



CHRISTOS FOLIAS

Innovation - Quality - Extraversion are

In an era of radical changes and wider redefinition of production and consumption models, the investment in new technologies and in innovation is set to be a strategic objective for the country. The Information Society, based on the rapid development of Information & Communications Technologies (ICT), directs the traditional economy in a new non-material economy based on knowledge, creating in parallel new opportunities for growth, prosperity and quality of life. With the growth of Information Society, we see a new process of conducting financial activity. The financial wealth becomes less dependent on the possession of material goods (natural resources, land and machinery) and more in non material goods, such as information, knowledge, and research. The processes of production of material goods tend to become less important than the processes of production, enhancement and dissemination of information and hence in the new economies we shift in focus towards the information and its dissemination.

The changes that took place in the telecommunications market at a European level look impressive. It is not just the number of new business agreements that creates impressive traction in the

sector, but mainly the speed with which these agreements were implemented with new investment forms that mark a departure from the state monopolies that traditionally dominated this market. The scene changes, the new dimensions are set and will most likely be extended with undiminished intensity in the near future; the technological developments will determine the way with which financial and investment decisions will be made. The big "innovation", naturally, was the big interest of private equity funds in telecommunications. The sector offers powerful motives for investment from such company schemes and is largely compatible with their philosophy; it is all about investment in companies of capital intensity, state of the art technology with exceptionally promising prospects.

In Greece, we promote a development model entirely customised in the needs of this new era. We seek to combine effectively the international competitiveness with the social cohesion of a country. This objective is supported by three pillars:

1. the educated, skilled and highly capable human capital.
2. the creation, development and dissemination of technology, innovation and knowledge.



3. the development of an innovation culture that allows the experimentation, the modernization, the multiplicity of approaches, the creation, the undertaking of risks and the boldness of implementing of new ideas.

Based on facts that were presented by the Greek Observatory of the Information Society regarding the contribution of ICT sector in the GDP, we see this figure at 3.8% in 2006. However, this percentage falls short compared with the rest of the EU that stands at 6-8%. It is estimated that this percentage presents growth potential. Regarding broadband, it is indicated that the growth of broadband penetration is continued at a high rate and the dynamics of this market contribute in a rapid convergence with the EU-25, which is expected to be achieved by the end of 2010. According to the latest facts of the Observatory, broadband penetration was 7.5% at

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Greece's "passport" in the global environment

the end of August 2007. The impressive changes in the domain of Information & Communications Technologies in the past few years brought emphatically in the foreground the positive relation between new technologies and their application in the market, with the encouragement and growth of research and development with marketable results.

Innovation

With the creation of the Innovation Centre of Microelectronics and after one year of operation of Cluster microelectronics (an important Greek achievement that brings us in the "heart" of modern research coupled with innovation and business activity), it is proven that research can be linked with production and work wonders. It is obvious that the challenge for our country is explicit and given: to successfully take up a place in the demanding inter-national environment leveraging three dynamic elements: "Innovation - Quality - Extraversion".

The initiatives that the Ministry of Development has undertaken create the conditions for the creation of a suitable environment for growth of innovation, in those sectors of Greek economy, which present capable characteristics to create conditions of competitive advantage at an international level. The Hellenic Technology Clusters Initiative "Corallia" - as it is named - is a pioneering source for innovative Greek business activity.

The Ministry of Development plans and actively invests in the sector of new technologies as well as their implementation in the market mainly when we encourage the growth of Greek research and technology with tangible results. Specifically for 2008 - 2010, it

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promotes the implementation of further important initiatives such as:

- Programs - interventions for implementation of state of the art Research & Development through the collaboration of Greek Industry, Universities and Research Centres and support of newly founded innovative enterprises in focused thematic regions, beginning with the Microelectronics and Embedded Systems, and in the near future in other technological priorities such as the Renewable Energy Sources, Culture & Educational Software and Multimedia, and Health Sciences.
- Ease of the innovation gap through collaboration and partnerships among cluster-members as well as between cluster-members and national and international organizations, including world-class innovation Centres of excellence such as the Sophia-Antipolis Foundation.

- Important actions for the repatriation of talented Greek scientists and managers and the attraction of premium investments from USA and EU, particularly via cooperation with Greek capital and technology enterprises of Greek interests abroad.

The technological changes, the transformations that are observed in all sectors of traditional economy, the parallel growth of "non-material economy" and the creation of new needs in the enterprises of new economy, the rapid increase of information and the globalisation, alter the needs of the employment market as well as the nature of employment. At the same time, these changes differentiate the type of knowledge, the faculties and the professional dexterities of professions and specialities that are required in this new environment. The synergy of all involved institutions is required in an extensive and continuous social dialogue for the management of technological changes, which should, mainly, focus in lifelong learning and in the process of recognition and transferability of qualifications (eg social dexterities, dexterities of behavior, etc.).

Likewise, issues as the new organisation of work with the use of tele-working, the import of wider innovations that are decisive for the orientation in new technologies are our direct priorities. The encouragement of research and technology with results for the market, as in the clusters example, constitute great creativity examples and enterprising dynamics that we will support and develop further. **S**

Mr. Christos Folias is Minister of Development of Greece.

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