

Response to fires: dealing with a national disaster in the context of sustainable growth

In the summer of 2007 Greece experienced some of the worst fires in the country's modern history. Thousands of hectares of rural and semi-rural land were burned including some of the most beautiful forests and sites such as development in Ancient Olympia, on Mount Parnes and on Mount Taygetos. Regardless of the direct cause of the fires, global warming is considered as a contributor to the extent, severity and duration of forest fires, as in other cases both in Mediterranean countries and other regions.

Response of the global community to the plight of thousands of fire stricken people was immediate and generous.

TITAN Group

Immediate support with heavy vehicles and water-tankers was offered for fire-fighting in most of the cases and particularly in the locations where TITAN has operations.

A three-fold package of assistance was offered by TITAN to reach out to people, society and the environment. One million euros were donated to the National Disaster Relief Fund to assist victims. Building materials worth one million euros were made available to prefectural and municipal authorities and other competent agencies for flood prevention projects and the reconstruction or repair of infrastructure (municipal and other public facilities, for example). Finally, it pledged to grow and donate one million trees to be planted in areas to be designated by the authorities.

TITAN employees

An outpouring of heartfelt compassion was expressed by TITAN employees throughout the Group as well. Beginning in the U.S.A. and later in Greece and elsewhere, employees took the initiative to install donation boxes at offices and plants. Employees made cash contributions which TITAN matched for a total amount of more than € 80,000. An employee Committee was formed that decided to offer this amount to one of the communities in the region of Peloponnese which was hard hit by the fires, in order to build in cooperation with local authorities a 5x5 football playground for the young people living in this area.

TITAN partnerships

Working through partnerships and networks has been one of TITAN's preferred strategies for many years. In the case of last year's fires in Greece, action was taken through the Hellenic Network for CSR as an expression of solidarity with the local business community. In cooperation with the NGO Praxis, two initiatives were developed to reach out to communities damaged by the fires in the Evia and Iliia regions. The first initiative was designed to provide immediate medical care and social support services to hard-hit regions through a network of experts. This project will continue as a community development initiative for the next few years. The second initiative encouraged employees of Network members, including TITAN, to volunteer their services and to help plant trees in damaged areas.

