

Summary of ASECAP & HELLASTRON Chairman Mr. Halkias's interview to BS/Proto Thema

Mr. Vassilis Halkias, chairman of the Greek non-profit association "Hellastron", with members of all the new and old concession companies operating a 2,133-kilometer secure network in our country, has been the new chairman of the European Association of Operators of Toll Road Infrastructures (ASECAP) for a few months now.

The main objective of Mr. Halkias is to bring to Greece the so-called collaborative and intelligent transport systems, so that Greece can enter European fora that will shape the agenda for the next four years in decarbonisation issues, green politics, interoperability in transport and tunnel safety. The first step has been made, as Greece is now a member of the consortium of the European platform C-Roads, through which the Authorities and EC road transport associations in each country can collaborate in the development of intelligent transport systems across Europe with co-financing from EU funds.

"These are technologies that change transportation as we know it and applications that bring pilot tests in Greece," explains Mr. Halkias, and adds that the completion of major concessions gave Greece a large lead over other States, as it now has one of the most advanced new generation motorway networks. "We are concerned about the next day as all the concessions have a thirty-year horizon," he points out.

The national pilot system developed under C-Roads will provide C-ITS services at two test sites, one in a rural environment in northern Greece (Egnatia) and one in an urban environment in the region of Attica (Attiki Odos). The proposal that has been submitted for funding approval under C-Roads mainly includes information services provided by the road infrastructure (motorway Traffic Management Centres) for vehicles. These services include information about ongoing roadworks in the vicinity of vehicles, either in the form of a warning or navigation recommendation, the provision of information for stationary or slow moving vehicles, obstacles, weather conditions (e.g. fog, storm, ice, etc.), recommended speed and path to ensure smooth traffic conditions, the provision of smart navigation to the driver, taking into account the actual traffic conditions, weather, condition of the road surface, incidents and roadworks.

According to Mr. Halkias, intelligent transport systems (ITS) incorporate a wide range of applications related to communications and designed to increase travel safety, since "these systems help drivers maintain a safe speed and distance on the road, to drive within the lane, to avoid overtaking in critical situations and to safely go through intersections. "

In the distant future, even a driving license may seem unnecessary, if one considers the possibilities that intelligent systems and automation in transport present.

The next big challenge for highways is electrification. Already, large industries indicate that by 2020 they will cease manufacture of conventional vehicles and will switch to electric. The highways claim an increased role in the autonomy of the electric vehicles, in cooperation with electricity providers, producers of RES and the Car Importers Associations.

Mr. Halkias argues that satellite technologies bear great potential in the field of applications to manage, for example, fleet vehicles, something that the Ministry of Infrastructure has introduced to deal with toll payment of Heavy Goods vehicles. The relevant tender is currently in the process of tender documentation preparation.