



Success story

Creating Supportive Environments for Active Living



Initiative type: Environment | Systems approach

Sector: Transport | Urban planning | Environment | Local government | Community

Target group: Whole population, including children, older adults and people with disabilities

Implementation stage: Scaling up

Transferability: Yes

About the initiative

Greece is implementing a broad set of policies and programmes to promote physical activity through sustainable mobility, urban planning, accessible public spaces and nature-based recreation. Led by the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the approach brings together actions that can make physical activity a more natural part of everyday life.

These include:

- Walking and cycling infrastructure
- Active mobility and sustainable transport
- Green networks, parks and urban regeneration
- Accessible public spaces
- Nature-based recreation and hiking trails
- European Mobility Week and public awareness activities

A national network of hiking trails in Natura 2000 areas also creates opportunities for recreation and physical activity beyond urban environments.

Who is it for?

The approach is designed for the whole population, including:

- Children and adolescents
- Adults and older adults
- People with disabilities or reduced mobility
- Urban and rural communities
- Walkers and cyclists
- People using public spaces and nature trails
- Local communities and visitors

What is making it successful?

The initiative's strength lies in bringing together environmental policy, urban planning and sustainable mobility rather than treating physical activity as a standalone policy issue.

Key success factors include:

- Sustained political commitment
- National and EU funding
- Collaboration between national, regional and local authorities
- Investment in walking and cycling infrastructure
- Development of accessible public spaces and green networks
- Nature-based recreation opportunities
- Public awareness initiatives such as European Mobility Week

What could other countries learn?

The practice is considered transferable to other countries, provided that it is adapted to local circumstances.

Successful transfer requires:

Political commitment + sustainable funding + cross-sector collaboration

Countries would also need to consider their own geographical characteristics, transport systems, urban structure, available public spaces and local resources.





Key challenges to promote HEPA

► Greece's wider challenge for physical activity promotion

Greece faces a combination of coordination, capacity and geographical challenges.

Although important initiatives are being implemented across different sectors, stronger coordination is needed to achieve population-level impact. Financial and human-resource constraints can affect implementation, while differences between regions can create inequalities in access to safe and supportive environments for physical activity.

Improved monitoring and evaluation are also needed to understand what works and guide future investment.

► Country-level barriers to advancing HEPA

The following barriers are most persistent to advancing HEPA policy in the country.



BARRIER	IMPACT
Regional/local implementation gaps	EXTREME
Weak intersectoral coordination	MAJOR
Lack of workforce capacity	MAJOR
Other	MAJOR
Insufficient monitoring/data	MODERATE
Limited research translation into policy	MODERATE
Limited funding/resources	MINOR
Political prioritisation	MINOR
Inequities in participation/access	NO IMPACT
Public engagement challenges	NO IMPACT

► What is needed?

Greece identified the need for a stronger whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

Priorities include:

- Institutionalising cross-sectoral coordination
- Ensuring sustainable funding and long-term political commitment
- Strengthening national monitoring and evaluation
- Investing in supportive environments for active living
- Reducing regional inequalities in access to physical activity
- Building implementation capacity
- Strengthening evidence-informed policymaking
- Expanding knowledge exchange and peer learning



► How can the HEPA Europe Network help?

HEPA Europe can support Greece through policy dialogue, peer learning and exchange of good practices among HEPA Focal Points and policymakers.

The Network could also provide technical support on:

- Policy development and implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Cross-sector governance
- Evidence-informed policymaking
- Capacity building
- Collaborative projects between countries

Peer learning could be particularly valuable in helping countries adapt approaches to supportive environments and active mobility to their own national and local contexts.



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