



Athens, Monday, May 15th 2023

**“Becoming accessible EVERYWHERE TOGETHER”, an event held
by Growthfund and Transport for Athens
at Monastiraki station**

The metro and electric railway station in Monastiraki has become fully accessible for people with disabilities (PWD), on the initiative of [Growthfund](#) and the Transport for Athens group. With a view to facilitating everyday life for our fellow citizens, a pilot accessibility project and interventions were implemented to ensure better service of impaired people at this station.

[Growthfund](#) has as a strategic collaboration on accessibility with the Non-Profit Civil Partnership “Me Alla Matia”, and is kindly supported by the Association of Social Responsibility for Children and Youth (S.K.E.P.) and the Hellenic Asperger's Syndrome Association (El.s.s.A). In cooperation with the above civil society organizations, a survey was conducted on a targeted audience consisting of people with disabilities (PWD) in order to identify the obstacles they encounter in transport.

Using the findings of the survey, an important pilot project was implemented at Monastiraki station in the context of practical inclusion in the center of Athens. At the same time, the Athens Urban Rail Transport, a member of the Athens Transport Group, will carry out major interventions in yet another station to make it fully accessible in 2023.

At the event, Mr. Gregory D. Dimitriadis, CEO of Growthfund, pointed out that: “The interventions made in the station are a minimum indication of respect for people with disabilities and a practical recognition of their right to move freely, like everyone else. Inclusive society embraces all people; the Group will pursue its actions to improve the daily life of people with disabilities,” Dimitriadis added.

Mr. George Spiliopoulos, CEO of OASA S.A., stressed that: “True to its values and conscious of the role it has to play in Greek society, OASA designs and implements actions that ensure the fundamental

right of access of people with disabilities to urban transport. Continuously improving accessibility to public transport for all passengers, without exception, is a top priority for all of us.”

Mr. Thanasis Kottaras, CEO of Athens Urban Rail Transport, stated: “As fixed-track transport providers, we stand by all our passengers, striving every day to forge a stronger relationship with them. It is imperative to design and implement actions and interventions aimed at upgrading our infrastructure, hence improving the passenger experience of persons with disabilities. This effort will be continuous and consistent, contributing to the overall endeavor of facilitating the daily life of people with disabilities.”

Mr. Vaggelis Avgoulas, Lawyer, member of the Board of Directors of the Athens Bar Association, President of the Non-Profit Civil Partnership “Me Alla Matia” and Growthfund’s strategic partner for Accessibility, commented that: “For months now, Growthfund and Athens Transport have trusted us in every step they have taken as a social partnership for disabled people and professionals. This translates into action the motto of the international disability movement “Nothing for Us, Without Us”. Disabled and non-disabled people jointly shape, create and decide.”

Mr. Panagiotis Pitsiniagas, Motivational Speaker, Accessibility and Inclusion Consultant at the Non-Profit Civil Partnership “Me Alla Matia”, addressing the audience, noted: “Proper public transport improves the quality of life for all of us, whether we use it or not. Steps have been taken in an effort to improve mass public transport, and more steps will follow so that everyone can use it, regardless of how they move, how they sense the environment or how old they are.”

The event was presented by the journalist Apostolos Mangiriadis.

Based on the diagnosis of the needs through a survey conducted on people with disabilities using public transport in Athens as well as on-site inspections in stations, Growthfund undertook the following actions for People with Disabilities in the framework of the initiative “Becoming accessible EVERYWHERE TOGETHER”:

- 1. Experiential training programs & Information:** a) Experiential training of bus drivers and metro station managers who interact with citizens in Transport for Athens Group; b) Training on accessible communication tools for the Marketing and Communication staff of Growthfund’s 17 subsidiaries. Marking (and confirming) the location of all metro lifts on Google Maps to facilitate access of people with disabilities to stations.
- 2. Action Plan:** 20 mild interventions/improvements of infrastructure for better transport operation and a progress reporting mechanism for passengers with disabilities on Google docs.
- 3. Infrastructure:** 2 pilot stations (at Kallithea and Monastiraki) were selected and were thoroughly evaluated by users with motor and visual disabilities regarding their accessibility, and detailed improvement suggestions were compiled from user focus groups. Installation of 409 ramps at bus stops to facilitate people with disabilities, a project funded through the Operational Program “TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”, PA 2014-2020, Cohesion Fund.
- 4. Results Measurement and Governance:** Establishment of an Accessibility Index as a principal KPI for the effectiveness of these actions. The measure is the increase in the use of public transport by people with disabilities, which allows to assess the impact of these actions on the target audiences.
- 5. Help Desk operation** by users with disabilities to support Growthfund's subsidiaries with regard to accessibility of communication materials.

The innovative concept of the program: the pilot project is based on the core participation of users with disabilities, the evaluation and design of the products and services of Growthfund's subsidiaries. To ensure project effectiveness, a task force has been set up comprising staff of Growthfund and the Transport for Athens Group (OASA-OSY-STASY) as well as passengers with disabilities.

A few words about Growthfund

*Growthfund is a holding company established in 2016 with the Greek State as its sole shareholder, represented by the Minister of Finance. Its objective, as the Public Investment Fund of Greece, is to play an active role in modernizing state-owned enterprises, to maximize the value of public property, to provide improved services to citizens and consumers, and to contribute to the national economy. Growthfund's portfolio consists of its subsidiaries and participations in public enterprises that operate in key sectors of the Greek economy, such as **Real Estate:** Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (HRADF), Public Properties Company (ETAD), GAIAOSE, and TIF HELEXPO, **Utility Services:** PPC, EYDAP, and EYATH, **Transport and Infrastructure:** Athens International Airport, OASA, AEDIK, and 23 Regional Airports, **Food Supply:** CMT, CMFO, and Hellenic Saltworks), **Technology:** 5G Ventures (PHAISTOS), and **Postal Services:** Hellenic Post. The portfolio managed by Growthfund currently has a value of €7 billion.*

Growthfund, in collaboration with the Transport for Athens Group (OASA-OSY-STASY) and the Non-Profit Civil Partnership "Me Alla Matia" as well as the kind support of the Association of Social Responsibility for Children and Youth (S.K.E.P.) and the Hellenic Asperger's Syndrome Association (El.s.s.A.), is designing and implementing an initiative with the vision of holistic inclusion and accessibility in Athens Transport and the ultimate goal of creating good practices in order to roll out the initiative to the rest of Growthfund's subsidiaries.

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