

# Short Introduction to the Region of Crete

*Region of Crete*

*1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> of July, Heraklion*

## Geographical – Morphological Characteristics (1/2)



The Region of Crete, is constituted by the prefectures of Heraklion, Lassithi, Rethimno and Chania. Heraklion is the Capital (and of the homonym prefecture).

It borders North by Cretan Sea and Southerly by the Lybian sea.

Crete has an area of 8.335 km<sup>2</sup> and covers the 6,3% of the total extent of country.

A number of small islands also belong in the Region of Crete; most of them are uninhabited.

## Geographical – Morphological Characteristics (2/2)

The morphology of Crete is characterized by three main areas: the area with altitude 400 m. and more (high or mountainous), area from 200-400 m. (medium) and the low area that concerns the regions that are extended by the surface of sea until the 200 m. altitude.

The island is quite mountainous. The two first areas occupy almost the 3/5 of the island and constitute a continuous mountain range from western to Eastern, interrupted from small valleys and gorges. This mountain range has six tops that exceed the 2.000 m.



# Demographic and Financial Characteristics (1/4)

## Demographic Characteristics (1/2)

- The population of the Region of Crete is 601.159 residents, representing the 5,5% of the total population of the country.
- The tendency of the population increase for the Region is much higher than that of the country (11,3% in the period 1991-2001).
- The demographic density of Crete region is lower in relation to the national (67,5 against 79,7 residents per square kilometre).

## Demographic and Financial Characteristics (2/4)

### Demographic Characteristics (2/2)

- The urban population represents the ~51% of the total population with increase tendency. The rural population represents the 33% of total with reduction tendency, while the semi-urban population remains constant (16% of the total).
- The lowest unemployment rates (5.2%)\* at national level.

\* 2003

# Demographical and Financial Characteristics (3/4)

## Financial Characteristics (1/2)

- The Region produces the 5,7% of total Gross National Product of country.
- The 9% of Gross Added Value refers to the primary sector, the 13% to the secondary and the remaining 78% to the tertiary sector.



# Demographic and Financial Characteristics (4/4)

## Financial Characteristics (2/2)

### ➤ Production Sectors

- » the primary sector demonstrates a strong expertise in the production of olive, citrus, tomatoes, grapes, potatoes and wheat. There are also organic products like olives and olive oil, vineyards and various fruits.
- » the secondary sector is quite weak and refers mainly to industry food and beverages, textiles, minerals (especially gypsum), and the production of rubber and plastics.
- » the tertiary sector is dominant for the economy of Crete with special focus and expertise in tourism.

# Transport Networks

## Road Network (1/2)

- The regional road network has limitations and cannot serve the increased needs of the community.
- The main axis –North Road Axis of Crete (VOAK) serves the North seaside zone of the island that produces the 79% of the Gross Income from touristic activities and the 74% of the total regional population.
- From the 415km of the national road network, the 314 km represent VOAK. The 14% of it has 4 lanes and is included in the TransEuropean Networks, 22 % is new sections with 2 lanes while the remaining 64% is old part with 2 lanes.



# Transport Networks

## Road Network (2/2)

- The South Road Axis of Crete –NOAK is less developed and connects areas with high agricultural activities via transversal vertical sections with VOAK.
- The road network requires significant improvements in order to provide better access to the exit gates to the business community, facilitate access to touristic zones and enhance the regional and local cohesion.

# Transport Networks

## Road Network – Map



# Transport Networks

## Ports –Map with the main Cretan ports



# Transport Networks

## Ports (1/3)

- The port of Heraklion is the main and most modern gateway for the transport of passengers and commodities in the island of Crete. The commercial port of Heraklion is ranked third in freight transport in Greece, below the ports of Piraeus and Thessaloniki. It has two daily ferry ships connections with the Port of Piraeus.
- The Port of Souda is the second biggest port in the Region of Crete. It has daily connections with ferry ships with the Port of Piraeus. The ferry connections serve the local commercial needs of the Prefecture of Chania for transport of products (mainly export of olive oil and oranges). Its commercial part serves mainly the export of cement. The Port of Souda supports the commercial activities of the Prefecture of Rethimnon (especially on high peak tourist season).

# Transport Networks

## Ports (2/3)

- The Port of Rethimnon is a passenger port. It has regular connections with the Port of Piraeus, while the local needs of the area in terms of freight transport are served by the Port of Chania and the Port of Heraklion.
- The Port of Sitia provides daily connections with the Port of Piraeus and with the main Aegean islands. The commercial activities are limited in high peak seasons when some agriculture products (mainly tomatoes) are served by ferry ships.



# Transport Networks

## Ports (3/3)

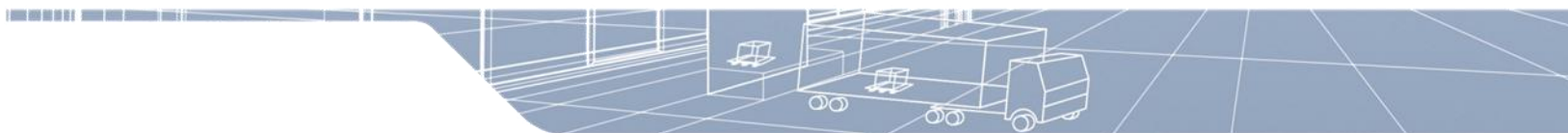
- In the recent years significant infrastructural investments have been made for the improvement of international passenger and freight transport services.
- Based on the Regional Programme priorities, it is necessary to define the business character of the Port of Heraklion (passenger, freight, touristic port), complete the infrastructure activities (efficient connections with the road network, creation of storage facilities etc.) in order to become competitive in the S-E Mediterranean area and support the export activities of the Region.



# Transport Networks

## Airports

- While significant investments have been made to the airports of Chania and Sitia and building works to the airport of Heraklion, further upgrading of their infrastructure is required.
- The Regional Spatial Planning foresees areas for establishment of a new airport.



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Made possible by the INTERREG IVC programme