

ITU Forum on 'Towards 5G Enabled Gigabit Society'

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Opening Ceremony

H.E. Nikos Pappas

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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen good morning.

It is my honor to welcome you all to this ITU Forum for 5G, which is with no doubt, the 5th generation of telecommunication infrastructures that will support the digitization of the economies and societal activities worldwide.

In the recent years, telecommunications have become a pillar for growth and development. With the arrival of the interconnected users and devices, new efficient technologies are developed that will be able to overcome booming of high traffic AND, security.

The fast evolution of related technologies does not only promise to offer tremendous opportunities for many industries, but also empowers governments to confront (deal with) the challenges of the upcoming 4th industrial revolution.

These challenges are not restricted to the dissemination of knowledge at national or international level as this Forum aims, but may also be extended to leverage a country's strength in the global industry, using suitable promotion and supportive mechanisms.

These mechanisms concern the preparation of a National Digital Strategy and the formulation of a technology ecosystem involving key stakeholders in the field, these being the Government, Academia and the Industry.

Participation and collaboration with each of these stakeholders is essential, so that a new institutional framework policy may be prepared for the promotion of a new technology development.

This process is also subject to international cooperation agreements with the goal to facilitate a global consensus on new technologies like 5G, that is related to standards and spectrum.

The mission of the Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media is the country's digital development, including eGovernment, broadband infrastructures, the digital single market and the development of the ICT industry.

In this context, emphasis is first given on infrastructure development, security and upgrading of digital public services, sectors that are the foundation and the prerequisites for the digital transformation of our country.

Between January 2017 and June 2018, 226 proposals for ICT projects were submitted, most of which, concern co-funded projects by NSRF and CEF, while a small percentage concerns national resources.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned institutional mission, the Ministry established the National Digital Strategy 2016-2021, which is the road map and the framework for digital development of Greece. It sets the vision and specifies the areas of intervention, so that Greece, by 2021, will be consistent with the European digital map.

In particular, our National Digital Strategy focusses on seven (7) areas of intervention:

1. The development of National Infrastructures for New Generation Networks.
2. The acceleration of the digitization of our economy.
3. Boosting of the ICT industry so as to develop digital economy and employment
4. Empowering people with digital skills
5. Robust review of the methodologies that deliver Digital Public Services
6. Eliminating the exclusions and diffusing of the benefits of the digital economy
7. Enhance Security and Trust

In May, we signed with the Bulgarian minister of transport technology and communication and the Serbian minister of commerce tourism and telecommunications an agreement for the creation of a cross-border Balkan corridor that will provide testing of connected and automated cars to Western Europe using 5g technology.

Greece recognizes the importance of telecommunications and ICTs and is committed to accelerate development and contribute in the digital transformation of our societies, paving the way for sustainable growth, as to achieve the goals of Agenda 2030 of the United Nations.

Despite the economic crisis and its implications, our Ministry is committed to contribute to the work of ITU and respond to the worldwide challenges of telecommunications and ICTs. The Greek Government presented itself at the Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) of the United Nations (UN) in July in New York, during which, our Ministry along with ITU, UNECE, UNESCO and the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates, organized a side event on "Shaping Smarter and More Sustainable Cities: Striving for Sustainable Development Goals".

I strongly believe that our dedication and commitment for bridging the digital gap, our support of ITU's position in the United Nations so as to promote the Union's global leadership in the sector of telecommunications and ICTs, along with the initiatives at National level and cooperation agreements we have made at International level, so as to promote new technologies, will ensure that Greece will have a strong position in the global stage.

I would like to thank our honorable speakers and moderators for accepting our proposal to be here with us today and wish you all success in this Forum.