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# P. Souretis: Immediate Action Needed to Address Traffic Congestion

Infrastructure is a prerequisite for the growth and resilience of the Greek economy, as well as for improving citizens' everyday lives, said Petros Souretis, Executive Member of the Board of Directors of GEK TERNA Group, at the 5th Economic Conference organised by *Naftemporiki* newspaper.

There is no doubt that significant infrastructure projects have been launched and are currently under way in recent years. This momentum must be sustained, with priority given to interventions aimed at addressing key challenges such as traffic congestion in the Attica region. As Mr. Souretis pointed out, more than 8 million journeys are made across the wider Athens metropolitan area every day, primarily by private car.

Considering that approximately 6 million vehicles circulate in Attica, which accounts for just 3% of Greece's total land area, while the region's road network is estimated to have a capacity limit of 2–2.5 million vehicles, it becomes clear why existing infrastructure has reached saturation point. This situation is expected to intensify as the Ellinikon urban regeneration project gradually reaches completion. The development is expected to attract an additional 1 million visitors annually and 20,000 new residents, while creating 85,000 new jobs, each of which is estimated to generate two additional daily journeys.

"The government must turn its attention to the landmark proposal submitted for the Ilioupoli Urban Tunnel. The areas of Ilioupoli, Vyronas, Argyroupoli, Ellinikon and Glyfada are facing excessive traffic pressure, resulting in severe congestion, particularly during the morning rush hour," Mr. Souretis noted.

At the same time, priority should be given to the extension of Kymi Avenue (3.8 km), which will directly connect Attiki Odos with the National Highway, bypassing Metamorfosi. An important step has already been taken, following the Council of State's dismissal of the relevant appeals. The finalisation of the financing arrangements is now pending, allowing the project to proceed to contract signing, as a contractor consortium has already been selected. Meanwhile, Nea Attiki Odos is carrying out upgrade works at the Metamorfosi interchange, where Attiki Odos meets the Athens–Lamia National Highway, with the aim of easing congestion at this key junction.

Asked about the future of infrastructure, Mr. Souretis stressed that ensuring its proper operation and maintenance must be a key priority, in order to prevent situations such as that of Egnatia Odos, which had been left without adequate maintenance for many years. As a result, its tunnels now

require immediate upgrades and safety certification to ensure full compliance with stringent European and international standards.

He concluded by emphasising that the digitalisation of infrastructure planning, construction and management is essential to delivering projects faster, at lower cost and with enhanced safety.