



## ASSOCIATION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS OF GREECE

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### 46<sup>th</sup> ECCE Meeting in Athens (18-20 October 2007)

#### **OPENING SPEECH BY DIMITRIS PAPAGIANNIDIS, PRESIDENT OF ASSOCIATION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS OF GREECE**

Dear President,

Dear colleagues, members of ECCE,

I have the honour to represent today the Association of Civil Engineers of Greece that **was established in 1961** based in Athens and constitutes a second degree trade union representing approximately **23.000 Greek University graduate Civil Engineers**. Civil Engineers Association acts as independent, non- profit scientific association whose mission is to promote its members scientific level, safeguard their economic and professional interests, forge among them a cooperation and solidarity spirit and contribute to the country's technical development programmes design and implementation.

Good scientists and civil engineers graduate from the Greek Technical Universities and Faculties, as well as from foreign institutions. **They constitute a great national asset**. A group of people equipped with skills, knowledge, sensitivities and demands associated with their studies level, depth and potential.

Our Association fully supports this aforementioned asset in Greece and the European Union. **It considers sufficient scientific training of engineers with qualified studies of a 5-year minimum duration as the fundamental precondition.**

DIMITRI PAPAGIANNIDIS  
PRESIDENT ASSOCIATION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS OF GREECE

The Association, being a staunch supporter of state education which could yield skilled and sensitive scientists, never did it raise an objection with regard to engineers number, in spite of the fact that Greece numbers **9 engineers per 1000** inhabitants, while **the EU average is 2 engineers per 1000** inhabitants.

The Association opposes to an arbitrary setting up of schools with no link whatsoever to current and future market needs; it considers that **the existence of Technical Occupational Institutes corresponding to Technical University faculties does not offer anything to production.**

**In the new three-year period 2007-2009 our interventions will be geared towards the following axes:**

- **To upgrade and highlight** University graduate civil engineers role and quality of knowledge resisting any efforts to equalize and undermine our profession
- **To defend civil engineers occupational rights and prerogatives** as well as our active participation in creating new specialties.
- **To support** young civil engineers in social security contribution, unemployment and underemployment issues.
- **To come up with solutions and proposals vis-à-vis** engineers social security fund improvement
- **To upgrade public sector civil engineers position** by promoting their institutional and economic demands.
- **To support small and medium size** project development and contracting enterprises.
- **To optimally utilize** European Union Programmes for young engineers with regard to entrepreneurship and training.
- **To achieve national balanced growth** through the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013.
- **To promote swiftly and apply correctly** the National Master Plan and, in particular, the general Urban plans.

- **To recognize Greek Universities civil engineering degree** as being equivalent to the Anglo-Saxon “Master” due to the five-year period of studies and the high level thereof.

**All the abovementioned objectives derive from a broader programming of positions and activities in Europe that we aim at realizing with your support and assistance.**

Nowadays, there are many challenges ahead. Channelling **82%** of the National Strategic Reference Framework resources standing at **36 bn euro**, of which **24 bn euro** are Community funds, to the Regions, implementing large development projects in the Regions, promoting entrepreneurship, adopting information technology and sustainable development are some cases in point.

Civil engineers play a key and multi-faceted role in the new era transition. We must struggle capitalizing on our Association’s role and position for the benefit of Greek civil engineers competitiveness in the labour market using their qualitative advantages.

**In addition, competences and responsibilities definition** is required for University graduate engineers-developers-owners and a corresponding engineers’ remuneration readjustment is called for.

It is up to the Government to take steps approaching the sector demonstrating its good will and to definitely settle the profession’s penalisation with a prescription starting time limit once an adverse event occurs by a legislative act. The first time a legislative act passed on the subject was in 1995 after the earthquakes in Aigeo being a serious threat to the profession itself.

Similarly, our growing concern for the **ENVIRONMENT calls for:**

- **Finalization of** all necessary projects for solid and liquid waste management
- **Preparation of** national legislation on hazardous waste management.
- **Activation of** water resources management law.
- **Completion by 2010** of all immediate flood protection projects.

The common concern about climate change, being now more intense than in the past, led us to organise with **ECCE** in July 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 a pan-European Conference on the Environment and **state-of-the-art technologies for water saving** benefiting from the positive reaction and acceptance by the **Commissioner for the Environment Mr. Dimas**.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, established in 1988 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) published the latest studies on climate change. Their findings were particularly cumbersome for human factor pinpointed as the main culprit responsible for the greenhouse effect. The Panel cautions about **global warming in the 21<sup>st</sup> century warning that it shall range between 1,8-4 degrees Celsius**, that **millions of people shall be threatened by flooding brought about by sea level rise and that in some countries crops shall drop even by 50% by 2020**.

**In conclusion, I need to stress that I am positive and optimist that civil engineers shall give a positive and creative response in the context of a modern and strong 21<sup>st</sup> century European Union of 27 members soon to embrace new ones simply because we create Europe, the Europe of growth, of sustainability and citizens' quality of life.**

Thank you

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