

European
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South-East Europe – A Region on the Move

Regional Intergration The Greek experience

1. Introduction

Regional integration has been one of the cornerstones of European policy, enshrined into the treaty of Rome and aiming at creating a prosperous, dynamic and coherent Union.

Integration has two phases. The first is to pull together the regions getting them closer to each other and the second is to keep them together through sustainable development.

The key for the first phase is building the networks which facilitate communications, diminish the time of travel between them and distribute and share energy resources.

The second phase is economic development.

2. The transport infrastructures

Transport is one of the main driving forces of economic activity and cohesion, and thus a key element in the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs. Without efficient transport networks there can be no competitiveness. Transport networks are vital for encouraging establishment of companies and development of centres of excellence and tourism. They are also a central factor in European territorial cohesion, constituting an essential link for communities and being a precondition for quality of life and employment in urban neighbourhoods and in rural areas, as well as in sparsely populated mountain or other remote regions. Transport systems are at the

crossroads of «sustainable development» in economic, social and environmental terms. They must be part of a global approach that takes into account the real impact of investment directed at creating and sustaining local activities and jobs, a balanced and polycentric development of the European area, and the reduction of damage to the natural and human environment.

In this direction, the European Union has since the nineties developed the notion of trans-European motorway.

They cover the whole of Eastern Europe, as the West has completed to a large extent a dense network of motorways since the seventies.

In South-eastern Europe the network is designed not only to improve inter-regional contact but also to facilitate the trade between the Black Sea, the Adriatic and the Mediterranean and to offer access to Central Europe.

In this presentation I intend to cover aspects of the Greek motorway development which links different regions, some of them geographically isolated and the effects observed in the local society and economy. We will then talk about the international connections and the expected effects to the region and finally refer briefly to other networks which contribute also to the prosperity of South-East Europe.

3. Greek regional transport policy

In Greece since the accession of the country to the then EEC, a large amount of funds become available in order to improve the road infrastructure. In the mid-nineties the Egnatia motorway project was initiated.

A road 670 km long, linking the port of Igoumenitsa with the Turkish border. Sections of the road are already in use, the total is scheduled to open by the end of 2008, the end of the 4th programmatic period. The construction of the motorway is funded by the Greek state, 50%, through a loan from the EIB, and the rest comes from EU community funds.

Currently, further six major motorways are scheduled to be built as concessions. All of them are now in the bidding or contract signing stage.

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ΕΠΑΓΓΕΛΜΑΤΙΩΝ (ΠΟΦΕΕ)

ΣΚΕΨΕΙΣ ΓΙΑ ΒΕΛΤΙΩΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΦΟΡΟΛΟΓΙΚΟΥ ΣΥΣΤΗΜΑΤΟΣ

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Σεπτέμβριος 2006

These motorways are named 'development roads' to underline the significance attached to them as a lever for economic development and a tool for integration between the regions.

The cost of construction of Egnatia motorway amounts to 5.9 billion Euro and together with the links to the neighbouring countries this amount comes to about 6.9 billion Euro.

The cost of the motorways to be built through concessions amounts to 7.5 billion Euro.

4. The effect of Egnatia motorway to Western Greece

Traffic data in the region of Western Macedonia before and after the opening of the section bypassing the mountains had shown a reduction of travelling time between the regional capital from two to one hour only.

As a result there was a large increase in traffic volume, by about 75%. The effect on the tourist flow was exceptionally high recording 100% occupation in hotel rooms in Western Macedonia for most of the weekends throughout the year. Most significantly though the construction of this section changed the employment pattern in the region as the area became a commuter belt for the city of Thessaloniki.

Regarding the effects on travel, the Epirus region has been draw closer to Thessaloniki and it is not unusual now for travellers going abroad to use the Thessaloniki airport instead of the Athens one which resulted in a reduction in travel time of about two hours.

5. The international connections

In the last three years the international connections between Greece and the neighbouring countries have received special attention. New motorways and high speed closed roads linking Egnatia motorway with the borders are under construction. The majority of them are part of the trans-European network.

The aim is to complete the majority of them by the end of 2008.

Four motorway connections are envisaged. Starting from the West a link to Albania and Tirana is under construction which forms part of the trans-European Motorway VIII. Two connections are built to FYROM, trans-European Motorway X, which lead also to Serbia and Central Europe. There are two more connections to Bulgaria, one linking Thessaloniki to Sofia and from there to Lom, to Romania and Hungary, trans-European Motorway IV. Finally there is the road along the Evros river joining the Sofia-Istanbul motorway. And of course the start of the motorway in Igoumenitsa port through which one using ferries can reach Italy and finally the end of the Egnatia motorway in Ikipi at the border of Turkey.

Of course these motorways should link up in our neighbouring countries to roads of similar standard of design and construction, facilitating fast and efficient connections between them and Greece. «Egnatia Odos S.A.» with its ten years experience of road construction management will be more than willing to help our neighbours, in collaboration with their local authorities, to harmonize the construction of such large infrastructures.

We should not also forget local road links which provide fast and efficient connections and allow easy flow of goods and products.

We should also underline that South Eastern European countries are also part of the Black Sea region.

In the last meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Black Sea countries it has been agreed to develop a ring road around the Black Sea facilitating trade and bringing the people of the region closer together.

«Egnatia Odos SA» is proposed to lead the technical secretariat for the Black Sea ring.

6. Conclusions

For the regional integration through infrastructure development the target is to bring people together, to obtain quick access to local markets for goods, products and services, to increase the flow of tourists between the countries, to provide improved and efficient transport services to a market of 80 million people.

To achieve all these common rules should be established and quality of infrastructures should become a must.

Regional development in South-East Europe requires integration not only of infrastructures but also design common rules and regulations.

Finally we must realize that we live and operate in an open world and a global market, where the synergies and collaboration of a large integrated region strengthen all those who live and operate in it. In global terms South-east Europe is just a small, neighbourhood. That is what we should strive to make it a friendly and dynamic one.

Thank you.

ΒΥΡΩΝ Γ. ΠΟΛΥΔΩΡΑΣ

ΑΣΤΥΝΟΜΙΑ

Ο ΑΕΝΑΟΣ ΠΛΑΤΩΝΙΚΟΣ ΦΥΛΑΚΑΣ



ΑΘΗΝΑ 2006

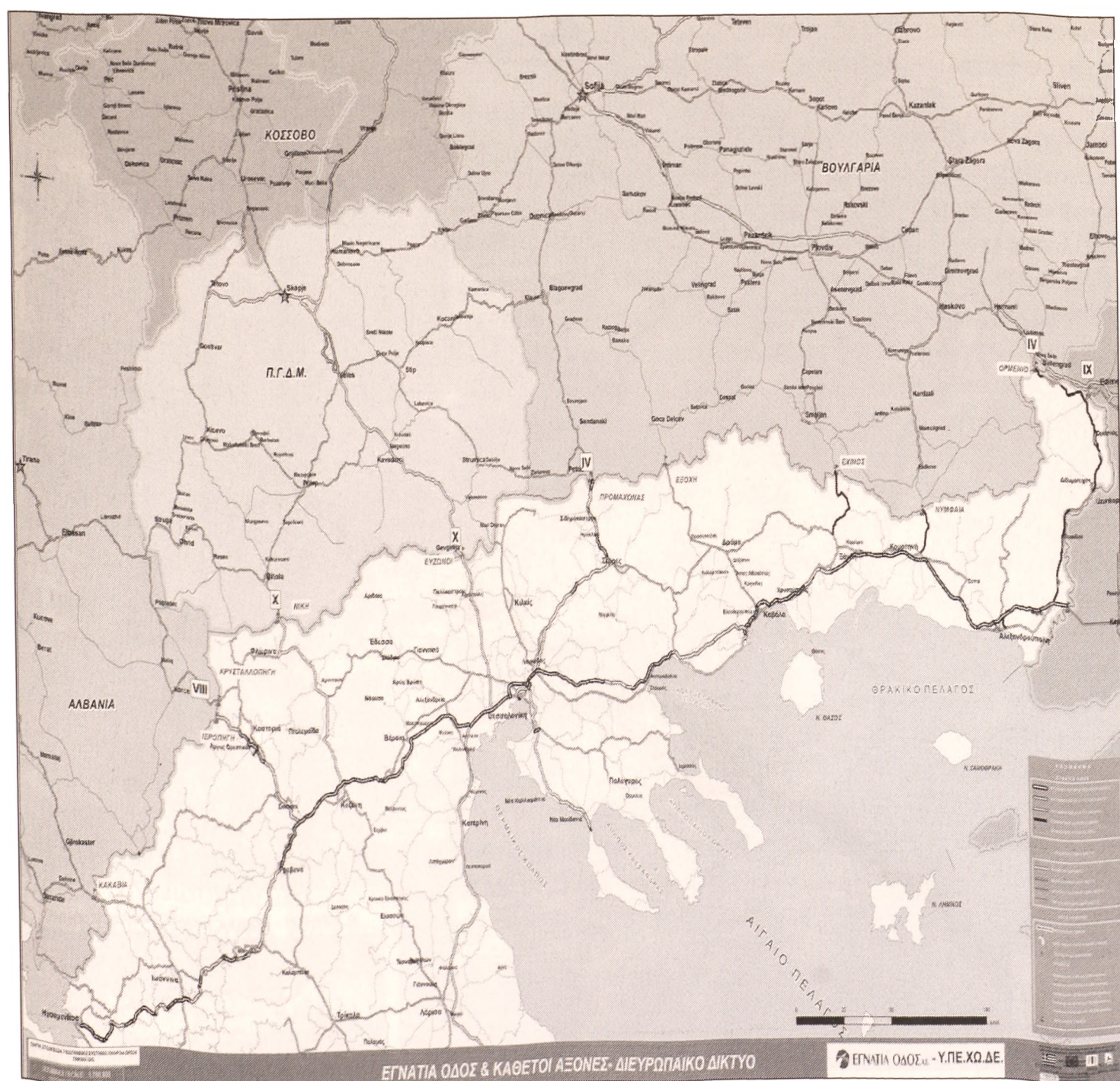
Greek regional policy Infrastructure Development

- THE NATIONAL ROAD NETWORK
- EFFECTS ON THE LOCAL SOCIETY AND ECONOMY
- THE INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS
- EXPECTED EFFECTS
- OTHER NETWORKS



The Greec expenditure

| | |
|---|------------------|
| EGNATIA ODOS | 5.9 Billion Euro |
| links to the neighborouring countries | 1.0 Billion Euro |
| CONSESSION PROJETS | |
| Six projects. Total cost | 7.5 Billion Euro |



The targets

Getting to know each other

Obtain quick access to local markets for goods and products

Increase the number of tourists

Provide services to a market of 80 million people

Improve efficiency

