

CHAPTER III: Transport

I Introduction

Greece has made extensive use of European Union (EU) structural and cohesion funds in relation to transport planning and works; therefore transport policy objectives are closely aligned with EU priorities. The completion of the national transport system, with emphasis on Trans-European corridors so as to improve accessibility throughout the country and to make Greece a major transport node for Eastern Mediterranean, has been a major objective and a driving force of relevant funding. The promotion of combined transport alternatives (e.g. commercial freight centres), the restructuring of the system and its operation in alignment with EU legislation and best practices and the reduction of environmental impacts by land and sea transport projects are also among the top priorities.

A major programme of highways construction has been under way for the past two decades, financed with funds from the public sector (incl. EU support funds) and private funds. This will help cut travel times, enhance safety conditions and decrease transportation costs for all companies and individuals, thereby increasing competitiveness of Greek products and services.

Marine transport is also a major component in the Greek transport mix, due to the country's geography. Greece has 889 ports (commercial, tourist, fishing or mixed) of which 138 are considered major ports, which however, still require significant infrastructure upgrades to be able to cope with summer months' peak loads.

During the past decade transport volumes increased considerably and steadily, for both passengers and freight. The share of road transport and particularly private cars in the modal split increased as well. About 40 million tonnes of goods transit in Greek ports every year and transport by pipeline has quadrupled since 2002.

The transport sector continues to be a major source of air emissions, as improvements in vehicle and fuel quality have been outweighed by increasing transport volume. Whilst the share of transport in Total Final Energy Consumption remained broadly constant at 37% between 2000 and 2006, energy consumption from transport increased by 17%. Accordingly, CO₂ emissions rose by 22%, mostly due to emission growth by road transport and navigation. Road and air account for 76% and 15% of energy use by the transport sector, respectively. Road transport is the major source of all emissions, with the exception of SO_x which are mostly due to navigation. Owing to the renewal of the road vehicle fleet, between 2000 and 2006 CO and VOC emissions fell by over 30%, and NO_x and particulate matter decreased by 5% and 12% respectively. SO_x emissions increased (+28%) as a result of maritime transport.

I Decision-Making, Legal and Regulatory Framework, Policy Instruments

General framework plan for spatial planning and sustainable development

The *General Framework Plan for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development* (OJG 128 / A / 03.07.2008) provides guidelines for the spatial structuring of transportation networks and services. Further upgrades of railway and marine infrastructure are envisaged, in order to make these transport modes more competitive as compared to road and air transport, especially concerning commercial (cargo) transport. Other provisions of the Plan concerning commercial transport are: the connection of transportation nodes (harbours, airports, commerce centres) through independent transport networks (road / railway) when possible, in order to alleviate the burden on urban traffic systems; the adoption of standardization processes and equipment used by international transportation to the internal transport; the development of an integrated information system, enabling the feed, process and administration of all transport-related information and aiming at the rational administration of available means and flow of goods; the development of commerce centers which will be able to handle the combined transport of containers as well as related services providing added value (logistics and moderate processing); the more rational organization of the distribution of urban goods at the retail and / or wholesale service points.

On *passenger-transport*, the Framework Plan calls for updated security standards, for both the networks and the transportation means, as well as the further introduction of environmentally friendly means of transportation. Safety and quality of service are major concerns for all facets of passenger transportation (harbour breakwaters, jetties, air-conditioned embarkation halls, sanitary facilities, etc. are particularly mentioned), while special care is bound to be taken for the architectural and aesthetic quality of facilities located in islands and traditional settlements. The possibility for the establishment of urban marine transport systems in the urban agglomerations of Attiki and Thessaloniki is also pondered upon in the Plan.

Rail transport for urban centers is also a major issue in the plan with special reference to issues such as network extension, speed increase and connectivity of urban and intercity rail lines with other means of transportation, through the appropriate setting up of correspondence systems. Rail is expected to assume a leading role among urban transport modes and the expansion of existing suburban-type railway services is envisaged, both for metropolitan areas and for connecting neighboring, dynamic, urban poles. Tram-type services will be the first option to explore for the rest of the urban centres. In line with the Plan's provisions, a feasibility study for the development of a tram service in the city of Patra has already been conducted and a similar study has been commissioned for the city of Ioannina. Meanwhile, a suburban rail line has been established and operating, making use of the existing national rail network, connecting the city of Patra with the suburb of Rio. The Plan also calls for the construction of intermodal stations and parking lots near railway stations.

As far as *airline passenger transport* is concerned, the General Framework Plan calls for the upgrade of existing, selected airports so that they receive an "international airport" status, the modification of some military airports into civil aviation airports serving regular or charter flights and the development of heliports in remote areas.

Vehicle technology

The promotion of environmentally friendly and energy efficient vehicles and other transport means and networks, with the use of new technologies (e.g. electric or hybrid vehicles) and cleaner fuels (as LPG, CNG or hydrogen) is a major policy component of the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport, and Networks. EU directives, related to air emissions limits from internal combustion engines for vehicles from 1998 till now ("Euro" standards), have been transposed into the Greek legislation. Furthermore, Greece has adopted the legal framework relating to the approval of vehicle types, related regulations of UNECE and the EU concerning internal combustion engine vehicles, as well as hybrid, electric and hydrogen vehicles. Overall, a number of *EU Directives and Regulations* as well as *UNECE Regulations* concerning vehicle technology - in particular Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles, vehicles with electric motors, hybrid vehicles and vehicles with alternative energy carrier - have been incorporated into Greek legislation and administrative practice. Such examples are UNECE Regulations No.49, 83 and 100, EU Regulations (EC) 715/2007, (EC) 692/2008, (EC) 595/2009, (EC) 79/2009, (EU) 406/2010 and EU Directives 2007/46/EC, 2002/24/EC.

A recent Joint Ministerial Decision (JMD) (No. 35075 / 2205 / 09) defines the technical characteristics of equipment suitable for retrofitting vehicles so that they will be able to use Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as fuel.

The provisions for the interoperability of devices related to electric vehicles and hybrids with external electrical charging (batteries, chargers, external power supply) are expected to be issued at the EU level and will then be transposed into Greek legislation.

Recent legislation (Law 3897/2010) has established, for the first time, the requirement for a *regular check of noise* emitted by motorbikes, motor-cycles and 3-wheel vehicles as well as the inclusion of motorbikes in the existing vehicle emission control scheme (see below).

The legal framework for the *road transport of goods* has been greatly revamped in 2010 (Law 3887/2010), with the goal of upgrading the level of transportation services in the country, providing motives for the modernization of the truck fleet and, thereby, contributing to higher levels of safety and environmental protection. New licences for trucks will only be given to vehicles adhering to EURO IV, EURO V or later emission standards. The provision of transit licenses is also linked to the existence of clean (low-emission) technologies for trucks.

The operational and legal framework for rail transport is currently under examination and a bill for the operational restructuring of urban transport services in Athens has also been put forth for consultation.

Other legal and economic instruments

The National Strategic Reference Framework (2007-2013), following the footsteps of similar past strategic documents, includes a sectoral operational programme titled 'Accessibility Improvement' aiming at a) the development and modernisation of the country's transportation infrastructure, b) the completion of the construction and upgrade of road axes, the railway network, port facilities and airports, c) the completion of the construction of metropolitan Athens projects, and urban road works in the Regions of Attica (wider metropolitan Athens) and Central Macedonia with special emphasis placed on transport safety. The total sum budgeted for the projects covered under this umbrella framework is projected to top EUR 11 billion, coming from Community Resources ('Fourth Community Support Framework'), National Funds and Private Funds. Additional funding for transport-related projects, falling under the scope of 'regional operational programmes' may also be provided, depending on regional priorities.

The Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change recently launched two major initiatives for *new master plans* for the metropolitan areas of Athens and Thessaloniki which are expected to include major interventions in the field of transportation planning, including transportation networks

Taxation: Vehicles in Greece pay an annual circulation tax, which until recently was related to the vehicle's technical characteristics. A recent change in legislation (Law 3888 / 2010) directly links the amount paid under this circulation tax to the environmental characteristics of a vehicle, and in particular its CO₂ emissions. Hybrid, electric and hydrogen vehicles are exempt from the circulation tax if their engine capacity is 1929cc or less. Above that threshold, they will be exempt for 50% of the circulation tax. Electric and hybrid vehicles are also exempt from registration tax. A financial scheme was recently announced by the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and the Ministry of Finance linking the reduction of the registration tax for smaller and medium vehicles with the withdrawal from circulation of older vehicles (over 12 years old). The excise tax on fuels has been raised to almost double within the past 3 years and retail unleaded gas prices in Greece are now among the highest in the EU.

Plans, Programmes and Projects

A work group involving representatives of several ministries has been set up to propose a series of measures on sustainable mobility, while a study for the elaboration of a *National Plan of Sustainable Mobility* is expected to be procured in 2011. This will help to better coordinate and direct plans, projects and actions that up to now have been only loosely connected to each other, although significant progress has been made in the past decade at several fronts. Some of these plans, programmes and projects are presented below.

Road safety and environmental protection

Vehicle technical inspection, vehicle emission control card and the newly established vehicle noise control card are some of the main means used by the State to certify the vehicles' good condition (and therefore road safety) and their environmental performance. In the same direction, an effort is made to encourage the use of bicycles in the country's road network, as an alternative means of transportation. More specifically:

Vehicle Technical Inspection: Vehicles registered in Greece undergo regular technical inspections to certify their good condition and their environmental performance, in relation to exhaust fumes. These inspections are carried out in 58 public and 137 private Vehicle Technical Inspection Centres. The legal status of private centres has recently been equated to that of public centres, so they may now carry out all kinds of inspections for all types of vehicles. The public centres' equipment is being modernized so that they can better fulfill their mission. Greece has a high number of road fatalities and such actions are considered pivotal in dealing with this problem. The inclusion of motor-bikes in the vehicle inspection scheme is currently being contemplated and should take place in the near future. Appropriate control lanes are already being installed in inspection centres.

Vehicle Emission Control: This measure was first established in 1992, initially starting from the former prefecture of Athens and then spreading to most of the country. Currently, it is in place in 40 of the country's 52 sub-regions (former Prefectures). Vehicle owners can have their vehicles checked and get a certifying card (valid for 1 year) either in Technical Inspection Centres or in authorized car repair-shops. Starting from 2008, motorbikes are also obliged to undergo vehicle emission control and to carry the relevant card. The program's goal is to ensure compliance with maximum emission limits that are applied for all vehicles traveling in Greece. Furthermore, the process was recently simplified and better streamlined with vehicle technical inspection.

Noise Emission Control: New legislation passed in 2010 (Law 3897/2010) requires all motorbikes, motorcycles and 3-wheel vehicles to carry a certification card for noise level, which can be acquired after these vehicles undergo a noise emission check at authorized control points. The legislation focuses on these types of vehicles as these are the ones mostly associated with noise pollution. It is expected that this measure will significantly contribute to achieving lower noise pollution levels in urban centres.

Besides these measures, as well as general legislation targeting noise, noise checks are often carried out in place and fines are assessed for excessive noise emission. Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change has set noise limits for major motorways. These limits are used in the process of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of major new transport projects and guide the undertaking of appropriate mitigation measures. In addition, noise barriers are being placed in parts of the road network seriously affected by traffic noise, where possible.

Vehicle Technology: The introduction of new legislation and financial motives concerning vehicle technology has resulted in net improvements in the vehicle fleet's quality as evidenced by the following data: Passenger vehicle registrations with emission limits according to Euro 3,4,5 & 6 have increased by 1.58 times, comparing registrations from 1/1/2004-23/9/2010 to registrations from 1/1/2004-15/9/2008. Bus and commercial vehicle registrations with emission limits according to Euro 3,4,5 & 6 have increased by 6.79 times, comparing registrations from 1/1/2004-23/9/2010 to registrations from 1/1/2004-15/9/2008. Hybrid electric passenger vehicle registrations and electrical two-wheel motor vehicle registrations have increased by 2.41 times, comparing registrations from 1/1/2004-23/9/2010 to registrations from 1/1/2004-15/9/2008.

Public transport: projects, operational improvements and greening of operations

During the past decade, significant projects related to transport have been undertaken, aiming to provide significant improvements to the lives of urban citizens including pollution reduction, noise reduction, lowering traffic congestion, enhancing citizens' mobility and facilitating easier movement of people to, from and inside major urban centers.

Public transit in the metropolitan Athens area is overseen by OASA (the Metropolitan Athens Urban Transport Organization). The OASA Group of Companies has a number of subsidiaries, including ISAP (the old Athens underground railway – currently 'Line 1' of the Athens Metro system), AMEL (the company operating the newer lines of the Athens Metro system), ILPAP (a company operating trolley buses running on grid-electricity), ETHEL (urban buses) and Tram S.A. The complete Athens Metro system currently consists of 30 stations, with another 4 stations shared with the suburban railway leading to the 'Eleftherios Venizelos - Athens International Airport'. The creation of the Thessaloniki Metro system is also under way and is expected to provide a major improvement in transport options and conditions in the Thessaloniki metropolitan area. Park-and-ride facilities are being planned in most stations where conditions allow. A base project of 13 Metro stations is under construction while two further extensions, comprised of 10 additional stations have been planned; the first one has already been put to tender while funding has been secured for the second. The European Investment Bank is involved in the financing of the Metro projects while funding is also provided by EU cohesion and structural funds.

Tram S.A., the company operating the tram lines that connect Athens with its southern suburbs, has a complete corporate social responsibility program, touching various facets of sustainable development, beyond legal requirements. As a partner of the Q-City European Program the company constructed the type of railway which minimizes noise pollution and has installed and operates along its network measurement stations for vibration and noise, supervised by the Polytechnic School of the University of Thessaly. An extensive planting and landscaping program is carried out along the tram's track lines improving the microclimate and aesthetic of neighboring areas. A sum of EUR 29 million was allocated during the construction phase for community development projects (construction of sidewalks,

landscaping, playgrounds, public lighting, etc.). Furthermore, the company has implemented design and operational guidelines that specifically cater to the needs of physically challenged people (e.g. access facilitated by ramps, floor of wagon and platform are on the same level, special seats are included for handicapped persons, sound and visual signage exist to facilitate all travelers, implementation of a Traffic Behavior Training Program, publication of a user's manual in Braille form, development of a model of the inner of the tram vehicle for blind people, so that they can orient themselves when inside, etc.). Finally, the company provides support to well-founded initiatives undertaken by cultural and athletic organizations of the suburbs where the tram passes through and has an extensive sponsorship / support program, including support for the Special Olympics World Summer Games that will be hosted in Athens in June 2011.

Procurement of new buses: In 2009, ETHEL, the company operating the bus fleet in metropolitan Athens received the final installment of 320 new buses, with Euro V and Euro VI Diesel engines, which replaced older buses (14 years of age on average and with Euro I engines). New buses emit significantly less air pollutants thanks to the engine's advanced technology as well as the new SCR type (Selective Catalytic Reduction) catalytic converters. This allows for a drastic reduction in NOx pollutants and particulate matter which are the main pollutants associated with diesel engines. Thus, the use of the above technologies leads to almost completely suppressing the emissions of primary pollutants contributing to Athens' photochemical smog. The procurement of clean technology buses is partly subsidized through the 3rd Community Support Framework (Operational Programme 'Railways, Airports, Urban Transport ') and the National Strategic Reference Framework (Operational Programme 'Accessibility Improvement').

The company also runs a fleet of 414 natural gas powered buses – among the largest ones in Europe – while another 200 natural-gas buses, meeting EEV standards, were expected to be received by the end of 2010. Overall, the company owns a fleet of 2147 buses, with an approximate average age of 9 years. There are two natural gas filling stations operating at Ano Liosia and Anthoussa, in cooperation with the Public Gas Corporation S.A. (DEPA). Furthermore, *bus-lanes* are being constructed and implemented in the metropolitan Athens area in order to promote the use of means of mass transport. The current total length of bus lanes exceeds 50 kilometres. The scheduling of new routes and the pricing policy implemented in the last few years tend to support the integrated / coordinated use of various mass transport means.

ISAP has installed a system for energy recovery in the brake system of its trains, which reaches a recovery level up to 30% of the energy needed to pull trains. This system has had the added benefit of reducing the emission of dust / particulates emitted when trains brake, while the wear of brake pads has been greatly reduced.

Several installations of *photovoltaic panels* have been installed on rooftops belonging to the OASA Group of companies, in cooperation with Public Power Corporation – Renewables S.A. (PPCR) and the Hellenic Transmission System Operator S.A. (HTSO). One of these installations is located atop the Irini Metro station operated by ISAP. The panels used are of polycrystalline silicon with a total power of 20kW. Another 20kW system was installed by renting out an area of 350 square meters on the roof of the main building of the depot at P. Ralli St. The electricity produced by the installation is discharged to HTSO and ETHEL receives 5% of HTSO's revenues as a rent. There are plans for additional installations of photovoltaic systems in other depots used by ETHEL in the near future. A similar 20kW system was installed atop a roof of an ILPAP depot, in conjunction with PPCR.

Furthermore, *green roof systems* have been installed in two large facilities belonging to OASA. The main, direct benefits from these systems are the improvement of the roof's thermal insulation (significantly cutting air-cooling costs during the summer) and the creation of aesthetically pleasing and environmentally helpful small gardens upon rooftops. The ISAP rail line has been completely revamped in recent years, and, among other improvements, sound barriers have been set up at some points where the tracks are above the ground.

Serving people with mobility problems The OASA group of companies also make it their goal to provide and facilitate access for physically challenged people and overall mobility-challenged people. The full fleet of ETHEL buses is made up of low-floor vehicles and most of them have the capacity to further "lean" down, towards the side of the entrance, facilitating people with mobility problems. Additional equipment is installed in 984 buses which have an extendable ramp facilitating the entrance of wheel chairs. Most of these buses have a special space for accommodating and safely locking wheel chairs, ergonomically designed so that the person on the wheel-chair may also press the stop

button and get off the bus. ILPAP trolley buses have low-floor and a lean-down system, and some of them also have an extendable ramp.

A special van service is provided to people with physical disabilities. This service provides free transportation to those who are not able to use the standard urban transport vehicles, using three special vehicles with a limited number of seats for passengers (3–7), spaces for wheel-chairs (3-4) and one attendant seat. In 2009 alone, this service was used 3407 times for transporting isolated physically challenged persons, while it is also being used for the transportation of sports clubs of physically challenged persons. ISAP Metro stations have been retrofitted with elevators and access ramps for wheel-chairs and special corridors have been created along all platforms for people with vision problems. For the same reason, all elevators include an audio announcement and their control buttons incorporate writing in Braille form. Such design considerations have been incorporated from the beginning in all the stations of the new Metro lines (lines 2 and 3 and the projected creation of a 4th line).

Increasing Efficiency: The bus network's effectiveness and efficiency are being constantly examined and network routes are adjusted as and when needed, employing among others, remote sensing technologies. OASA has initiated a *web-application* in its website, called "Search of Optimum Route" to facilitate the combined use of various mass transport means by its customers. ILPAP has installed a remote-sensing system at 190 of its trolley buses, providing information to its customers on the route's next stop. Under a related pilot program, a number of new bus stops feature electronic panels which provide information on incoming vehicles and their expected time of arrival, while passengers inside ISAP and AMEL trains are informed about the next stations on their route.

An *integrated remote sensing system* for the whole fleet of ETHEL buses and ILPAP trolley-buses is expected to be rolled out, including the provision of real-time information for passengers within the vehicles and / or waiting at bus stops. This will include information on expected time of arrival, delays and traffic problems. Similar information will be available online (via computer or cell phone). At the same time, this will enable a better operational management of both the fleet and the personnel as it will be possible to know where each vehicle will be located at any given moment. This project will be carried out as a public-private partnership, according to Law 3389/2005.

An *integrated fuel management system* should also contribute to the network's efficiency and increase safety. This project, to be carried out by ETHEL, consists of the installation of an electronic system for the automatic measurement of volumes at the depots' fuel tanks, a fuel management system with the automatic identification of each vehicle entering the depots' fuel pumps, the change of fuel tanks and the installation of automatic fire extinguishing systems at bus engines.

Special categories of users of urban transport systems (both in metropolitan Athens and in bus companies operating in other towns) are subsidized, by having the right to pay a reduced tariff. These categories include students and members of multi-member families.

A suburban / peripheral rail network has been operating in the Athens metropolitan area since 2004 and in the Thessaloniki metropolitan area since 2007. Further expansion of the network has been planned and is dependent on the future, overall restructuring plan of the Hellenic Railways Organization (OSE). A railway electrification system has been under development but so far it has only been delivered in parts of the *railway network*.

Encouraging bicycle use

In an effort to include bicycles in the country's transit system and promote their use as an alternative means of transportation, the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport, and Networks is implementing a program to direct EUR 15 million from the relevant Operational Programme of the 3rd Community Support Framework for the "Creation of bike-paths and associated bike service infrastructure". The country's municipalities were invited to submit tenders for the creation of such projects in their jurisdiction. Seventeen (17) such projects were approved, with seven in the Athens metropolitan area and the rest in various towns throughout Greece. Furthermore, the former Ministry of Transport & Communications had commissioned two critical research studies on bicycle use, undertaken by the School of Rural and Surveying Engineering of the National Technical University of Athens with the following topics: a. "Research of application methods for the promotion of conditions of sustainable mobility in Greece" and b. "Planning for bicycle infrastructure in the Horofylakis Park and Illission Park and connecting the two through the Metropolitan Park of Goudi, Polytechnic Campus and University Campus". Part of the first study was the integration of bicycles in the municipality of Halandri and the

formulation of the 'Strategic Plan of Sustainable Development of the city of Rethymno in the field of Transportation'. The second study dealt with the creation of bike paths in two metropolitan Athens parks and their connection, via a 13km-long bike path. The end-goals of the project are (i) to serve University and Polytechnic students who use Metro stations neighboring the two institutions, through the combined use of private or public bikes, (ii) to serve those who would like to bike as a means of recreation and exercise in safe and pleasing conditions, (iii) to leverage the usage of the Polytechnic Campus' 4km-long bike path which has already been constructed but remains cut-off from Athens transport network.

The two companies operating the Athens Metro network have adjusted their policies regarding the admission of bicycles in Metro wagons, in order to facilitate the combined usage of bicycles and Metro for daily transportation. Bicycle stations have been created at most ISAP stations.

Tram S.A. permits the admission of bicycles on board its trains without any constraints regarding time or day.

Transport to school, for students living in remote areas

A particular example of a "good practice" policy worth mentioning is that of a program that has been set up, now running its 13th year, to facilitate the transportation of students (Grades 1-12) to school, for rural areas and in particular for students whose residence is far from their school. The Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs, in co-operation with the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport & Networks and local authorities has set up a financing mechanism to either directly provide school transportation for affected students or to subsidize the cost of such transportation, through public or private mass transport means. If the transportation of students via mass transit means is not possible, their legal guardians receive a direct monetary subsidy to cover the cost of transport to and from school.

The General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT) has already issued (or is elaborating) different calls to subsidize Research, Technological Development & Innovation activities. As a general rule eligible applicants are research organizations and enterprises. One of these calls, launched in 2009, included a transport theme with the title "Green" road and sea transport - Development and utilisation of intelligent transport systems". Sixteen projects were selected for funding after evaluation, with a total budget of EUR 5 million.

Education, Training and Awareness-Raising

The OASA Group of companies is engaged into a number of activities including recycling and better management of products and wastes, promotion of the Eco-driving training program for drivers of its own fleet of buses and trolley-buses, the procurement of buses using new, cleaner technology as well as alternative fuels, the use of photovoltaic systems, development of a natural gas network for the heating of facilities housing buses and trolley-buses, energy recovery systems, etc. As part of the 1st phase of the Eco-driving program, a personal test was undertaken and personal driving profile was drawn up for each participating driver, with the goal to evaluate their performance and pinpoint inadequacies in their driving style. This was followed by a 2nd phase, where the drivers selected in the 1st phase acted as instructors, training the rest of the driving personnel.

Tram S.A. supports a number of environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and aims to encourage its own personnel in participating in activities benefiting the environment. The company is examining the development of a special motivation program in order to encourage its employees in participating in all types of environmental protection initiatives.

OSE operates the Museum of the Hellenic Railways, in Athens, organizing different activities, exhibitions and guided tours (especially for schools) in its premises.

In recent years, the annual 'European Mobility Week' has attracted the attention of several Greek towns and organizations and has served as a vehicle for organizing a number of events meant to promote sustainable modes of transport, including a 'car-free' day.

A number of Greek organizations (local authorities, private and public enterprises, associations and NGOs) such as ILPAP, Gefyra S.A., the municipalities of Athens, Patra, Thessaloniki, Volos etc., the 'Panos Mylonas Road Safety Institute' are signatories to the European Road Safety Charter. This is a European participatory platform whose actors undertake to carry out concrete actions and share their

good practices in order to resolve the road safety problems that they encounter in their day-to-day environments. The objective of the Charter is to help reduce road fatalities whose number, for Greece, remains the highest among EU countries, even though they have decreased by 23% from 2001 to 2009.

Cooperation

In the context of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC) Organization, Greece will be financing projects in the field of environmental protection, through the BSEC Hellenic Development Fund (BSEC - HDF). The Fund aims at supporting BSEC efforts to strengthen regional cooperation among its member states and enhance its project-oriented approach, including in the field of transport, among other key areas.

The Vehicle's Technology Directorate of the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport & Networks, participates in workgroups of the EU (e.g. Technical Committee Motor Vehicles) and UNECE (WP 29).

OSE is trying to enhance its status at the international railway community by participating in meetings of various railway and state organizations and networks with reports on the country's railway system as well as to benefit from the experience of other railway organizations, especially in the European framework and taking part in the formulation of EU policy in the field of railway transport.

More specifically, OSE also participates in the International Railway Organization, in the Community of the European Railways and Companies of Railway Infrastructure, in the Group of the railways of South-Eastern European Countries, in the International Union on the facilities of the railway personnel, as well as in other international organizations and working groups.

Moreover, OSE participates in the Trans-European Transport Network, serving as the coordinator of 4 member-states (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary) for the action "Development of the Railway Priority Project No 22", also called "Axis 22" which is currently the only axis linking southeastern Europe with central Europe and is expected to enhance the network's transport capacity and significantly reduce railway transportation times and costs, for both passengers and goods.

The Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport, and Networks has taken, over time, various legislative or policy initiatives and actions and participated in several EU policies and strategies such as those related to the Pan-European corridors, the Adriatic intermodal corridor, the 'Motorway of the Sea of south-east Europe' etc.