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# Sarakatsanon square at the junction Botsari – Electra’s (ongoing)

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Thessaloniki, Greece



## IN A NUTSHELL

The Municipality of Thessaloniki is committed to designing and implementing pilot projects of urban regeneration based on the local bioclimatic characteristics, in order to adapt to climate change impacts.

BackgroundThe lack of green spaces is acknowledged as one of the major urban deficiencies for the city of Thessaloniki, combined with densification and compact city development. The significant height of the buildings, the increased traffic and the excessive use of air conditioners for heating and cooling, add to the drastic degradation of the urban environment thus creating a variety of environmental and social impacts.

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Picture 1: View from Electra’s str.



Picture 2: Chatzikyrakou str.



This project is located on the junction Botsari – Ilectra's including the pedestrian roads Pirea and Chatzikyriakou. The surrounding area is much densely populated and with a low percentage of green areas per inhabitant. As seen pic. 1, there was already some vegetation since it used to accommodate the municipal plant nursery. Both plants and infrastructure were rather old, partly destroyed and much of the vegetation was suffering from diseases. There was much noise and obstruction from the surrounding restaurants in Chatzikyriakou pedestrian street, as well (pic.2)

### Interventions of the project

The project aims at creating a new green area which will better cover the needs of the local people for recreation and relaxation, and can accommodate various activities during the day by entailing a new playground for kids. Outside the playground there is another edutainment area for kids with a maize and a tic tac toe with a disabled access. The new design better settles the pedestrian routes so that both emergency vehicles can reach accommodation units and the adjacent tavernas can have a specific area for outdoor sitting, allowing ample space for green and pedestrians. The project is designed on a bioclimatic basis, with the use of fountain jets providing a "cool effect" during summer months, the use of natural materials such as the wood deck and materials with blanks and with a water absorbing capacity both in the pedestrian routes and in the playground, resembling the natural soil (pic. 3). Approximately two thirds of the area will be covered with vegetation, with new tree species (*Celtis australis*, *Acer platanoides*, *Hibiscus syriacus*, *Aesculus hippocastanum*), aromatic and hedge bushes (*Prunus laurocerasus*, *Rosmarinus officinalis* "prostatus", *Perovskia triplicifolia*, *Hypericum calycinum*, *Hebe fransciscana*, *Hebe speciosa*, *Hebe pinguifolia*, *Vinca major*). Pictures 4, 5) and grass. The project also contains sitting areas and lighting.



Picture 3

### Benefits

The project serves as a cool spot for recreation and relaxation, welcoming inhabitants from the surrounding areas during the whole day. With its high vegetation coverage and the use of water jets the park reduces the air temperature during summer months, purifies the air, absorbs CO<sub>2</sub> and makes the city area more resilient through its ability to manage storm water and mitigate flooding.

## Financing the project

The project's budget amounts to 860.000 Euro and is financed by the National Strategic Reference Framework 2014-2020 in the context of the Regional Operational Programme of Kentriki Makedonia.