



**30 innovation partners from 15 countries launch  
THE NEXT SOCIETY  
A Do Tank to unleash the creative potential in the Mediterranean**

OPENING EVENT IN ATHENS @ ELECTRA PALACE HOTEL on 16 MAY 2017

May 10, 2017 – Marseille / Athens

**On the occasion of THE NEXT SOCIETY OPENING EVENT hosted by ANIMA and Enterprise Greece, 30 innovation partners announce the launch of THE NEXT SOCIETY, a community of change makers engaged in innovation and economic development, with the support of the European Commission, and present their 4-YEAR ACTION PLAN to reinforce the innovation ecosystems in the Mediterranean.**

**WE ARE THE NEXT SOCIETY**

THE NEXT SOCIETY is a community of change makers **open to any stakeholders engaged in innovation and economic development**. It gathers entrepreneurs, investors, corporates, NGOs, public and private innovation, research and economic development hubs **from Europe and the Mediterranean countries**.

**WE INTEND TO**

THE NEXT SOCIETY will implement concrete activities to **remove the barriers to innovation and unleashing the creative potential** of innovators in the Mediterranean, **reinforce innovation ecosystems** and fostering value creation as well as **push forward concrete solutions from start-ups and clusters** contributing to a shared value among the Mediterranean countries.

**WE ACTIVATE CHANGE AT EVERY LEVEL**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> May in Athens, THE NEXT SOCIETY presents a comprehensive action plan supported by the European Commission, which brings support at each level of the innovation ecosystem.

- **Policy frameworks:** THE NEXT SOCIETY organises public-private dialogue and benchmarks the performance of Mediterranean innovation ecosystems in order to define and implement country strategic roadmaps to improve innovation support strategies.
- **Start-up development:** THE NEXT SOCIETY offers tailor made support to Mediterranean start-ups ready for international development composed of mentoring, training, introduction to investors and immersion into foreign markets.
- **Cluster promotion and internationalisation:** THE NEXT SOCIETY develops peer learning services for business and industrial clusters as well as foreign partnerships and guide them towards a Cluster Excellence management approach.
- **Technology transfer offices (TTO):** THE NEXT SOCIETY trains TTO managers like entrepreneurs and help them improve their services, market their portfolio of innovation and meet potential clients.





### **ABOUT THE OPENING EVENT @ ELECTRA PALACE HOTEL**

The opening event will take place in Athens on May 16th, 2017. It will show the various approaches developed across the Mediterranean to address our common challenges, present new solutions for the future developed by Greek innovators, and offer networking, cross learning and collaboration opportunities for developing innovative societies.

**The event co-hosted by ANIMA Investment Network and Enterprise Greece, and will gather around 150 selected participants from the Greek and the EU-Mediterranean ecosystems from 15 countries.**

### **MAIN SPEAKERS**

The event opens with **Christos Staikos**, Chairman of Enterprise Greece and **Emmanuel Noutary**, General Delegate of ANIMA Investment Network.

- **Policy perspectives** will be given by **Dimitris Papadimitriou**, Minister of Economy and Development of Greece; **Dimitrios Papadimoulis**, Vice President of the European Parliament, head of SYRIZA party delegation; **Vladimir Rojanski** from the European Commission, **Rena Dourou**, Governor of the Region of Attica, Greece, and **Costas Fotakis**, Alt. Minister for Research and Innovation of Greece.
- **Mediterranean innovation ecosystems perspectives** will be presented by **Rasha Tantawy**, ITIDA, Egypt; **Ramy Boujawdeh**, Berytech, Lebanon and **Mohammed Al Jafari**, Royal Scientific Society, Jordan, **Ilyas Azzioui**, Start-up Maroc.
- **Experiences of networks and collaborations to innovate** presented by **Douja Gharbi**, 1st Vice President, CONECT, Tunisia, **Alain Tubiana**, Board Member, France Cluster, France, **Ibrahim Nairat**, International Relations, HCIE, Palestine and **Vasilios Makios**, General Director, Corallia Cluster, Greece.
- Finally, the experience of **key supporters of the entrepreneurs, the investors and mentors**, will be represented by Candace Johnson, President, EBAN, Belgium, Aristos Doxiadis, Open Fund, Greece and Alicja Turner, Operations Manager Mowgli, United Kingdom

### **WHY ATHENS AND GREECE?**

**Enterprise Greece** - the official state agency for attracting investment to Greece and promoting exports – also Vice President of the ANMA Investment Network will join the community of innovators shaping the future in the Mediterranean and support the opening event of THE NEXT SOCIETY.

**Fostering innovation is actually one of the current objectives of Enterprise Greece, focusing on ICT sector, which is one of the most significant in the Greek economy.** Several innovation and research activities are being pursued in Greek polytechnic institutions and public RTOs (Research and Technology Organisations). There is also a significant growth of technology clusters, incubators and accelerators focusing on new ventures, which have aided this trend and resulted in high-end, value added products and services from many startups.

[Discover the full programme of THE NEXT SOCIETY launch event](#)



## JOIN OR FOLLOW THE NEXT SOCIETY

welcome@thenextsociety.co  
Twitter @TheNext\_Society  
Facebook THE NEXT SOCIETY

### Press and communication

Magali Morel magali.morel@anima.coop |  
Inmaculada Ruiz Inmaculada.ruiz@anima.coop |

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## About THE NEXT SOCIETY

THE NEXT SOCIETY IS an open community of change makers engaged in innovation and economic development. It gathers entrepreneurs, investors, corporates, NGOs, public and private innovation, research and economic development hubs from Europe and the Mediterranean countries.

THE NEXT SOCIETY gathers already a large network of over 300 business & innovation, research and investment organisations, 2,500 international SMEs and entrepreneurs from 30 countries.

THE NEXT SOCIETY is launching a four year action plan (2017-2020), co-funded by the EU up to 90% for a global amount of EUR 7.8 million budget.

[www.thenextsociety.co](http://www.thenextsociety.co) (coming soon)

## About Enterprise Greece

Enterprise Greece is the official state agency, under the supervision of the Ministry of Economy and Development, for attracting investment to Greece and promoting exports aiming to establish Greece as an ideal investment location and promote exports of Greek products globally.

Greece since ancient times has maintained strong and unbroken bonds with the countries of the region. Subsequently, Enterprise Greece strongly believes that through partnering with all relevant Mediterranean stakeholders, the region can upgrade its offer and meets the challenges. The key target being creating a business ecosystem based on synergies and win-win situations for all.

[www.enterprisegreece.gov.gr](http://www.enterprisegreece.gov.gr)

## About ANIMA Investment Network

ANIMA Investment Network is a multi-country cooperation platform for economic development in the Mediterranean. The ANIMA network gathers 80 government agencies and business network, financing and innovation around the region. ANIMA's objective is to contribute to the continued improvement of the Mediterranean business climate, and investment growth in the Mediterranean region. The ANIMA network is operated from Marseille (France) by a 15 people team and is chaired by Khalil Laabidi, General Manager, FIPA Tunisia. The majority of its funding comes from the management of international donor programs.

[www.anima.coop](http://www.anima.coop)