

**ITU Forum on 'Towards 5G Enabled Gigabit Society'**  
**11/10/2018 | Athens, Greece**

**Opening Ceremony**

**Dr. Vassilis Maglaras**  
**Secretary General for Telecommunication and Post**  
**Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media, Greece**

Excellency Minister Nikos Pappas,  
Dr. Chaesub Lee, Director of TSB,  
Distinguished colleagues  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great privilege for our Ministry to host the ITU Forum "Towards 5G Enabled Gigabit Society" and have all these honorable speakers and a great audience to attend this Forum.

5G is a multidisciplinary and a cross-sectoral network technology and I am very happy to see all major stakeholders (national authorities, international bodies, academia and industry) to be here, to exchange views and experience.

At his point of time, deployment of 5G networks is one of the key concerns of the "telecom world"; as major policy makers, we focus our attention on the timely and coordinated deployment of the networks and our efforts are to engage all stakeholders and leverage their active participation.

Greek government is highly committed to the digital transformation of the country; to this end a new Ministry has been established, dedicated to the development of ICT sector. We firmly believe that digital evolution is a key enabler for sustainable development and its benefits should reach every single citizen of the country, no matter where he lives or work.

It is well known that Greece is ranked in low positions in the ICT scoreboards; however, despite the difficulties of economic situation, we have elaborated on an updated National Broadband Plan, in line with the targets set by the European Vision for Gigabit Society 2025.

We all realize that extended broadband infrastructures are a prerequisite for the deployment of 5G. The aim of our National Broadband Plan is the deployment of future-proof network infrastructures, exploiting all available public resources (both European and National Funds)

and leverage more private investments, focusing on both supply and demand sides. The total budget of the plan is estimated to exceed 700M€ within the next 5 years, which constitute one of the greatest public interventions for broadband deployment in Europe.

In particular, the ongoing SuperFast Broadband project provides vouchers to citizens to obtain an at least 100Mbps internet connection, readily upgradable to 1Gbps. The Ultrafast Broadband project is a 300M€ budget PPP project, that aims to provide ultra-fast connectivity infrastructures all over the country, complementing the EU-award winner Rural Broadband Project. Several other projects of smaller scale, form an integrated and multi-targeting public intervention framework.

We consider our lag in broadband infrastructures as a challenge; bearing in mind our highly skilled ICT personnel and the potentials of the Greek economy on entrepreneurship and innovation, I firmly believe that the perspectives are positive. The fiber penetration has already started to grow rapidly and we anticipate a “fiber-boom” within the next months.

When it comes to 5G, the General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post has signed MoUs with 3 municipalities, namely Trikala, Kalamata and Zografou, in order to deploy pilot 5G networks, in cooperation with the mobile network operators. Furthermore, our Minister has signed an agreement to develop an experimental 5G cross-border corridor that will test driverless vehicles. These projects will serve as testbeds, will engage all stakeholders and will allow for smooth and rapid deployment of the 5G networks throughout the country.

Considering the highly cooperative nature of the 5G deployment plan, we have established an ad-hoc working group, with the participation of all major stakeholders, which will coordinate all the relevant actions. Furthermore, we participate in the EU and international bodies dealing with spectrum management issues and a roadmap for the 700MHz band release has been announced, in line with the framework set by EU decisions. Within the next few days, a new bill will be submitted to the parliament, which aims to codify, streamline and update the legislative and regulatory regime for antenna licensing - a key issue for small cells deployment.

All our efforts are focused on making Greece a Smart Nation. We recognize the importance of telecommunications and ICT sector, which we consider a major pillar of Sustainable Growth. This year, the Hellenic Government presented itself at the Voluntary National Review at the High Level Political Forum of the United Nations in July in New York and we co-organized a side event on Shaping Smarter and More Sustainable Cities: Striving for Sustainable Development Goals.

Moreover, we are dedicated on our vision for an inclusive digital society and we consider that every single citizen should participate in it, on equal terms.

5G network deployment both promotes and requires collaboration. ITU is the worldwide recognized collaboration platform for telecom sector development and furthermore, ITU is the pioneer for IMT2020/5G development. This forum is the result of our cooperation on this field and I firmly believe that its outcomes will be very interesting and useful.

I grab the opportunity to inform you that Greece will be candidate for ITU Council, at the elections that will take place in PP-18 in Dubai, and we hope that, with your support, we will be elected once again.

I feel grateful to my colleagues in General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post and the colleagues of ITU for their efforts to organize this event;

I would like to say a warm thank to all the honorable speakers who accepted our invitation and travelled to Athens;

Thank you all for your participation and I wish all the success for the forum.