

Mr Mayor,

Dear friends, residents and everyday visitors of the commercial center of the City of Athens,

Thank you very much for being here today.

We are gathered here today on the occasion of the expansion of the pilot program for upgrading the area of the Commercial Triangle of Athens (CT). The Municipality's interventions are already underway, with a priority on the pedestrianization of selected roads and the highlighting of specific points in the Triangle area.

The CT revitalization program is part of the broader partnership between the SNF and the Municipality of Athens, through a grant approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors in July 2015, totaling 10 million euros, in support of actions to revitalize our urban centers and combat the effects of the crisis, in whatever form they may appear. As part of the same initiative, we support many other Municipality actions, such as Open Schools, the Athens Culture Net, and social and educational actions.

Our collaboration with the Municipality of Athens is part of the SNF's emergency grant program, totaling 300 million euros, aimed at helping the Greek society, its people, its cities and communities, so that they may come out of the crisis and the "shocks" of our times, as strong as possible.

In our decision to support the Program for Upgrading the CT, we recognized the need for effective intervention in an overcrowded but very lively area of Athens, with respect to its particular commercial character.

We stand by this initiative by the Municipality of Athens and we support every effort that will add value to the area's daily operation and its aesthetic upgrading, aiming at a clean, friendly and functional city. The SNF grant covers activities for the immediate cleaning of buildings and the creation of pedestrian rest stops. However, the interventions that are mainly tested and implemented are those which will provide the appropriate framework for the larger-scale infrastructure project launched by the Municipality of Athens. Thus, these precursor conditions are created through the acquisition of extra garbage disposal and cleaning equipment, and through the review of chronic parking and store supply issues.

We are fully aware that there are difficulties that need to be ironed out, and preconceptions that need to change. We strongly believe, however, that this new start that is already underway with the support of the SNF, is a great opportunity to upgrade the area and—why not—to redesign it in order to ensure its smooth day-to-day operation.

We realize that this is a huge undertaking, but it is our desire to fully support and embrace it. After all, this will guarantee that this effort will not only be successfully completed, but will also be implemented consistently and continuously in the future.

On behalf of the SNF, thank you all very much,