

Greece: EUR 180m EIB backing for new Heraklion airport



- **Project replaces second busiest airport in Greece and double passenger capacity for Crete**
- **Overcoming restricted passenger numbers key for tourism growth on largest Greek island**
- **New airport to overcome congestion and delays, improve service levels and security**
- **Thousands of jobs to be created during construction and more once operational**

The European Investment Bank has agreed to provide a EUR 180 million loan to support construction of the New Heraklion International Airport on the Greek island of Crete. The new airport will replace the current airport serving Heraklion. During the summer tourism season the existing airport is heavily congested and cannot handle additional passengers, at the required Optimum level of service with the most recent security standards.

This European Investment Bank loan in support for Greek aviation investment was formally agreed by Andrew McDowell, European Investment Bank Vice President, Christos Staikouras, Minister of Finance and Governor of the European Investment Bank, and Kostas Karamanlis, Minister of Infrastructure and Transport, during a visit to Athens earlier today. The loan was signed in the presence of Adonis Georgiadis, Minister of Development & Investments, and Yannis Tsakiris, Deputy Minister of Development and Investments.

“Today marks a key milestone in the history of aviation in Greece that will unlock the full tourism potential of the beautiful island of Crete. I welcome the support of the European Investment Bank for the new Heraklion Airport that will create thousands of jobs during construction and when operational and ensure a warm welcome for millions of visitors to Greece in the years to come.” said Christos Staikouras, Minister of Finance of the Hellenic Republic and Governor of the European Investment Bank,

The Minister of Infrastructure and Transport, Kostas Karamanlis, said: "Today we are truly pleased that a major development project is underway; the new airport of Heraklion in the area of Kasteli. A very important project for the island of Crete, but also for our tourism as a whole. The European Investment Bank is our steady ally, not only today, but also in other key areas : flood prevention projects throughout the country and a road rehabilitation and safety project. Our cooperation is excellent and EIB's contribution is invaluable."

"The European Investment Bank recognises the importance of new investment to increase passenger capacity, improve security and support growth of the tourism sector in Greece. The EUR 180 million EIB loan will enable construction of the new Heraklion airport to finally start after many years of planning and delay. The EIB recognises the commitment to re-develop the existing Heraklion Airport area to unlock economic, environmental and social benefits. This redevelopment is an integral part of our loan conditions." said Andrew McDowell, European Investment Bank Vice President responsible for lending operations in Greece.

The new airport will be built at Kasteli, 30km from Heraklion. The existing airport will be closed once the new airport is operational.

The 28 year EIB loan to the Hellenic Republic will finance the state contribution to the EUR 517 million project.

Transforming passenger capacity

The existing Heraklion airport is the second busiest in Greece and the most important of three civil airports on Crete. Passenger numbers at the current airport have grown since 2012 and now exceed 8.1 million passengers a year. This is well above the number expected when the airport was built and can be adequately handled today.

Once complete the new airport will increase operational capacity to ensure passenger comfort and improve services.

Improving links to the rest of Crete

Construction of the new Heraklion airport is expected to take five years. The project will include a new 18km motorway and 6km access road.

Building on support for leading airports around the world

In recent years the European Investment Bank has financed long-term airport investment in Frankfurt, Amsterdam, London, Madrid, Budapest, Helsinki, Zagreb and Beijing amongst other major airports. The EIB also backed construction of the new Athens airport and the upgrade of 14 regional airports across Greece