

Fact File 2**THE ATHENS OLYMPIC SPORTS COMPLEX**

The Athens Olympic Sports Complex was named in honour of the 1896 marathon winner Spyros Louis, a resident of Athens, and covers an area of 1,000 acres.

The foundation stone for the construction of the complex was laid by then Greek President Konstantinos Karamanlis on 8 January 1980. The idea was to gradually create all the necessary conditions so that at some point the Olympic Games could again be held in Greece. Two years later, on 6 September 1982, the Athens Olympic Sports Centre was inaugurated.

The sports complex, apart from its ancillary facilities, includes five main venues:

- Olympic Stadium - seating 72,000 fans;
- The Olympic Indoor Hall, where gymnastics, trampolining and basketball competitions took place. The capacity of the hall is 19,250;
- Olympic Aquatic Centre, which includes 3 swimming pools with a capacity of 11,500, 6,200 and 5,300 respectively;
- Olympic Tennis Centre, which includes 16 tennis courts;
- Olympic Velodrome with a capacity of up to 5,250 spectators.

The complex has been the venue for many significant sporting events. For example, it hosted the 1991 Mediterranean Games, the 1997 World Athletics Championships, the 1998 World Basketball Championships, the 2006 Eurovision Song Contest and the 2007 Euroleague Four Cup

Final. However, the XXVIII Summer Olympic Games in Athens in 2004 were the biggest event, the main venue of which was the sports centre. The opening and closing ceremonies of the Games and competitions in about two dozen sports were held here. In 2000-2004, on the eve of the Games, the complex was completely reconstructed according to the project of Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava.

Now the most famous sports complex in Greece, it is a masterpiece of construction and technology and an integral part of the developing neighbourhood of the northern suburbs of Athens.

The complex is located on Kifissias Avenue in the Athenian suburb of Amarousione in North Athens, Attica. It can be reached either by public transport or by private car, however, you should be aware that parking is for a fee.