

## Chapter 9

# Municipality of Peristeri: Initiatives of an Upcoming Smart City

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### ABSTRACT

*In recent years, both in Greece and worldwide, there is a tendency to create smarter cities in order to improve the daily lives of citizens. The chapter focuses on the city of Peristeri and intends to analyze its transformation from a traditional city to a 21<sup>st</sup> century smart city. As Peristeri is the third largest municipality of Attica, the case of it is of special interest. A recording and an assessment of the transition of Peristeri to a smart city will depict the current situation, future directions, and planning and how the COVID-19 period influenced this transition. The fundamental role of citizens is discussed. The results of the case study analysis indicate that Peristeri aims to be a smart city leader for the western suburbs. Although the findings highlight great potential for further development, the strategy, the methodology, the organization, the emphasis on the citizens and the city seems to be a decisive factor for the municipality of Peristeri to be a pioneer.*

### INTRODUCTION

In a technological age where new data are being formed in the field of local self-government, the development strategies of smart cities require in-depth study in order to explore their effects at the functional, educational and administrative level.

Indeed, in recent years the researches' interest has turned to the study of the development of smart cities (Katsola, 2019; Mavrogianni, 2019; Gene, 2018; Serif, 2018; Spiliotakou, 2017), recognizing their contribution to the development of individual, local and global community.

But what is a smart city and why should it concern modern changing society? The term smart city, as well as the related terms Intelligentcity (Tsarchopoulos, 2013) and Digitalcity are often used to describe, in general, the ways in which information and communication technologies could be improved. The functions of modern cities, increasing their efficiency and competitiveness. This improvement is attempted through proposals and solutions that could prevent and / or improve problems and difficul-

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ties related to urbanization, unemployment, social exclusion, energy consumption, water consumption, greenhouse gases produced etc.

The creation of smart cities is a global phenomenon under study. In particular, case studies of successful examples of creating smart cities are recorded internationally, e.g. smart food cities (DelaCruz, et al., 2020), smart cities with an emphasis on healthcare (Pérez-Roman, et al., 2020), smart cities with an emphasis on transportation - safe roads (Das, 2014), smart cities with an emphasis on the environment (Lombardi, 2011a).

Most of the surveys that have been conducted in Greece, mainly concern large municipalities (eg Trikala, Athens, etc.) where strategies and techniques of smart cities have already started to be piloted, while fewer surveys concern smaller municipalities (e.g. Sparta, Komotini etc.). These researches mainly focus on the design and organization of smart cities (investigation of financial support possibilities, structural dimensions and characteristics of smart cities, etc.), as well as on the study of the positive results that lead to the utilization of these applications.

However, like any innovative approach / proposal, the innovative approach of smart cities provokes reactions and resistance. Indeed, research reflects some concerns about issues that arise in the quest for smart cities. These usually refer to the lack of coordination of institutions (Mpoua, 2017), the distance between desire and action (Cisco, 2016), the violation of privacy and personal data (Mani & Chouk, 2019), health problems (Cohen, 2015) and issues that are generally related to the local community and the citizens of each city.

From what was briefly discussed above, during the development of smart cities, a complex of factors determines the transition of a city to a Smart City. This paper focuses on the city of Peristeri and intends to analyze its transformation. As Peristeri is the third bigger municipality of Attica and considered to be a leading city in western suburbs, the case of it, is of special interest. A recording and an assessment of the transition of Peristeri to a Smart City, will depict the current situation, but also future directions and planning. The fundamental role of citizens both in the design and in the implementation process of any of ongoing projects will be analyzed.

In particular, the main axes of transformation of Peristeri into a smart city focuses on: a) smart economy, through the support of entrepreneurship, the development of facilities and infrastructure, b) smart people, their participation in the commons and the level of concern of lifelong e-learning, c) smart governance, through the emphasis on transparency of procedures, the development of public and social services of the municipality (even in covid19 period), d) smart ICT, through the provision and planning of new technology support and transportation, e) smart environment, through environmental awareness, pollution, sustainable management natural resources, etc., and (f) smart living, through the planning, development and maintenance of cultural, educational, medical, etc. infrastructure.

## **SMART CITIES INITIATIVES IN GREECE**

In the Greek literature, most researches cover the design and organization of smart cities, focusing on case studies of smart cities [e.g. Lamia (Oikonomou, 2018), Heraklion, Crete (Stylianakis, 2019), Karditsa (Thoma, 2018), Thira Island (Koiliakoudi, 2019)], or the results from the development of specific applications [e.g. Fixmycity in the municipality of Glyfada, (Nikou, 2018), autonomous vehicle (Vio-poulou, 2019)], emphasizing their individual positive and negative elements.

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