek Ministry of Mercantile Marine.

Many important firms have already expressed their interest in relevant projects.

Seeking privatization of the two container terminals in the ports of Piraeus and Thessaloniki reflects the belief that the involvement of the private sector in the port industry is an appropriate tool which will lead the ports to further development.

In the new political, economic and technological environment for the Greek ports, security is a crucial competitiveness factor. For this reason high cost investments are planned and to a large extent already implemented.
Motorways of the Sea (MOS) currently constitute a very important new development in the European Transport Policy.

MoS represent necessary extensions of the land networks intended to improve existing maritime links or to establish new viable, regular and frequent maritime links, mainly for the facilitation of freight transport between member states. They shall consist of infrastructure, facilities and easy procedures.
The creating of a “Sea Motorway” in the East Mediterranean Sea, connecting Central- and Northeast Europe with the Southeast edge of the European Union, Cyprus, and the Middle East region, through a trans-European multimodal transport system, offers an opportunity for a further development of the Short Sea Shipping in the region.

The Marco Polo Programme will play hereby also an important role, since in the period 2007-2013 it will provide the necessary funding for services or logistics in the Short Sea Shipping.
Within the Framework of the Motorways of the Sea, a closer cooperation between Greece, Italy, Malta, Cyprus and Slovenia has been established and MoU have been signed for this purpose.

The cooperation efforts have resulted so far in the approval of a common TEN-T project. The project concerns the elaboration of a Master Plan aiming at the development of the Motorways of the Sea in the East Mediterranean, with a budget of 4 millions EUR. The Master Plan aims to identify projects, which will be submitted to the EU responding to next TEN-T Calls.

For the development of the MoS in the BSEC region has been signed a relevant MoU among the participant countries of the Organization.
The sufficient operation of the Transport Networks and the perspective of their development and extension give the framework of strategic planning and goal setting for the Greek ports.

On the other hand, improvements implemented in the ports and future investments are expected to support a further development and contribute to a better operation of the Networks.
DEVELOPMENT OF THE NETWORKS
Concluding remarks (2)

- Good political conditions and economic progress in the countries of the wider region provide a secure and prosper environment for a smooth operation of the networks, so that basic requirements for their further development are granted.

- On the other hand issues related with inadequate infrastructure, especially concerning intermodality, should be successfully confronted.

- For this purpose the states of the region should enhance their cooperation efforts for the creation of sufficient transport networks.

- The private sector should be encouraged to participate to this development, undertaking appropriate initiatives towards this direction.
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