

## HOCHTIEF: Athens Airport opens

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The new Athens International Airport "Eleftherios Venizelos" will be opened today with an official ceremony. In the presence of President Kostis Stefanopoulos and 2,000 representatives of the world of business and politics, the Greek Prime Minister Konstantin Simitis will symbolically give the starting signal for this new hub of civil aviation in South-East Europe to go into operation. During the night of March 28/29, airlines and service-providers will relocate from the old airport to the new one. The first scheduled passenger aircraft will take off from Eleftherios Venizelos at six a.m. on March 29.

HOCHTIEF not only planned, financed and built the new airport, which represents an investment volume of EUR 2.1 billion – in conjunction with the Greek state, the company will now also operate it for the next 25 years. The airport operating company, Athens International Airport S.A. (AIA), is 55 percent owned by the Greek state and 45 percent by the consortium led by HOCHTIEF AirPort. AIA currently employs some 650 people.

Worldwide, Athens International Airport is the first and so far only example of successful public-private partnership in the airport sector in which construction and operation come from one single source. "Athens has brought us a big step closer to achieving our goal of becoming one of the world's leading airport managers", says Dr. Hans-Peter Keitel, HOCHTIEF's CEO.

The opening has been preceded by around five months of trial operations. During this period, some 1,500 aircraft movements have been simulated, with the help of around 5,000 test passengers and involving 25,000 items of baggage. The trials covered passenger and baggage-handling facilities, air traffic control, the cargo and postal services, catering and aircraft taxiing.

In all, the airport has an area of about 1,244 hectares, with one main and one satellite terminal. This gives it an initial capacity of 16 million passengers a year, which can be increased to 50 million by the addition of further satellite buildings and one more main terminal.

Security standards at the new airport are extremely high: in contrast to many other international airports, in Athens, all flight baggage will be X-rayed with the help of sophisticated technology and checked by computer tomography. "From the tower equipment to the security precautions and baggage handling, the new Athens Airport is an international

leader", confirms Dr. Reinhard Kalenda, Chairman of the Management Board of HOCHTIEF AirPort, emphasizing the high standard.

25 stores and five duty-free areas will be available to passengers for shopping. The non-aviation sector, which includes restaurants, cafés and many other services in addition to retail outlets, is expected to account for as much as 40 percent of the airport's revenues.

You will find further information on AIA's homepage at [www.aia.gr](http://www.aia.gr).

(Translation)

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