

Athens, 24 December 2020

## **The Minister for Development & Investment, Mr. Adonis Georgiadis, attended the delivery ceremony of the Mobile Medical Unit of Neonatal & Pediatric Intensive Care to the Organization “The Smile of the Child”**

The Minister for Development & Investment, Mr. Adonis Georgiadis, attended the delivery ceremony of a new Mobile Medical Unit (Ambulance) of Neonatal & Pediatric Intensive Care, to the Organization "The Smile of the Child" on Wednesday 23 December 2020. The new Unit will be used for the transfer of new-borns and children in northern Greece, thus strengthening the National Health System and substantially contributing to the fight against Covid-19.

The President of “The Smile of the Child”, Mr. Costas Yannopoulos, briefed the Minister on the work of the Organization and its new initiatives designed to offer relief to families in the midst of the pandemic.

Mr. Georgiadis exchanged wishes with the executives of the Organization and pointed out; "I am overwhelmed with pride for the delivery of the new unit to “The Smile of the Child”. This delivery marks the completion of a project run through the “INTERREG” and "INTERSYC II" programs of the European Structural and Investment Funds of the Ministry for Development & Investment.

I was in strong support of this initiative. The state-of-the-art unit is integrated within the emergency response system of the National Health System and will assist with emergency transfer of new-borns, children, as well as adults. It is equipped with an intensive care unit, a mobile incubator and telemedicine. Even in the midst of Covid-19, timely response is essential to saving a human life and to offering relief to families with healthcare emergencies.

I would like to congratulate both "The Smile of the Child" and its President, Mr. Yannopoulos, on coming up with beneficial projects and implementing them in such a consistent and transparent way. This in turn allows us to get quick approval from European programs and to put them into operation immediately. I would like to express my commitment that we are at the disposal of the Organization to cooperate in many more projects in the future. Our goal is to continue to leverage available European programs to improve the quality of life for Greek citizens. My best wishes for a “Merry Christmas”.

Mr. Costas Yannopoulos stated; "We are very proud today because in partnership with the country's emergency response system, “The Smile of the Child” is acquiring a state-of-the-art ambulance through the “INTERREG” and the "INTERSYC II" programs managed by the Ministry of Development & Investment. We are honoured by the attendance of the Minister himself. The Minister delivers the Unit to us and we will further set it at the disposal of the public under the strict order of EKAV (country's emergency response system). We serve EKAV and support it in an effort to address emergencies in the midst of this pandemic.

Based in Thessaloniki, the new ambulance - along with the other units - will cover northern Greece. This is very important, because with the integrated intensive care unit it enables the transfer of intubated newborns and children from one area to another.

It is a state-of-art technology and in a short time it will also provide telemedicine which already works as a pilot project. The doctor and the rescuers will be in direct communication with the hospital, continually receiving advice. When the baby or child arrives at the hospital, the emergency staff will be informed and know exactly what to do. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Ministry for Development & Investment for this fruitful cooperation, which we intend to continue for years to come.

Our efforts with the prior INTERREG program have been recognized with a first place award. The Judges recognized the benefits for our initiatives, and this is an honor not only for the project, but also for our Organization, the Ministry and our country, Greece. We thank all those who participated in this effort so that today children rightfully get what they need.



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## The new ambulance serves as a model for Greece

The new Mobile Medical Unit (Ambulance) of Neonatal & Pediatric Intensive Care constitutes a model for our country, being equipped with state-of-the-art medical devices to allow the safe transport of children with serious health problems. Every mobile medical unit of the Organization "The Smile of the Child" is integrated in the EKAV system and is staffed by rescuers who get certified by EKAV.

The New Mobile Unit was acquired within the framework of the project "Integrated Territorial Synergies for Children's Health and Protection II (INTERSYC II)" of the European territorial Cooperation Program "Interreg V - A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020", co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and national resources of the participating countries.

INTERSYC II aims to develop ways and tools to protect children at risk and improve the level of Health and Social Care Services for children.

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