

# Olympic Games

## ATHENS 2004

### Athens' first - and largest - commitment to the 2004 Games has been fulfilled

Three and a half years prior to the Opening Ceremony of the Games of the XXVIII Olympiad in 2004, Athens has inaugurated a new international airport, 'Eleftherios Venizelos' created according to modern specifications and offering all modern amenities, that can handle 16 million passengers annually. The operation of such an airport was one of the key promises made by Athens in its bid to host the 2004 Olympic Games, a promise which has been kept in full, thereby providing solid proof of its commitment to the ongoing preparations.

The new airport was inaugurated on 27 March in a special ceremony attended



by the President of the Hellenic Republic Constantinos Stephanopoulos, Prime Minister Costas Simitis, and representatives of all the major political parties and social agencies, thereby indicating the broader consensus that prevails among Greeks when it comes to major national initiatives.

Normal operations went into full swing the very next day. The main features of the new airport are its state-of-the-art technology and equipment, with a particular emphasis on security, its user-

friendly features and its high-level services. Specific attention was given to security during the construction and the operation of the airport - both on the ground and in the air with the use of advanced security systems.

By the year 2004, a new suburban Railway, terminating in front of the central arrivals and departure building, extending almost into the centre of Athens, is also scheduled to serve the new airport. Indeed, the suburban railway will be inter-connected with the existing metro system, sharing common stations.

As to the future strategy planned by the new airport's company, it should be noted that a primary aim is its development into South-Eastern Europe's hub, offering competitive connecting flights between the countries of Eastern Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, the Balkans, Africa and Europe, but also with Asia and America. The implementation of this strategic goal requires an expansion of the present network, attracting new

### The new airport in figures

<b>Construction period:</b>	51 months, plus a five month testing period
<b>Number of passengers:</b>	Up to 16 million a year in the initial phase.
<b>Cargo carrying capacity:</b>	Designed for 220,000 tons annually.
<b>Length of runways:</b>	About four kilometres each
<b>Flight frequency:</b>	65 landings and take-offs per hour, or 600 per day
<b>Airport Central Building:</b>	On four levels, with 14 bridges for passenger embarkation, over an area of 150,000 square metres
<b>Satellite Building:</b>	Ten bridges for passenger embarkation
<b>Road access:</b>	Six lane highway (Attiki Odos - New Athens Ring Road)
<b>Parking capacity:</b>	4,800 vehicles
<b>Ticket gates:</b>	163
<b>Luggage conveyor belts:</b>	11



Prime Minister Costas Simitis (2nd from left), accompanied by Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki.

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destinations for passengers and cargo and increasing the number of flights to existing destinations.

Europe's new southern gateway to the world, the airport is the greatest infrastructure project to date in Greece, with important entrepreneurial and social dimensions.

## The Athens 2004 Olympic Store, the main attraction at the new airport

With the opening of the new airport, the first Olympic Store in Greece also opened for business, selling licensed merchandise of the 2004 Games. The Olympic Store has a prominent position at the airport, as it is located in the departures area and is accessible to all travellers and visitors alike. Within an area of 70 square metres, all Olympic licensed products are available, the product categories include: sports-

wear, swimwear, houseware, casual accessories, pins, jewellery.

The objectives of the Olympic Store include:

- Promotion of the values of the 2004 Games to Greeks and foreign visitors alike
- The creation and cultivation of consumer interest in anticipation of the Olympics, in order to provide additional revenue to meet organizational expenses.
- Conveying the Olympic Ideals and the spirit of Olympism to a wide audience.

More Olympic Stores will start operating within 2002 in Athens' commercial centre, as well as in other Greek cities. The company that will manage the Olympic Stores in Greece is Nuance

S.A. This Company has been granted the exclusive right to use the title 'The Olympic Store' through an agreement signed directly with the IOC. The Nuance group is the largest international retail sales organization active in airports, with more than 350 shops in 16 countries on four continents. It is the same company that managed the Olympic Stores in Sydney.



*The Olympic store.*

## Olympic infrastructure: Putting plans into action

The long but necessary period of planning, programming and financial calculations is now moving into a new phase; the sight of bulldozers and construction can be witnessed throughout the Greater Athens area, where, up to the Spring of 2004, some of the most modern competition and non-competition venues are being developed to host the Games of the XXVIII Olympiad.

Over the past three months preliminary excavation and land fencing work has begun in four areas of Attica (the broader Athens region), they are as follows: At Schinias, where the Olympic Rowing and Canoeing Centre is being created; Markopoulo, where the Olympic Shooting Centre and the Olympic Equestrian Centre are to be established; Aghios Kosmas, where the Olympic Sailing Centre will be created and Acharnes, which will host the Olympic Village.

The final studies on these projects are also being developed, while the bidding has begun for the contracts to construct the Olympic Village (there will be four contracts for a total of 2,292 apartments, where 17,300 athletes and officials will be hosted during the Games), as well as for the construction of the Olympic Equestrian Centre.

The removal of the airstrip at Schinias began in early February this year, as the first stage in the creation of the Olympic Rowing and Canoeing Centre. The tarmac and airport facilities will be replaced by a lake system designed to re-introduce freshwater to the underground aquifer of the Schinias basin. Freshwater from the Makaria Spring that currently drains out to the sea, via a canal built in 1923, will be re-directed to the lake system. These steps are necessary to restore the original balance of fresh and saline water to the coastal wetlands, as well as provide the necessary balance to protect the forest of rare

umbrella pine nearby. Situated approximately 3.8 kilometres away from the protected archaeological site of the Tomb of Marathon, the project overall is intended to restore the natural serenity that existed long ago. The removal of the airport is the first step in a process that will also remove an abandoned military facility built in the centre of the wetlands, restrict vehicle traffic along the protected beach and coastal pine forest, and provide increased habitat for migratory birds. This last aspect will be achieved through the special design of the lake system, which will have gently sloped earthen banks to increase areas for foraging. In addition, pedestrian traffic will be restricted throughout the wetlands to designated pathways, with bird watching towers placed in several points along the route. In a further step to enhance the habitat for birds and other fauna, recreational use of the lake will be restricted to rowing and canoeing, (water-skiing, for example, will be

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*Beginning of the works in Aghios Kosmas, nautical centre and marina.*

prohibited) and all uses will be restricted during bird mating season.

Meanwhile, at Aghios Kosmas, one of the most attractive areas on the Saronic coast, located on the shore of the site where the former Athens International Airport was operating until the month of March, work has begun on the development of the region. On this coast, which is near the centre of Athens, the Olympic Sailing Centre will be built as well as the yachting marinas, which will host the competitors' vessels and the land facilities for their dry-docking and maintenance. The sailing events will take place a short distance from the shore, in August 2004.

### ***Attica ring road will soon enter Athenian life***

The first section of the Attica ring road, a 70 kilometre-long inter-connecting network of motorways designed to radically improve the Greek capital's traffic circulation and facilitate improved access to other parts of the country, went into operation for the public in mid-March. It is a high-speed, protected motorway, which starts at Athens new International Airport and joins up the highway which heads out of Athens towards the Peloponnese in southern Greece. The first fully operational section, covering an 18-kilometre stretch, connects the airport with the Athens suburb of Pallini. Also completed and in use is a two-kilometre strip between the

suburbs of Pallini and Gerakas, and a five-kilometre section in the Metamorphosis area in northern Athens. The rest of the road network, from Pallini to Eleusis (Elefsina) and the western circular road around Mount Hymettus (from the suburb of Kaisariani to Glyka Nera), will be ready by the end of 2003. At that point, the entire route from Eleusis to the airport will only take 30 minutes. To connect the Attica Road with the areas through which it passes, or with other important road junctions, 32 flyovers are being constructed, 108 overpasses and 57 underpasses, 9 footbridges and 35 bridges for the trains of the Greek Railway Organization. In the middle of the Attica

Road and all along its length, a strip is being constructed for the suburban railway. The Attica Road, which is a protected motorway, has three traffic lanes in each direction.

The total budget for the whole project amounts to 435 billion drachmas, funds which will come from the Greek State, the European Investment Bank and from a consortium of Greek construction companies. The cost of the project rose significantly due to additional works undertaken for the protection of the environment, such as underground sections, tunnels, trenches, sound-proofing constructions, etc. ATHOC.



*Model of the rowing and canoeing venue in Schinias.*