GREECE
Marches forward
Greece’s widely praised management of COVID-19 makes the Mediterranean country one of the safest and most rewarding places in the world for tourists and investors in 2020
This month, construction began on Athens’ €8-billion Hellinikon Project, Europe’s largest urban redevelopment scheme that “symbolizes the new Greece,” according to Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

Mitsotakis’ new Greece is a country of optimism. Prior to coronavirus’ emergence, his government’s reforms had reignited the economy after a decade of financial crisis. Confidence was high, with foreign direct investment (FDI) and exports seeing double-digit growth rates. That confidence has risen with Greece’s impressive management of coronavirus. The government rapidly introduced decisive measures to limit its spread, resulting in one of the lowest number of COVID-19 cases in the European Union. It also quickly announced a €24-billion stimulus package for its economy, which is expected to bounce back with 5 percent growth in 2021.

By 1 July, Greece could safely welcome back tourists. Tourism is a vital sector that supplies nearly 21 percent of the economy and one of the few that expanded during the financial crisis, as visitors enjoyed diverse, year-round experiences. “Greece has so much to offer beyond its sun and beaches. It has wonderful mountains, an incredible mainland and rich cultural heritage, for example,” Mitsotakis enthuses. “Greece is also one of the safest places to travel to,” adds George Hatzimarkos, governor of the South Aegean Region. Minister of Tourism Haris Theocharis agrees: “Greece has gained control of the virus and introduced many initiatives to uphold health standards to ensure that we don’t put our population or visitors in harm’s way.”

“Our guests’ health and safety is top priority at Mitsis Hotels,” confirms Stavros Mitsis, managing director of the country’s largest family hotel chain with 17 hotels and 11 spa and thalassotherapy centers. “The crisis caught Mitsis Hotels on the rise. We have worked intensively over the last three years in implementing large investment projects that showcase our valuable tourist assets, modern products, quality services and unique experiences. We are determined to carry on investing in new infrastructure, sustainability, advanced technologies and improved services to constantly add value for our guests.”

Mitsis Hotels and Hellinikon’s Lamda aren’t the only ones investing right now, and Minister of Development and Investments Adonis Georgiadis predicts more investors will join them soon: “Just as we made the positive surprise in the health sector, we will do so with the economy.” Georgios Filiopoulos, CEO of Enterprise Greece, the one-stop-shop for investors and exporters that is helping to make Greece a more investment-friendly destination, explains why: “Greece’s underlying investment story remains intact and there is strong international interest in our privatizations and planned infrastructure projects. Sectors ranging from exports to property, energy, tourism and logistics remain attractive, and asset prices in Greece are still undervalued. Moreover, some of Greece’s unique assets, like a sophisticated life sciences sector, highly educated
workforce, well-developed tech sector, and health and wellness ecosystem, are significant advantages at the world emerges from this pandemic."

Panos Papangiorgiou, managing partner in Greece for EY—the worldwide leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services—provides more reasons: "We’ve seen reforms during the crisis, around digitizing services, which have cut bureaucracy. Greece is much more business friendly. In collaboration with NCSR Demokritos, EY is creating a Center for Excellence in Artificial Intelligence in Greece to promote further digital transformation and leverage talent in new technologies. It is also supporting companies through the crisis. "Resilience is key today, not only because of coronavirus. Companies and countries need to think about the ‘now’, the ‘next’ and the ‘beyond’.

Greece has so much to offer beyond its sun and beaches. It has wonderful mountains, an incredible mainland and rich cultural heritage.

The summer you deserve is here

With its Dodecanese and Cyclades islands spanning in the dazzling Aegean Sea, traditional blue- and white-painted seaside towns, glorious year-round climate, fabulous beaches and famously warm hospitality, the South Aegean Islands Region has long been known as one of the most welcoming and beautiful regions in Europe.

This year, it is also one of the safest places in the world to enjoy a stress-free vacation. Having taken swift measures to limit the impact of coronavirus on its shores, "The South Aegean Islands have emerged from this crisis as a White Region on the global COVID-19 map, with the lowest numbers of cases at the national and European level. We have recorded only 10 positive incidents and zero fatalities," says the region’s Governor George Hatzimarkos. During Greece’s two-month lockdown, the regional administration’s number one priority was to protect human lives. That continues to be the case now that the islands are opening up to international visitors once again, with all employees in the tourist sector having received extensive training in new health and safety protocols in order to keep both themselves and their guests safe.

The South Aegean has so much to offer, from locally grown and freshly caught ingredients. So unique, diverse and infinite are the food and wines of the South Aegean Islands that it was named an EU Region of Gastronomy in 2019. According to Hatzimarkos: "This inspiring are the food and wines of the South Aegean Islands that it was named an EU Region of Gastronomy in 2019. According to Hatzimarkos: "This

"Resilience is key today, not only because of coronavirus. Companies and countries need to think about the ‘now’, the ‘next’ and the ‘beyond’.

Greece is the best place to enjoy your freedom, connect with the sea and nature, and be with people you love.

George Hatzimarkos, Governor, South Aegean Region

Kyrillacos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister

The beautiful South Aegean is one of the safest places to travel to in 2020

With its Dodecanese and Cyclades islands spanning in the dazzling Aegean Sea, traditional blue- and white-painted seaside towns, glorious year-round climate, fabulous beaches and famously warm hospitality, the South Aegean Islands Region has long been known as one of the most welcoming and beautiful regions in Europe.

This year, it is also one of the safest places in the world to enjoy a stress-free vacation. Having taken swift measures to limit the impact of coronavirus on its shores, "The South Aegean Islands have emerged from this crisis as a White Region on the global COVID-19 map, with the lowest numbers of cases at the national and European level. We have recorded only 10 positive incidents and zero fatalities," says the region’s Governor George Hatzimarkos. During Greece’s two-month lockdown, the regional administration’s number one priority was to protect human lives. That continues to be the case now that the islands are opening up to international visitors once again, with all employees in the tourist sector having received extensive training in new health and safety protocols in order to keep both themselves and their guests safe.

The South Aegean is the perfect place to enjoy your freedom, connect with the sea and nature, and be with people you love.

George Hatzimarkos, Governor, South Aegean Region

This approach is to be expected from a region that has dedicated itself to serving the needs of visitors. "In the South Aegean, we breathe tourism. We produce one third of all Greece’s tourism income and 97 percent of our local gross domestic product is linked to the sector, which has always been our number one priority. We are looking forward to hosting our guests again and I am sure that, this year, our smile will be bigger than ever before," states Hatzimarkos.

Lucky passengers flying into the region’s five international airports will discover the vacation of their dreams on one of 50 inhabited islands, each of which has its own distinct personality. These include its “Star Islands” with plenty of 5-star facilities, like Santorini with its unbeatable views, glamorous Mykonos, the medieval Rhodes and Kos, home to unending beaches. But the region also includes many lesser-known, low-key gems such as Naxos and Patmos, which is a perfect destination for walkers. "Whatever you might be looking for, you can find it in the South Aegean. Historical sites, secluded areas, natural gems, cosmopolitan resorts—the choice is yours," he says. If, understandably, choosing just one option in the region is too difficult, you can take advantage of over 100 posts in the region to hop between islands by boat.

Whichever island you visit, you will enjoy an amazing cuisine that contains a wealth of flavor-packed and authentic recipes, which are expertly prepared from locally grown and freshly caught ingredients. So unique, diverse and inspiring are the food and wines of the South Aegean Islands that it was named European Region of Gastronomy in 2019. According to Hatzimarkos: “This year, more than ever, travelers from around the world deserve to experience a Greek summer and it is here, in the South Aegean. Our islands are here for you to enjoy—as beautiful as always and safer than ever the South Aegean is the perfect place to enjoy your freedom, connect with the sea and nature, and be with people you love.”

Kyrillacos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister

The summer you deserve is here

With its Dodecanese and Cyclades islands spanning in the dazzling Aegean Sea, traditional blue- and white-painted seaside towns, glorious year-round climate, fabulous beaches and famously warm hospitality, the South Aegean Islands Region has long been known as one of the most welcoming and beautiful regions in Europe.

This year, it is also one of the safest places in the world to enjoy a stress-free vacation. Having taken swift measures to limit the impact of coronavirus on its shores, “The South Aegean Islands have emerged from this crisis as a White Region on the global COVID-19 map, with the lowest numbers of cases at the national and European level. We have recorded only 10 positive incidents and zero fatalities,” says the region’s Governor George Hatzimarkos. During Greece’s two-month lockdown, the regional administration’s number one priority was to protect human lives. That continues to be the case now that the islands are opening up to international visitors once again, with all employees in the tourist sector having received extensive training in new health and safety protocols in order to keep both themselves and their guests safe.

The South Aegean is the perfect place to enjoy your freedom, connect with the sea and nature, and be with people you love.

George Hatzimarkos, Governor, South Aegean Region

This approach is to be expected from a region that has dedicated itself to serving the needs of visitors. “In the South Aegean, we breathe tourism. We produce one third of all Greece’s tourism income and 97 percent of our local gross domestic product is linked to the sector, which has always been our number one priority. We are looking forward to hosting our guests again and I am sure that, this year, our smile will be bigger than ever before,” states Hatzimarkos.

Lucky passengers flying into the region’s five international airports will discover the vacation of their dreams on one of 50 inhabited islands, each of which has its own distinct personality. These include its “Star Islands” with plenty of 5-star facilities, like Santorini with its unbeatable views, glamorous Mykonos, the medieval Rhodes and Kos, home to unending beaches. But the region also includes many lesser-known, low-key gems such as Naxos and Patmos, which is a perfect destination for walkers. “Whatever you might be looking for, you can find it in the South Aegean. Historical sites, secluded areas, natural gems, cosmopolitan resorts—the choice is yours,” he says. If, understandably, choosing just one option in the region is too difficult, you can take advantage of over 100 posts in the region to hop between islands by boat.

Whichever island you visit, you will enjoy an amazing cuisine that contains a wealth of flavor-packed and authentic recipes, which are expertly prepared from locally grown and freshly caught ingredients. So unique, diverse and inspiring are the food and wines of the South Aegean Islands that it was named European Region of Gastronomy in 2019. According to Hatzimarkos: “This year, more than ever, travelers from around the world deserve to experience a Greek summer and it is here, in the South Aegean. Our islands are here for you to enjoy—as beautiful as always and safer than ever the South Aegean is the perfect place to enjoy your freedom, connect with the sea and nature, and be with people you love.”

www.aegeanislands.gr

www.country-reports.net
What are some of the measures being introduced to ensure travelers are protected and that will build on Greece's reputation as a safe destination? The economic pillar is an important part of the restart tourism plan. The second pillar is health and ensuring that this reopening process is carried out in a safe and responsible manner. In a way that doesn't put our population, tourist enterprises' employees or our visitors in harm's way. We are introducing a lot of initiatives to uphold health standards and are working to ensure that, when somebody spends time here, we limit the risk of infection. Those rules will be based on hygienic standards—there will be no sort of discrimination, just considerations about health. We will constantly review and possibly revoke those restrictions as time progresses, as long as the health situation continues to improve in the country. Finally, we have a whole operational plan for ensuring that people that come to Greece get the help and support that they need. We need to guarantee that we ten people and must also ensure that, if someone has special requirements, they are attended to in a timely and effective manner.

Why would you advise our international readers to visit Greece this year?
A vacation in Greece is something that caters to the needs of everyone. During this crisis, we have all gone through a very stressful period and I think those who can take some time off to heal from all the stress. I believe that Greece, given the way it has dealt with the crisis, is a great option to consider for your next travels.

The perfect destination to relax and unwind
Harry Theoharis, Minister of Tourism, describes how the sector is being supported to ensure tourists have safe travel experiences

Greek Tourism is more important than ever

A fantastic start to the new decade for Greece quickly became a high-risk situation with the emergence of COVID-19. What were the key elements that enabled Greece to tackle this crisis so effectively? This is a totally different time for the whole world, not just us. There are three elements that were most important to our success. The first was the decisiveness of our prime minister—tough choices were made early. The second was the effectiveness of the government and of the people on the frontline. And the third, perhaps the most important, is the seriousness with which the Greek people took this task—the belief that we have to do this collectively and the trust that they placed in the experts. Altogether, united as one, we managed to weather this storm in a remarkable way. It is a good lesson to learn and hopefully something that will help us to face future challenges in a more coordinated way. Our country is a mix of beauty and culture that can offer all kinds of experiences to all kind of tourists. Greece is the 13th most popular tourist destination in the world.

The perfect place to experience the warmth of Greece this year
George Hatzimarkos, Governor, South Aegean Region

Greece and the South Aegean Region in particular have received global praise for their handling of the coronavirus crisis. What were the key elements that led to the amazing results you achieved?
The government and regions implemented very strict measures early and the measures enjoyed the full cooperation of citizens. The South Aegean, in particular, emerged as a White Region on the global COVID-19 map, with the lowest numbers of cases—we have recorded only 10 positive incidents and zero deaths—at the national and European level. Thus proving it to be one of the most secure places on earth. The South Aegean made decisions imposed by our number one priority: the protection of the human life. We reinforced our health system and initiated a large health and safety training program for business owners and employers. In the South Aegean we breathe tourism. 97 percent of our local gross domestic product is linked to tourism, a sector that has always been our number one priority, which is reflected in our action plans, policies and funding.

How do you think COVID-19 will affect tourism to your region in future?
2019 was a wonderful year. In our region, we produce one third of all Greece's tourism income. We have the “Star Islands” like Santorini, Mykonos, Rhodes and Kos, and so many other precious gems like Naxos and Paros among others. We have five international airports. In other words, the South Aegean and tourism are bound together. We do, however, understand that after this crisis, we will all be living on a new planet. We understand that tremendous amounts of habits have changed. We will also change but one thing is for sure: openness is in our DNA. Openness with protection and measures has become part of our system. Our dream is not to bring back the numbers we once had but to be back on the field gaining as much share of the tourism market as possible, while everyone remains healthy and safe.

What message would you share with travelers from around the world pondering a visit to the South Aegean this summer?
Thanks to our prompt and effective policies, we are one of the safest places to travel to as soon as the borders open. The message I would like to share is that the Greek summer, which we all desire more than ever this year to take off the pressure, is here in South Aegean. Whatever you might be looking for, you can find it on our 50 islands. Traveling now is like making an escape and I cannot imagine a better escape than visiting the Aegean Sea. I would say to people around the world that the islands are here for you to enjoy. As beautiful as always and safer than ever, the South Aegean is the perfect place to feel the Greek summer, to enjoy your freedom, to connect with the sea and nature, and to be with people you love. Historical sites, great food, secluded areas, natural gems, cosmopolitan resorts, the choice is yours. The professionals in our tourism sector are very well trained and will be more than happy to host our guests again. And I am sure that, this year, our smile will be bigger than ever before.

On top of the beauty of your region and the warmth of its people, the South Aegean has a gastronomy that has attracted millions of visitors. Your rich and diverse cuisine was recognized last year as the European Region of Gastronomy 2019. What makes it one of the best and healthiest in the world?
Before I got involved in politics I was president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry around the islands and, with my colleagues, I designed the Aegean cuisine platform. We were very happy that we won in 2019 for our cuisine and because we worked very professionally. If you respect history and tradition, you will find the recipes. Gastronomy is now contributing to our off-season tourism. Our visitors surveys show that no matter who they are or where they come from, no matter their age, no matter if they are well-educated or not, and no matter the income they have, food is number one or number two in their experiences. We started a large campaign around the islands to train the professionals in the food industry to offer Greek food over everything. Everybody is looking for the local experience. We want to feel like people from the country we are visiting.
What is your outlook for Greece, considering the strides it has made in its recovery prior to the emergence of COVID-19 and the surge in business sentiment recently?

The economy was gradually returning to normality after 10 years of economic crisis. Greece’s growth was expected to hit 2.5 percent in 2020, with the unemployment rate dropping to 16.5 percent. Greek state bonds have recorded the best performance in the eurozone and we have seen bank deposits increase to €135 billion from €120 billion in 2015. We need to define a “new normality” for a productive, competitive and sustainable economy. We must be as open as other economies, maintain political stability and implement reforms and privatizations, which accelerating investment in infrastructure projects. In conclusion, following the successful management of the coronavirus crisis by Greece, we maintain an optimistic outlook for the future.

How would you describe Intrakat’s role in building Greece’s intermodal transport network?

Infrastructure investments have a high economic multiplier and are vital for the Greek economy. We are below our European peers, as in Greece there is a systematic gap of 0.7 pps of gross domestic product, that translates to a shortfall of €13 billion over the last decade. We need to accelerate and, to do this, we must face the obstacles to infrastructure investments, such as political consensus, poor planning, bureaucracy and delays. The new government of Kyriakos Mitsotakis has prioritized resolving these problems and encouraging public private partnerships (PPPs). Intrakat, as a leading construction company, is determined to invest more to create new partnerships and play a major role in Greece’s national strategic infrastructure plan. “Intrakat, as a leading construction company, is determined to invest more to create new partnerships and play a major role in Greece’s national strategic infrastructure plan.”

Petros Souretis, CEO, Intrakat

What is the timeline for Intrakat’s large-scale projects and what is the scope of its work? For example, could you describe the projects taking place at 14 of Greece’s regional airports?

In terms of these regional facilities, we are focusing on the refurbishment and upgrading of existing airport infrastructures, as well as the design and construction of extensions. Parallel construction is taking place at all the airports, as they continue to operate as normal during works. Nine airports have already been delivered and earlier than the scheduled contract date. These are Chania, Kavala, Zakynthos, Alexia, Kefalonia, Mytilene, Rhodes, Samos, Skiathos. During 2020, the remaining five airports will be delivered: Mykonos, Santorini, Crete, Kos and Thessaloniki.

We are also working on a €54.3-million road construction project that runs from Potidaea to Kassandra in the Chalkidiki prefecture in northern Greece. We are in charge of the construction of the Kassandria road circuit that has a total length of 17 kilometers. In terms of PPPs, we are also involved in broadband infrastructure through a €60 million project that will expand it into rural areas. That is Intracom Holdings’ project, with Intrakat having a 60 percent participation for an operating period of 15 years. Another of our projects is an integrated passenger information and fleet management system for the Athens Public Transport Organization, which is worth €84 million and has an operating period of 10.5 years. Lastly, we have a solid waste management plant in Serres prefecture in northern Greece that is a €31 million project focusing on recycling and composting. Intrakat’s participation there is up to 45 percent and the duration of the operation will be 25 years.

What would be your final message to the readers of Newsweek?

At Intrakat, we focus on high added-value projects. We facilitate any adaptations required with flexibility and clarity. We foresee opportunities for new activities in a timely manner and, above all, we execute our projects with consistency, reliability and high quality.
The Hellenic Public Properties Company (HPPC—ETAD) is responsible for managing and exploiting the state’s vast and diverse portfolio of real estate assets through investment, rental or sale. What impact has the global COVID-19 crisis had on ETAD?

The good thing to come out of the crisis is that international trust and credibility toward Greece have been further enhanced. We stayed ahead of pandemic, in contrast to many countries. However, ETAD felt the impact of COVID-19 because we had heavily invested in tourism in previous years—at this point of time, tourism assets are more than 80 percent of our total investments. The pandemic made us understand the need to reposition ourselves. We have developed a new business plan and our strategic priority is to divert our focus from tourism to telecoms, logistics, marinas, energy and office real estate assets—areas where we haven’t invested so much in the past.

What can you tell us about ETAD’s strategies to maximize domestic and international investments in real estate?

Before COVID-19 struck the global economy, Greece was on a steady positive trade surplus path, and Greece became a more attractive investment destination compared to other EU countries. And this is now a major advantage for us—Greece is no longer the scapegoat of Europe, but a trustworthy country that provides economic stability.

ETAD looks to gain 8 gigawatts of renewable energy

Gerassimos Thomas, Deputy Minister for Energy and Natural Resources, details the many opportunities in energy

What is your assessment of Greece’s economic trajectory and how would you describe the energy sector’s role in that process?

Before COVID-19 struck the global economy, Greece was on a steady positive growth trajectory following close to ten years of deep economic and financial crisis. Now, because of the pandemic, Greece will have a revision in 2020 (like all European Union countries) (EU), followed by a recovery in 2021. It is too soon to forecast if the recovery will be V- or U-shaped but the government is determined to pursue structural reforms and a growth plan that will boost the output potential of the country. The energy sector will have a crucial role to play in the recovery effort. The European Green Deal has been recognized as an essential component of the EU growth strategy. Within this framework, Greece’s role of ambition remains high and we will intensify our efforts in order to achieve our ambitious goal set in our National Energy and Climate Plan. All available existing tools and particularly the European Recovery and Resilience Fund, now under discussion, will be utilized in order to fast-track and frontload large-scale investments in the energy sector. Solar and wind renewable energy investments, the development and modernization of electricity and natural gas distribution networks, and large-scale energy efficiency schemes for buildings in line with the EU’s Renovation Wave.

By 2023, all Greece’s lignite operating capacity will be terminated

Greek islands possess natural assets that make them prime locations for solar, wind and geothermal energy. Are there underexploited renewable energy resources?

Beyond traditional photovoltaic and wind energy on shore, there is unexploited potential in offshore wind. But in Greece, offshore waters are deep, so you cannot have similar projects to those in the North Sea, for example. So, we need to look at floating offshore wind. We are going to develop a regulatory framework this year so that investments can start developing.
Greece will continue to be a dynamic real estate market

George Kormas, CEO, Piraeus Real Estate and Executive GM, Piraeus Bank Group, takes the risk out of Greek real estate for investors

Prior to COVID-19, Greece had one of the hottest real estate markets in the EU. Why was this and how will the pandemic impact the market?

Greece is at the beginning of the yield curve. For the very same asset type, here you can achieve double the yield that you would achieve in any other European country. The exact measurement of COVID-19’s impact is impossible at present, but we can make some estimates about potential changes to the real estate economic system. We can predict future lower demand for office and retail space due to increased teleworking and e-commerce respectively.

On the other hand, with lower interest rates and some decrease in assets’ prices at present, but we can make some estimates about potential changes to the real estate economic system. We can predict future lower demand for office and retail space due to increased teleworking and e-commerce respectively.

What impact has the pandemic had on PRE’s activities?

During the lockdown, PRE deployed a thoroughly prepared business continuity plan that relies on modern technology, and our employees’ sense of responsibility and commitment. We remained fully operational, continuing to offer our services to customers by exploiting the advantages of technology through telesselling and video conferences. Our innovative e-auction platform Properties4Sale is also fully effective.

How is PRE driving sustainability in real estate?

As a result of this crisis, real estate companies and stakeholders will be forced to realize that sustainable, responsible investing is not a vague ‘nice-to-have’ concept, but an urgent present-day obligation that must be incorporated in business models. Sustainable, responsible investing isn’t a vague ‘nice-to-have’ concept, but an urgent present-day obligation that must be incorporated in business models. Sustainable, responsible investing isn’t a vague ‘nice-to-have’ concept, but an urgent present-day obligation that must be incorporated in business models. Sustainable, responsible investing isn’t a vague ‘nice-to-have’ concept, but an urgent present-day obligation that must be incorporated in business models.

George Kormas, CEO, Piraeus Real Estate

“Sustainable, responsible investing isn’t a vague ‘nice-to-have’ concept, but an urgent present-day obligation that must be incorporated in business models.”

George Kormas, CEO, Piraeus Real Estate

Part of Piraeus Bank Group (PBG), Piraeus Real Estate (PRE) services Greece’s largest real estate portfolios and is involved in many high-profile projects, including City Link, Komsomolis, Thessaloniki Square, Piraeus port and the Votanikos Project. How has PRE evolved?

Before 2008’s financial crisis, real estate was the dominating collateral for loans. Greek banks ended up with a huge non-performing loan problem in that regard and were somewhat obliged to acquire the properties. Piraeus Bank is the outcome of an amalgamation and consolidation process of other banks. It absorbed their real estate portfolios and now has an interesting mix of all asset types spread over the whole of Greece. The sole principal of PRE’s strategy is to de-consolidate from real estate. We are there to enter into a transaction with any possible market participant at market prices. As a subsidiary of PBG, we guarantee that everything is as it should be and is legalized. We eliminate that potential risk for our counterparties, as it is crucial to safeguard the reputation of the group.

PRE services a portfolio of real estate assets worth €1 billion

FDI into Greek real estate was €1.45 billion in 2019

PRE’s innovative e-auction platform is at www.properties4sale.gr

PIRAEUS REAL ESTATE

5 KORAI, ATHENS 105 64 | T +30 210 7728 400 | REALSTATE@PBRE.GR | WWW.PBRE.GR

Piraeus Real Estate SA provides a full range of services in real estate planning, development, monitoring and asset management. Its activities include selecting and selling property from the largest real estate portfolio in Greece, property development, project management and project monitoring, property and facilities management, property valuation, intermediation, as well as real estate consulting and fund management.

The Group Real Estate unit of Piraeus Bank Group has the overall responsibility for planning and implementing focused strategies and policies concerning Piraeus Bank Group’s overall real estate exposure. Piraeus Real Estate SA supports Group Real Estate as its executional arm in pursuing its targets.
Greece’s investment potential remains as strong as ever

Georgios Filiopoulos, CEO, Enterprise Greece, explains why the country’s unique assets will be advantages after COVID-19

Greece has drawn global praise for its successful handling of the coronavirus crisis. What impact will this have on investments into the country?

The fact that the government acted quickly and decisively in containing the coronavirus sends a strong message that the country is committed to effective and transparent governance. This will have wider benefits. It shows that Greece is a safe country to visit and invest in, since we have managed so far to avoid the traumatic impacts experienced elsewhere. The world economy will suffer an extraordinary shock and a contraction in the Greek economy of 5-10 percent is expected this year. However, Greece’s quick reaction may help soften the economic impact and reduce the pressure faster than others around us. Moreover, some of Greece’s unique assets, like a sophisticated life sciences sector, highly educated workforce, well-developed tech sector, and health and wellness ecosystem, will be significant advantages as the world emerges from this pandemic.

In the last two years, foreign direct investment (FDI) and exports have grown at double-digit rates to record levels. Major multinationals from the U.S., Europe and Asia have chosen to invest here. Greece’s underlying investment story remains intact, in spite of the crisis. Market sources suggest that there is still strong international investor interest in privatizations and many of the infrastructure projects Greece has planned.

“Market sources suggest that there is still strong international investor interest in privatizations and many of the infrastructure projects Greece has planned.”

Georgios Filiopoulos, CEO, Enterprise Greece

Even before the crisis, the agency had embarked on a process of aligning its operations to private sector standards. That allowed us to respond rapidly to changes in the environment. To help Greek businesses and exporters, Enterprise Greece launched a digital campaign to inform them of government support measures to mitigate the pandemic’s economic impact and we launched a “Support Greek Exports” information campaign to assist the sectors, products and services most affected. In parallel, we are working in close collaboration with our international partners—such as other European trade promotion agencies and the ANIMA Investment Network, a Mediterranean cooperation platform—to mitigate the impact on Greek businesses. We are also keeping exporters up to date on restrictions imposed in countries of interest, creating a promotional production flipbook, organizing social media campaigns, producing FDI testimonial and offering webinars for Greek companies. Faced with a radically different work environment, our teams have come up with creative solutions at every turn.

Is there a silver lining to the coronavirus crisis in Greece?

The crisis triggered a digital leap forward. Before the crisis, the Greek government was planning to launch a new e-government platform to streamline public services. The crisis became a catalyst for more rapid implementation of those plans. The new platform—gov.gr—offers more than 500 services online and new ones are being added constantly. This digital leap will greatly contribute to improved productivity and competitiveness for Greek businesses. At the same time, the quarantine measures gave a boost to e-commerce and, going forward, I believe we will see a strengthening of online commerce and marketing by Greek businesses, including exporters. Greece is growing startup sector, a significant segment of which is involved in applications in the health sector. Coronavirus will continue to be an issue for the foreseeable future, which provides an opening for Greek expertise to come to the forefront. In short, Greece is fully prepared to move into this new era.
Supporting the resilience of Greece and its businesses

Panos Papazoglou
Managing Partner in Greece, EY

EY, a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and consulting services, has been established in Greece since 1926. What is your opinion on the country’s economic outlook for 2020 and what will help revitalize the economy?

We expect a recession across the eurozone. How deep the recession will be in Greece depends on tourism. If that can somehow recover by September, the recession will be lower. The good thing for Greece is that, after a number of years, it appears to have political stability and, within the first months of its being in power, we’ve already seen some reforms from the government, including during the COVID-19 crisis, specifically around digitizing services and government processes. This gives a significant boost to investment through the public sector, because it has cut bureaucracy. What the business community now sees as important is reducing income tax, especially because the cost of employing people is too high. The environment is much more friendly for businesses in Greece these days. Before coronavirus, we saw significant interest from foreign investors and Greek entrepreneurs investing again, something that will give rise to significant growth in the economy.

According to the Global Risk Survey conducted by EY before COVID-19, only 21 percent of board members believed their organizations were prepared to respond to adverse risks from a planning, communications, recovery and resilience standpoint. EY in Greece has joined forces with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry around the topic of facing the COVID-19 challenge. What can you tell us about EY’s insight on enterprise resilience and planning for recovery?

EY is supporting companies to become more resilient and overcome the crisis. Resilience, at a corporate and a country level, is key today—not only because of COVID-19. Companies need to think not only about the “now”—which is about people management, safety and operating models—but also about the “next” and the “beyond.”

“Companies need to think not only about the ‘now’—which is about people management, safety and operating models—but also about the ‘next’ and the ‘beyond.’”

Panos Papazoglou, Managing Partner in Greece, EY

According to the Global Risk Survey conducted by EY before COVID-19, only 21 percent of board members believed their organizations were prepared to respond to adverse risks from a planning, communications, recovery and resilience standpoint. EY in Greece has joined forces with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry around the topic of facing the COVID-19 challenge. What can you tell us about EY’s insight on enterprise resilience and planning for recovery?

EY is supporting companies to become more resilient and overcome the crisis. Resilience, at a corporate and a country level, is key today—not only because of COVID-19. Companies need to think not only about the “now”—which is about people management, safety and operating models—but also about the “next” and the “beyond.”

We need to rethink the supply chain as a country and as individual corporations. We must rethink bringing forth more digital transformation. We have to think about different working models, such as working remotely, which COVID-19 has accelerated. The “beyond” talk about a greener, circular economy and the value that businesses can bring to society. Overall, we need to rethink everything. Similar crises will happen in the near future, we cannot avoid them and need to be proactive.

In collaboration with NCSR Demokritos, EY created a unique Center for Excellence in Artificial Intelligence in Greece. Why Greece?

You have stated that Greece must focus on exports. How can this happen?

I’m a believer in small entrepreneurship. But in reality, after a certain point, size matters. Therefore, I’m in favor of joint ventures, mergers and in clustering companies to be able to sell products or services outside of Greece, because increasing our exports is a “must” and a matter of survival. We are seeing more small companies realizing that they need to compete in the wider global economy.

Greece came into the COVID-19 crisis with a positive economic performance and has applied effective crisis management to it. Is there a silver lining to the crisis for Greece?

Something I consider to be very positive is the digitalization of the Greek state. It will be much easier to embrace digitalization and new technologies now than it was in the past. Another benefit is that widely conceived myths have been dispelled. One was that Greeks are not patient; it has been said before that, if the government says one thing, Greeks do the opposite. The second is that we cannot work remotely and we need to be together to deliver work—that myth is now gone as well. A key message is: Greece is changing. We have reframed our future. We want to be seen as a good example. There is significant commitment from the majority of the Greek people and the political system for Greece to become a positive example in Europe and to stop being its “black swan.”

Do you have the ability to adapt to an unfamiliar landscape?

As our landscape changes and becomes more unfamiliar, how ready are you to change with it? The EY ‘beyond framework’ helps you explore the questions to reframe your future.

ey.com/reframeyourfuture
#BetterQuestions

The better the question. The better the answer. The better the world works.
Your father established Mitsis Hotels over 40 years ago and it has since become Greece’s largest privately owned hotel chain. How has COVID-19 affected your firm and what will its impact be on Greek tourism?

The country’s excellent performance in this crisis will certainly boost tourism in the short term, as Greece appears to be the single safe destination in the region. It came at a time when Greece has the lead over other countries: our tourism is more mature than ever and is extending its product as a 12-month destination beyond the sea-sun-sand model—the richness of this country creates endless possibilities. Likewise, it caught Mitsis Hotels on the rise. We have worked intensively over the last three years in implementing large investment projects that showcase our valuable tourist assets, modern products, quality services and unique experiences that we offer to our visitors, enabling us to reach out to new interest groups and chart a dynamic development path.

Despite the crisis, we are completing our infrastructure projects that were underway—investments in renovations, modernization and the improvement of all units. Technology and artificial intelligence, which offer us creative apps for better services and interactive communication, are our best allies in the development of holistic experiences for our guests and to maximize our new infrastructure, advanced technologies and improved services to constantly add value to our product. With our guests’ and employees’ health and safety as top priority, we have drawn up detailed procedures for all departments. Aspiring to take care of others as well, we have organized a large blood donation and offered 10,000 nights in our hotels and resorts for those giving blood. As a trusted partner, we care about sustainability and respect human rights. We must all be geared toward local communities and their power to give birth to unique authentic experiences.

What is your vision for sustainability within your operations and for the wider support of your local communities?

Overall, this crisis has further highlighted the unique role our brand plays in the lives of Greek people. As a trusted partner, visionary sponsor and proud ambassador of Greece, we invest capital, time and expertise in the progress of our communities. We all need to develop our own piece of corporate social responsibility and show our modern visitors that we care about sustainability and respect human rights. We must all be geared toward local communities and their power to give birth to unique authentic experiences.

Last year, Mitsis Hotels was awarded with Travelife’s gold certification for accommodation sustainability and in two years we aim to acquire the ISO 14001:2015 certificate for environmental management and sustainability. The idea is to be able to recycle 100 percent of the garbage that we produce, go 100 percent green and leave zero footprint on the environment. We will be recycling on site and through some external partners. We started a couple of years ago, but the goal is to reach the maximum in these regards.

Tourism is one of our greatest opportunities to excel, both individually and collectively. We are proud that excellence is the key principle guiding Mitsis Hotels’ growth in the years to come.

“We are determined to carry on investing in new infrastructure, advanced technologies and improved services to constantly add value to our product.”

Stavros Mitsis, Managing Director, Mitsis Hotels
How has the international business community’s perception of Greece as an investment destination evolved in recent years?

The perception of Greece as a potential investment destination improved substantially between 2017 and the beginning of 2020, especially toward the end of that period. I think this should continue, as the handling of the coronavirus crisis by the Greek government has clearly been a case study in crisis management. Over the course of the crisis, its decision making was swift, data based and responsive to new evidence. By strengthening its operational leadership, digitalizing interfaces and introducing economic support measures, the government controlled the health situation without paralyzing the economy and with no political arguments. All investments into Greece are welcome. To date, we have not had many large projects that could attract significant overseas capital but our privatization programme can assist in bridging this gap by generating investments with significant multipliers, which will help the economy to accelerate.

Formed in 1924, Attica Bank is Greece’s fifth-largest bank. From your perspective, what are some of the main lessons to be learned from the coronavirus crisis for the country and its banking sector?

There are valuable lessons to be learned for when we return to normality. First, we need to ensure the continuity of vital supply chains at all times. Second, technology was instrumental in retaining the lockdown’s effectiveness. Remote working will expand in all sectors and will become the dominant mode in some sectors. The new way of working will expand in all sectors and will become the dominant mode in some sectors. This paradigm into the new era of digital execution, while retaining the human face of real banking in lending money to our customers. We will soon start rebranding our branches to transmit this new message to the public. We are small enough to be able to modernize quickly, but our emphasis will always be on maintaining long-term relations with our customers.

Having said all that, neither the path to normality nor the new normality after COVID-19 are clear enough to be able to judge the current situation. Therefore, we are trying to make sense of the evolving environment before reparametrizing our business plan. We are currently focusing on four change areas: understanding our customers better and tailoring solutions to their emerging needs; making remote working standard, digitalizing as fast and as much as we can, and strengthening our supervisory management that links everything together. When dealing with crisis and intense pressure, creativity comes out naturally from many quarters and we are making them having to physically visit the bank if they don’t want to. We are moving away from the current paradigm into the new era of digital execution, while retaining the human face of real banking in lending money to our customers.

Costas Mitropoulos, Chairman, Attica Bank

“In 2019, Attica Bank’s exposure to the energy sector has reached €0.5 billion, with plans for an imminent increase

Costas Mitropoulos, Chairman, Attica Bank

How has COVID-19 affected DNV GL Maritime, the world’s leading classification organization and advisor, which enhances safety, quality, efficiency and environmental performance in the global shipping industry?

DNV GL Maritime was already set up to adapt, because the nature of our job is remote. Our people are always on the run, onboard vessels or at client sites. Almost everyone in the maritime industry has been impacted by the pandemic. But thanks to our long-held commitment to digitalization and our extensive experience in delivering remote surveys, we were spared its worst effects.

DNV GL in Greece has become a dynamic regional hub for the company. Can you describe your Greek-based research and development (R&D)?

In 2019, DNV GL was the first to establish an R&D department in Greece. We have developed solutions that are cost efficient for our customers, making their lives easier and improving their cost-benefit ratio. A few examples are COSSMOS, a platform that uses thermodynamics criteria to boost energy efficiency; Direct Access to Technical Experts (DATE), a centralized service through which customers can ask questions and receive answers within a few hours; and a smart survey booking service for competent services around the world.

Can you explain the role of DNV GL Maritime Academy Hellas?

Our industry has seen a lot of changes in recent years, with new regulations and requirements coming into force. Our academy prepares our clients for these changes and offers training solutions fit for their needs that are delivered by top-level experts. Over 10 years, we have conducted about 1,150 courses with almost 15,000 attendees from 400 shipping companies within the shipping industry. Maritime Academy Hellas received the 2020 SMART4SEA training award in recognition of its achievements.

Can you explain the role of DNV GL Maritime Academy Hellas?

Today’s market needs a smarter approach and a classification partner who prioritizes safety. Find out how our classification solutions turn possibilities into opportunities and make your operations safer, smarter and greener. Learn more at dnvgl.com/maritime

Stay Connected with DNV GL’s digital services

MODERN CLASS FOR SMARTER OPERATIONS

Today’s market needs a smarter approach - and a classification partner who prioritizes safety. Find out how our classification solutions turn possibilities into opportunities - and make your operations safer, smarter and greener. Learn more at dnvgl.com/maritime

www.country-reports.net
Greece, the power of the international shipping sector

Costis Frangoulis, Founder and CEO, Franman, explains how preparation and agility will keep the shipping sector at the top.

As a longstanding member of the community, what is your personal vision for Greece's shipping sector? What are your thoughts on the new Maritime Hellas cluster and its potential to become a global hub for shipping services?

I can only be proud of the fact that Greece is considered to be the number one ship-owning nation worldwide. We are a nation of islands at the crossroads of the Mediterranean trade routes, with the maritime industry at the heart of the Greek economy. I feel confident that this will not change in the future, as shipping is a fundamental part of this country's DNA. The mentality of Greeks and our success in business is born out of our experience as shipowners or service providers in the industry.

"It is of the utmost importance to find partners who not only have expertise and a leading position in their field, but that also share our business values." - Costis Frangoulis, Founder and CEO, Franman

As an industry, it is important to have a strong cluster supporting you—providing research and development (R&D), economies of scale and innovative products and services to drive the industry forward, challenging the status quo. We are prepared for whatever is coming next, be it sustainable shipping, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) goals for 2030 and 2050, increased digitization of maritime trade, and the ups and downs of the shipping market.

This year marks a new era for the global shipping sector with the implementation of the IMO's 2020 sulfur cap. How would you describe the impact of the sulfur cap on your business and what types of opportunities are emerging from this new paradigm?

As a marine trading house, we were heavily involved in scrubber installations with the majority of tankers, bulkers and container ships owners placing orders over the last two years in preparation for 2020. This January, very large crude carriers with scrubbers were making savings of $20,000 per day in fuel costs due to the fact we had big price spreads between regular and low sulfur fuel.

Since 2014, the Greek fleet has grown by 22%, employing more than 160,000 people. Greece holds 22% of the global fleet with 4,536 vessels. Franman represents 132 corporations in Greece and trades in 13 other markets.

What are the necessary ingredients that a company and potential partner of Franman will have in order to establish a long-term, trusting relationship?

We try to find partners that share the same value and corporate philosophy with us. We have seen in the past that there are some excellent companies out there, but this is not enough in order to have a successful commercial relationship. It is of the utmost importance to find partners who not only have expertise and a leading position in their field, but that also share our business values. We feel quite fortunate to have established excellent partnerships from the very early days of our operation.

As a marine trading house, what are some of the core values instituted by you that make your company stand out among the competition when it comes to high standards of customer service?

I started the company from scratch back in 1991. As the company was growing, I always emphasized the quality of the services as my highest priority. Even today, this one of my main roles in the company, making sure that we are providing the best possible service to our customers and partners worldwide. We try to be constantly on top of our game and we never forget that we need to evolve, as success is not permanent. In our early years, we adopted the Japanese trading house ‘one-stop-shop philosophy’ model and this helped us differentiate from our competitors and get to where we are today.

What are some of the opportunities facing the Greek shipping sector today?

I can only be proud of the fact that Greece is considered to be the number one ship-owning nation worldwide. We are a nation of islands at the crossroads of the Mediterranean trade routes, with the maritime industry at the heart of the Greek economy. I feel confident that this will not change in the future, as shipping is a fundamental part of this country's DNA. The mentality of Greeks and our success in business is born out of our experience as shipowners or service providers in the industry.

"It is of the utmost importance to find partners who not only have expertise and a leading position in their field, but that also share our business values." - Costis Frangoulis, Founder and CEO, Franman

As an industry, it is important to have a strong cluster supporting you—providing research and development (R&D), economies of scale and innovative products and services to drive the industry forward, challenging the status quo. We are prepared for whatever is coming next, be it sustainable shipping, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) goals for 2030 and 2050, increased digitization of maritime trade, and the ups and downs of the shipping market.

This year marks a new era for the global shipping sector with the implementation of the IMO's 2020 sulfur cap. How would you describe the impact of the sulfur cap on your business and what types of opportunities are emerging from this new paradigm?

As a marine trading house, we were heavily involved in scrubber installations with the majority of tankers, bulkers and container ships owners placing orders over the last two years in preparation for 2020. This January, very large crude carriers with scrubbers were making savings of $20,000 per day in fuel costs due to the fact we had big price spreads between regular and low sulfur fuel.

Since 2014, the Greek fleet has grown by 22%, employing more than 160,000 people. Greece holds 22% of the global fleet with 4,536 vessels. Franman represents 132 corporations in Greece and trades in 13 other markets.

What are the necessary ingredients that a company and potential partner of Franman will have in order to establish a long-term, trusting relationship?

We try to find partners that share the same value and corporate philosophy with us. We have seen in the past that there are some excellent companies out there, but this is not enough in order to have a successful commercial relationship. It is of the utmost importance to find partners who not only have expertise and a leading position in their field, but that also share our business values. We feel quite fortunate to have established excellent partnerships from the very early days of our operation.

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, would you like to share a final, powerful message with the readers of Newsweek?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, would you like to share a final, powerful message with the readers of Newsweek?

Always obsessed with the sea, with the vessels that travel the sea. Obsessed with doing everything we need to do to keep your business safely, efficiently, on the move.
Posidonia: The Greek shipping sector’s biennial flagship event

Theodore Vokos, Managing Director, Posidonia Exhibitions, is adamant that the Greek shipping community will remain dominant.

What impact has COVID-19 had on Posidonia’s event planned for 2020?

The purpose of Posidonia is to promote Greece and Greek shipping globally, guarantee a productive and safe exhibition for global participants, and contribute to the Greek economy. If one of the above criteria is not met, we will have to adjust our plans. We will be evaluating the situation in the coming weeks and, depending on how the crisis develops, will consider cancelling the exhibition and move on to the next Posidonia, planned for 6-10 June 2022.

This year marks a new era for the shipping sector with the implementation of the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO’s) 2020 sulfur cap. What’s the current status on this and future regulations?

We are at the first stages of implementation of the new cap. Early adopters of scrubber technologies are sharing their experiences regarding whether the technology actually works, the availability of low sulfur fuel is a crucial topic, as is its quality. But it is not only the technical issues, the industry is now looking into the legal aspects of the new regulations. Another important issue is the IMO 2050 regulation on greenhouse-gas emissions. However, the technology to achieve that is not there yet.

Are sustainability and the climate a central part of Posidonia?

They are always on Posidonia’s agenda—the industry as a whole is focusing on sustainability and the environment. Greek shipping has stepped up to its responsibilities. It has been keen to comply with all new regulations and is an active member of the IMO, suggesting new solutions, like slow speeding, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, we have to get the message across that shipping has been over-targeted in the climate pollution agenda. The sector has faced an unfair amount of criticism, while the expectations for change on its part have never been higher.

Do you foresee a post-COVID surge for the Greek shipping sector and the new Maritime Hellas cluster?

Shipping will continue to be strong and I am amazed that new companies are being created by new entrants to the sector and by big traditional shipping names. The transition from the previous generation of shipowners to their children is also coming along smoothly, with the younger generation keen to take the business further. But the success story lies in the rise of Greek equipment and services companies. Judging by the success of two Greek associations—the Hellenic Marine Equipment Manufacturers and Exporters and the Worldwide Industrial and Marine Association—Greece has become a technology innovator and premium quality producer. The Maritime Hellas cluster is a very important initiative, which complements the efforts of the maritime community. We are proud to be a member of the cluster and further promote Greek products and services to the global maritime industry.

Smart tech experienced a surge in representation at the most recent Posidonia, with over 60 international companies participating. What does this tell us about the shipping sector?

In the last few years, Greek shipping has been embracing technology at full speed, through a top-down and bottom-up approach. New regulations oblige companies to adopt certain technologies but, at the same time, in their continuous efforts to optimize performance, shipping companies started producing their own proprietary technology. The adoption of new technology coincides with a generational change in the shipping community.

Are sustainability and the climate a central part of Posidonia?

They are always on Posidonia’s agenda—the industry as a whole is focusing on sustainability and the environment. Greek shipping has stepped up to its responsibilities. It has been keen to comply with all new regulations and is an active member of the IMO, suggesting new solutions, like slow speeding, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. On the other hand, we have to get the message across that shipping has been over-targeted in the climate pollution agenda. The sector has faced an unfair amount of criticism, while the expectations for change on its part have never been higher.

As an ambassador for Greek shipping, do you have a final message?

The Greek shipping community is here to stay. It is a dominant force, providing a service of global importance. Shipping is a very important industry for the Greek and the global economy, which has not received the recognition it deserves. Greek shipping has proven it remains open for business, regardless of what happens with the country’s economy. Greece’s shipping companies are and will remain trusted partners. The industry should be regulated and must focus on protecting the environment as much as it can. However, regulators should be careful not to handicap the industry as a vital business partner and the EU should not risk losing this industry.
Raising the profile of Greece to the international level

Panos Kirnidis, CEO, Palau International Ship Registry, sees innovation as core for any successful registry in the future.

What are your views on the evolution of the maritime sector in Greece, in terms of its historical significance and current status, as well as the emergence of the Maritime Hellas cluster?

The contribution of shipping to the country is as important as it is diverse, going beyond maritime transport services, through indirect economic investments and employment opportunities. While Greece might only account for 0.15 percent of the world population, 21 percent of the global shipping tonnage is Greek-owned. This makes the Greek merchant fleet the biggest fleet in the world, with 4,936 vessels of 389.69 million deadweight tons. Greek shipowners increased their investments in the maritime sector between 2007 to 2018 by more than doubling the capacity of their fleet. These ship owners have very specific needs and requirements, and consequently our registry has been designed to help them meet these challenges. Looking forward, trade disputes and shipping-related regulatory trends will continue to fuel uncertainty in the shipping market. Brexit stands to disrupt European markets and as China continues its growth internally it will transform from the world’s factory to a consumer country.

“PISR is tomorrow’s leader, globally known as the ‘SMART.Registry’, with a customer-centric focus and offering real value-added services and innovative solutions for shipowners and managers.”

Panos Kirnidis, CEO, Palau International Ship Registry

The launch of a new decade in 2020 also kicks off a new era in the global shipping industry with the implementation of the International Maritime Organization’s sulfur cap. The need to remove sulfur pollution from the maritime sector is of increasing importance. How do you think that the recent measures focused on curbing emissions will impact your ship registry?

The shipowners in our fleet have been preparing for the IMO’s sulfur cap for the past two years. We have been in discussions with them about how it will affect their operations, and are offering them advice and support. We are working with the IMO and have a permanent representative at that organization, so we understand the changes and implications for our fleet. We fully back the importance of a proper, effective global regulatory regime through the IMO.

One of the concerns, especially for those with older fleets, is the uncertain impact of the incompatibility of bunker fuels. This may leave shipowners facing serious engine repair issues, requiring vessels to be taken out of service and leading to serious loss of earnings. Our work as a ship registry is to provide support, guidance and development for shipowners, who see us as a flag of confidence and a real partner in their daily operations.

Palau is an island republic in the western Pacific Ocean. Can you explain how your registry—Palau International Ship Registry (PISR)—tapped into a new market niche by fully leveraging technology and digital solutions to cater to the needs of shipowners?

PISR is tomorrow’s leader, globally known as the “SMARTRegistry”, with a customer-centric focus and offering real value-added services and innovative solutions for shipowners and managers. We are the world’s fastest-growing ship registry and one that is increasingly being called “tomorrow’s registry today.” PISR wanted to be a registry for the future; one based on unique online services that also utilize the skills and experience of real people. Our goal is clear: we are aiming to be one of the leading ship registries in the global shipping industry.

We deliver our services faster, more efficiently and for the lowest possible value for money in comparison with others. As times change and technology develops, our clients are looking for traditional registry support blended with new technologies, which is why we have made significant investments in information technology systems and have developed our unique SMARTRegistry solution that is fully integrated with the software systems SAP Business One for enterprise resource planning and Salesforce for customer relationship management.

Our investment in technology has not overridden our commitment to shipowners. Our registry is based on four pillars: responsiveness, instant and transparent decision making, localization and effectiveness. To be as responsive as possible, we have established a global presence and have offices in the U.S., Greece and Cyprus, with a new office in Europe opening soon. These offices are empowered to make decisions themselves and all their work is coordinated through our global workflow management system.

In addition, the strong relationship that Palau has with the U.S. under our Compact of Free Association has strengthened the economic standing of the republic. PISR is now one of the strongest and most politically supported ship registries in the world, which is a further benefit for those ships flying the Palau flag.

Abu Dhabi • Alexandria • Beirut • Cape Town • City Of Port Of Spain • Constanta • Dubai
Eindhoven • Fuzhou • Guangzhou • Hong Kong • Houston • Istanbul • Kerala • Kherson
Lagos • Limassol • London • Miami • Moscou • Nakhodka • Nicosia • Odessa • Ostend
Panama City • Piraeus • Qingdao • Sakhalin • Shanghai • Singapore • Sri Lanka
St. Petersburg • Tainan • Tartu • Trinidad & Tobago • Varna • Venice • Vladivostok

The world’s oceans are big enough for a SMART Registry

HEAD OFFICES
EUROPE | GREECE | 5 SACHTOURI STR. PIRAEUS - Tel: +30 210 4299500
USA | TEXAS | THE WOODLANDS | 9595 SIX PINES DRIVE - Tel: +1 832 531 6861 info@palaureg.com

www.palaureg.com
This year Petsiavas celebrates 100 years of history. What are some of the core values instituted by its founder that continue to be embraced today and which enable the company to work at the highest levels of standards?

First of all, we have focused heavily on diversification and, secondly, we have maintained the family aspect of the company, focusing on the family atmosphere we share with the people working with us. Petsiavas was operating with corporate social responsibility (CSR) principals before CSR became a standard in business. People do not leave the company, as we have people working with us for more than 50 years. We are not a multinational company and we certainly do not offer the level of salaries that some of our multinational competitors might offer. However, the environment within the company is supportive of everyone, which played a fundamental role when it came to our company’s survival through dark times.

Petsiavas is slightly different to other pharmaceutical companies, as we produce in Greece but we don’t produce generics. In that sense, we have the license to manufacture, promote, produce, import and distribute products into the Greek market. As our prescriptions base is very healthy, we have managed to safeguard our volumes and survive decreases. However, we do face the same issues as the rest of the pharmaceutical industry, which are the multiple clawbacks and rebates. At their current level, clawbacks and rebates will not allow the Greek pharmaceutical industry to survive for much longer.

There has also been significant discussion about the distribution of clawback, as the system is unfair. Returns are distributed among all marketing authorization holders and not only those that created the increase in pharmaceutical expenditure in the first place.

How would you describe the evolution of your company and its diversification strategy? Moreover, where will new growth come from? Do you have plans to tap any new, possibly related, segments?

Over the years, we have managed to survive thanks to diversification. Petsiavas has more than 150 employees. In 2019, pharmaceutical products were second among the 100 most important Greek exports. Between 2018 and 2019, the rate of change in value for pharma exports was 45.6%.

In 2019, pharmaceutical products were second among the 100 most important Greek exports. Petsiavas has more than 150 employees. Between 2018 and 2019, the rate of change in value for pharma exports was 45.6%.

What aspects of Greek’s social and economic fabric have you focused your attention on that you believe, if addressed strategically, can have a dramatic effect on competitiveness?

Even though Greece has human capital of high quality, it seems that we lack the necessary skills for the current environment, either in Greece or abroad. We see areas where basic skills seem to be lacking. Change in our education system seems to be more necessary than ever before. Our current abroad. We see areas where basic skills seem to be lacking. Change in our education system seems to be more necessary than ever before. Our current absence from plastics and textiles. The textile industry is currently dead throughout Europe, but plastics might be an opportunity, as we are currently focusing on recycled materials to offer to our customers.

With the deepening of the financial crisis came harsh austerity measures that created a challenging environment for the pharmaceutical sector. How have you used this period to refocus, adapt, innovate and make Petsiavas more resilient and committed to patient needs?

How will COVID-19 affect the global engineering sector?

The virus has brought uncertainty and there will be a slowdown in construction. However, the most effective investment at this moment is in public infrastructure such as roads, ports, hospitals and schools. Governments need to inject money to ensure these projects are developed. It is also a good time to examine renewable energy and environmentally respectful initiatives.

Climate change must be a priority. How is Salfo embracing sustainability in its project portfolios?

For a few years, Salfo has focused on expanding into new sectors, including energy, the environment and IT. We are already involved in energy-saving projects and in the IT sector here in Greece. Clearly, we are not only an engineering company with infrastructure projects but also a dynamic company focused on other sectors. Our basic know-how allows us to expand our horizons as a company that is well grounded and diverse with regard to the sectors we operate in.
Introducing unique resources in a highly curated product

Ioanna Drettta, CEO, Marketing Greece, describes Greece’s plan to enhance the renowned ‘Philoxenia’ experience

As a figurehead of Greece’s champion sector—tourism—how would you sum up the ‘essence’ of Greece and what makes it so unique as a destination?

Marketing Greece represents a globally unique case of a private company with the promotion of the country as its main purpose. We have been raising funds throughout the years, trying to promote various national destinations and the Greek tourism product in general. In 2013, the company was founded during the very dark days of the financial crisis in order to promote the country. Nowadays, we are still promoting it, trying to implement the national strategy, with the promotion of the country as its main purpose. We have been raising great numbers into this project, as we are moving to tackling the sustainability issue more. Last year, we made the first step toward that direction, as we ran our first business-to-business campaign, encouraging companies to implement zero-waste practices. In addition, last year we produced around 60 videos. We know how to create content and that is not solely on the practical level. We are a non-profit organisation, which pays great remittances on our budget. We are mainly doing digital work, as it is cheaper and easier. The idea is that we create content and give it to big players like GNTO or the regions themselves to use it. We are considered to be a destination marketing organization (DMO), but we are not officially recognized as a DMO. Throughout the world, DMOs are usually state-owned or mixed funds. Here we are entirely private. So, we are trying to cooperate with the GNTO, so that we create a mined here.

What is the importance of collaboration for an organization backed by the private sector that is also related to all stakeholders in the industry?

Collaboration is the key for the tourism sector, as there are too many players, starting from the state, going to regional government, the private sector and society itself. Our goal here is to increase the quality of the tourist product offered from our side. All the above-mentioned players need to be able to cooperate, as this cannot be enforced. Collaboration should be a common goal, inspired by the people.

What would be your final message to the readers of Newsweek?

I have a passion for business and art. During my many years of service in business I have seen very good days and days so bad that I do not want to be reminded of them. To climb up from small beginnings, not to any great heights but to a halfway reasonable level, requires a lot of effort and I never gave up. Greece’s best days are certainly coming but it won’t be immediate. We have to be patient and believe that the very difficult period we have been through is over. Better days will come but only through hard work, collective effort and an honest desire to revive anew both the state and society.
Success from the perspective of an insightful entrepreneur

Nikos D. Pateras, Chairman, Contships Management, shares his views on the international outlook for the shipping sector

As a member of the Greek shipping community, you have navigated with determination and contributed to the development of the shipping sector worldwide. What is your view on the current state of the shipping sector at the global level, the impact of the International Maritime Organization’s 2020 sulfur cap and other critical issues affecting the sector? Between 1986 and 1989, my father and uncle entrust me to acquire 11 ships. I managed to resell the ships in less than three years with 300 percent profit. My initial idea of shipping was close to asset management. In 1993, I created my own shipping company, Pacific & Atlantic, which specialized in managing bulk carriers and multipurpose ships. Between 1993 and 2007, I owned a fleet of 52 vessels. Just before the financial crisis started in 2008, I sold my fleet, making a substantial profit. For a period of over 20 years, we were not making any money from the trading of vessels, but in 1989 and 2008 we gained remarkable profits from asset play.

What are the high-growth markets that your vessels will be servicing in the coming decade and where will new growth in the containership feeder sector be coming from?

In 2018, when the U.S. embarked on this trade war on China, we saw the market in the feeder segment drop by 25 to 30 percent. There was less cargo coming in, which meant that feeder vessels had less containers to carry, leading to charters decreasing their rates. This was something unexpected for us, as between 2018 and 2019, we expected to make a net profit of around €30 million, but instead we made nothing. We see that 2020, a year going to be very difficult year and won’t lead to the expected uplift. The other issue we have been facing is the recent coronavirus epidemic. China’s industrial side has destabilized and this has dramatically affected the market. Even though some of the factories will reopen, it is going to take months before we see the market return back to normal.

In terms of the current state of the sector, the banks that finance shipping have reduced dramatically. Most shipowners now look for financing elsewhere, gained remarkable profits from asset play.

In our case, feeder ships do not have large engine rooms, we do not have the space to fit scrubbers. Consequently, we have to use low-sulfur fuel. In terms of regulations, everything has become stricter since 1986. However, all of this has had a positive effect, as the quality of ships has improved dramatically. The regulations have forced us to become better managers. The main problem that the shipping sector is facing today and potentially, in my view, for the coming decades, is the lack of talent and competent crew to man ships. We, as Contships Management, have handled the situation by creating a pool of officers that mostly come from Europe, as well as a competent pool of ratings that are from the Philippines.

What are the high-growth markets that your vessels will be servicing in the coming decade and where will new growth in the containership feeder sector be coming from?

In 2018, when the U.S. embarked on this trade war on China, we saw the market in the feeder segment drop by 25 to 30 percent. There was less cargo coming in, which meant that feeder vessels had less containers to carry, leading to charters decreasing their rates. This was something unexpected for us, as between 2018 and 2019, we expected to make a net profit of around €30 million, but instead we made nothing. We see that 2020, a year going to be very difficult year and won’t lead to the expected uplift. The other issue we have been facing is the recent coronavirus epidemic. China’s industrial side has destabilized and this has dramatically affected the market. Even though some of the factories will reopen, it is going to take months before we see the market return back to normal.

In terms of the current state of the sector, the banks that finance shipping have reduced dramatically. Most shipowners now look for financing elsewhere, gained remarkable profits from asset play.

In our case, feeder ships do not have large engine rooms, we do not have the space to fit scrubbers. Consequently, we have to use low-sulfur fuel. In terms of regulations, everything has become stricter since 1986. However, all of this has had a positive effect, as the quality of ships has improved dramatically. The regulations have forced us to become better managers. The main problem that the shipping sector is facing today and potentially, in my view, for the coming decades, is the lack of talent and competent crew to man ships. We, as Contships Management, have handled the situation by creating a pool of officers that mostly come from Europe, as well as a competent pool of ratings that are from the Philippines.

Olympic Shipping and Management has vast experience and importance, having originally been set up by Aristotle Onassis in the 1930s. We would be interested, therefore, to hear your views on the impact of the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO)’ 2020 sulfur cap and other initiatives affecting the sector?

In 2000, I was appointed by the organization’s 2020 sulfur cap and other initiatives affecting the sector?

If these initiatives as part of our evolution. Shipping is one of the most efficient industries in terms of generating greenhouse gas, in comparison to the amount of cargo it transfers. We should all try to make it as more efficient. The industry is regulated by the IMO and should remain as such. Everybody needs to comply with these directives so they aim to improve the global climate. The initial findings, after the implementation of the IMO 2020 cap, show that the industry has been able to comply with the new regulations. These steps will benefit our planet’s environment in the future.

“Shipping is one of the most efficient industries in terms of generating greenhouse gas. In comparison to the amount of cargo it transfers.”

George Karageorgiou, President and CEO Olympic Shipping and Management

How do you view the current state of the global shipping sector and Greece’s role within it?

Shipping is an extremely important industry, responsible for 90 percent of the transportation of global trade. Not only is it crucial for world trade but it has been a key industry for Greece, and I believe it will remain that way. It is an essential source of employment for a large number of Greeks, and the country relies on the sector in order to boost its gross domestic product.

Greek will continue holding a predominant position in the shipping industry with multiple shipowners. I believe that there will be consolidation, with smaller companies merging in order to form bigger entities. We need to do that in order to be able to compete in a much better and more efficient way with the state entities that are being formed, mostly in Asia.

Looking a little further ahead, what key issues are you looking at when making a medium-term growth strategy for Olympic Shipping and Management?

One of the first things I did when I took over this position was to digitize the foundation’s initiatives that make you feel the proud customer.

The foundation, the Nikolos D. Pateras Foundation, started 20 years ago. The initial idea for the foundation was to cover the costs and expenses of military families that had lost their loved ones while serving their country. We have covered a significant social gap that was never covered adequately by the government. Over the last 20 years, we have taken care of about 110 families, based on the above criteria. Additionally, we decided to also get involved in cultural work, we have helped by supporting the National Gallery as well as various publications related to shipping. We have also assisted in the renovation of 10 churches around Greece and have provided medical equipment for multiple hospitals.

We are a big investor in this area and we have already started seeing some small benefits during our operations, as well as in our financial results. If you start with a good and efficient operation, then those technological advancements will help you become a little more efficient. However, they are not a very big step forward on their own. The majority of the work has been already done by the people: if you have a lot of talent and an effective management structure, then the benefits will show over time.

www.country-reports.net
The modernization of a cornerstone industry

Stamatis Tsantakis, Chairman and CEO, Seanergy Maritime Holdings, shows how shipping is going greener

What is your overall view of the current state of the shipping sector at the global level and the impact of the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO’s) 2020 sulfur cap?

Seanergy is the only U.S.-listed pure-play Capesize shipping company, with a cargo-carrying capacity of approximately 1.75 deadweight tonnage and trading around 8 million tons of cargo per year. We have strong relationships with some of the world’s most prominent charternets. In particular, in order to accommodate and make our ships environmentally compliant with the IMO 2020 rules, we have got into three to five-year partnerships with companies that are involved in the market for the installation of energy saving devices and scrubbers.

As a company, we decided not to take an active position in scrubbers—instead, we have invested in such a way that those installations are shared through partnerships with various charternets. In terms of the impact of the sulfur cap, I believe that it was really significant at the very beginning of the year. Now, due to COVID-19, fuel prices have collapsed to a level where scrubber installation may not be an economical project for most companies.

“Due to COVID-19, fuel prices have collapsed to a level where scrubber installation may not be an economical project for most companies.”
Stamatis Tsantakis, Chairman and CEO, Seanergy Maritime Holdings

Seanergy has evolved from a dry bulk carrier established in 2007. If we look back, what are some of the most important waterways it has navigated through and how were these turned into opportunities for the company?

Seanergy’s first fleet that was established in 2008 was comprised of assets that were at the peak of their prices. No matter what good efforts the company put in at the time to restructure those acquisitions, it was impossible to make it happen. As a result, we had to sell all of our ships, in a procedure that started in 2012 and ended in 2014. I joined the company in 2012 and I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time.

We did not have to resort to any type of bankruptcy, unlike many of our competitors. We did not change anything in terms of shareholders and the restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time. I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time.

What changed and what is the company’s strategy for the future?

I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time. I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time.

Do you think that there will be a change in global shipping patterns due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time. I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time.

What is the future of the shipping industry?

I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time. I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time.

How are you preparing for the future?

I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time. I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time. I led this restructuring phase. I must say that we overview the most successful restructuring process in the entire history of the U.S.’s public markets at that time.
A unique destination for yachting

Antonis Stelliatos, President, Hellenic Professional Yacht Owners Association, demonstrates why Greece is the sector’s global leader.

With tens of thousands of kilometers of pristine coastline, Greece is a paradise for travelers who love the sea. What makes Greek yachting distinct when compared to competing destinations?

Greece is the ultimate destination for yachting, with the clearest and most transparent waters in the Mediterranean. Whether in the classic splendor of the Cyclades in the Aegean, the salt flats of the Ionian region or the cosmopolitan Dodecanes islands. Whether you would prefer spending your days lounging on a beach or experiencing our museums and archeological sites—what better way to experience it all than with a yacht.

Since the yachting season in Greece runs from April to early November, the Greek seas offer attractions and delights for all tastes.

“The yachting season in Greece runs from April to early November, the Greek seas offer attractions and delights for all tastes.”

Antonis Stelliatos, President
Hellenic Professional Yacht Owners Association

Tourism is Greece’s champion sector: during the financial crisis, it was the only sector that saw consistent growth. How does yachting contribute to tourism?

Today, according to researchers, yachting contributes 1.1 percent of the tourism sector’s entire contribution. In comparison, cruise ships represent 0.0082 percent.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has announced a three-pronged plan to boost Greece’s maritime sector, with nautical tourism being one prong. From your perspective, what are the critical issues that you are focused on tackling?

We are promoting Greece as a unique yachting destination and nautical tourism. Beside that, our shipyards are being upgraded to allow for the construction of new yachts in Greece. We are also giving a lot of attention to tourism education, which is important for high-level VIP passengers.

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

We have coordinated with the government and other stakeholders to mandate to employ Greek-only crew, which we want to reconsider with the government. Equal treatment for foreign and Greek flags is crucial, in our opinion.

What are some of the opportunities on offer to investors in Greek nautical tourism?

Hopefully, the government will focus further on nautical tourism, including marinas. With the amount of yachts visiting Greece during the summer, a marina investment would present an excellent opportunity and there are already foreign investors that have invested in marinas. There is currently a serious focus on the shipyards of Piraeus, which would allow us to compete with Italy or France and provide job opportunities to thousands.

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?

As an ambassador for the Greek shipping industry, do you have a favorite yachting destination?
Meeting the global challenges in dry bulk shipping

George Souravlas, Founder and CEO, Load Line Marine, reveals how his company continues to stay ahead of the competition

Load Line Marine is an important member of Greece’s shipowning community that operates and manages dry cargo vessels. Considering your experience, how do you view today’s global environment for shipping?

Our area of expertise is dry bulk shipping, which has suffered 10 years of drought and low rates, mainly due to an oversupply of ships rather than a lack of demand. The International Maritime Organization’s 2020 fuel sulfur cap has also produced major disruption in shipping because many suppliers had to change their facilities to abide by the new regulation. Now, we are seeing availability of the new fuels and prices are normalizing.

The next plan is to reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, as well as other greenhouse gases, by 40 percent in 2030 and 50 percent in 2050. This is the most important issue the sector has to address today. The sulfur content was an easily manageable issue the sector has to address today. The sulfur content was an easily manageable issue.

We have managed to maintain operating costs below the average index and this is certainly an important issue the sector has to address today. The sulfur content was an easily manageable issue the sector has to address today. The sulfur content was an easily manageable issue the sector has to address today.

What is your vision for Greece’s shipping sector?

The Greek fleet has been for many years the world’s largest fleet, as well as one of the strongest pillars of Greece’s economy. The strength of Greek shipowners is that they have evolved with the times—in shipping, you have to have commercial and technical know-how combined with an open mind.

As well as working with the Minister of Tourism, the GMA is working closely with the Hellenic Merchant Marine authority and central committees of doctors to finalize and achieve the health and operating protocols to restart operations. When the airlines start, it will be possible to charter boats from marinas. If that is delayed, chartering will be further delayed. That is why it is important for us to extend the Greek tourism season. We have the ideal climate and the natural beauty of our islands. Extension depends on other sectors of the economy and life but, if there is good cooperation, we will find a way.

How are you helping your members navigate 2020’s economic shock?

We learned that we can find good solutions when we work with others. Load Line Marine itself has always supported Greek shipyards, preferring them to other yards. Our detailed plans and proposals, which have been submitted to the authorities, are mid- to long-term targets. We want to change things in Greece and our industry. The problem is that there is never just one authority involved in marinas. The first thing I raised at the GMA’s January forum was that unless we have central coordination from one committee for our industry, we won’t be able to solve the marinas’ issues effectively.

Are there opportunities for international investors in the marina sector?

There are many lessons GMA learned from the coronavirus crisis. We learned that we can find good solutions when we work with others. With the International Council of Marine Industry Associations and the European Boating Industry, we set safe operating guidelines that we are recommending to our government. Another good thing is technology—we upgraded our facilities, automation, software and our business. In addition, we are becoming better professionals, not only because of the new technology solutions applied but because of better business planning and risk management in better ways.

The marina sector will be stronger than ever after COVID-19

Stavros Katsikadis, President, Grecianas Marine Association, on plans to change the industry and maximize Greece’s potential

From your position as president of the Grecianas Marine Association (GMA), what is the current outlook for the sector in 2020?

Things are not as we thought they would be when the GMA held a very successful forum in Greece at the end of January. We had an excellent, honest discussion with the authorities and ministers, and all agreed that we have to move quickly to address problems like bureaucracy, the opening of the market to foreign operators and the long, frustrating period that new operators have faced.

“Any financial assistance we get from the government will end up with our clients and customers.”

We are in discussion with the government for a relief in concession fees. As well as working with the Minister of Tourism, the GMA is working closely with the Hellenic Merchant Marine authority and central committees of doctors to finalize and achieve the health and operating protocols to restart businesses. When I say restart, I don’t mean the operation of marinas—this never stopped. They continued with daily operations, liabilities, expenses and personnel. That involves a lot of expense.

We are about to complete a contingency plan for each marina in the case of COVID-19 incidents. If a boat arrives with an infection, everybody—all employees, clients and customers—will know what to do. It is important for us to extend the Greek tourism season. We have the ideal climate and the natural beauty of our islands.

How are you helping your members navigate 2020’s economic shock?

It is important for us to extend the Greek tourism season. We have the ideal climate and the natural beauty of our islands.

Stavros Katsikadis, President, Grecianas Marine Association

When the airlines start, it will be possible to charter boats from marinas. If that is delayed, chartering will be further delayed. That is why it is important for us to extend the Greek tourism season. We have the ideal climate and the natural beauty of our islands.

Are there opportunities for international investors in the marina sector?

There are many lessons GMA learned from the coronavirus crisis. We learned that we can find good solutions when we work with others. With the International Council of Marine Industry Associations and the European Boating Industry, we set safe operating guidelines that we are recommending to our government. Another good thing is technology—we upgraded our facilities, automation, software and our business. In addition, we are becoming better professionals, not only because of the new technology solutions applied but because of better business planning and risk management in better ways.

Are there opportunities for international investors in the marina sector?

When you invest in times of uncertainty, you will get a higher return in times of success, and I know there is a strong interest from Greek and foreign investors in marinas. I think that, after COVID-19, it will be proved that investing in marinas is not the highest risk because they will suffer less than other tourism sectors. In Greece, we have a strong advantage in our 16,000 kilometers of coast; our friendly seas; the know-how in marinas, shipping and tourism sectors. In Greece, we have a strong advantage in our 16,000 kilometers of coast; our friendly seas; the know-how in marinas, shipping and tourism sectors.

It is important for us to extend the Greek tourism season. We have the ideal climate and the natural beauty of our islands.

Stavros Katsikadis, President, Grecianas Marine Association

Load Line Marine’s fleet consists of:

- 11 Handysize, Supramax and Ultramax dry bulk carriers
- 2.2% of global CO₂ emissions come from shipping
- 90% of global trade transportation

Ships providing 90% of trade transportation

“Any financial assistance we get from the government will end up with our clients and customers.”

Stavros Katsikadis, President, Grecianas Marine Association

Marinas and yachting contribute 1.41% to Greek GDP

Marinas and yachting contribute 1.41% to Greek GDP, according to a 2013 report by Greek Maritime Academy. This report estimated the total revenue generated by the marina sector, including yacht club fees and other services, at €60 million. The report also noted that the marina sector is a significant contributor to the Greek economy, with a 2.6% share of the country’s GDP.

Greece has 16,000 km of coastline

Greece has 16,000 km of coastline, which makes it a natural destination for both domestic and international yachtsmen. The country’s coastline is home to a number of marinas, which cater to the needs of both amateur and professional sailors. The marina sector is an important part of the country’s economy, with a significant contribution to the GDP and employment.

There are many lessons GMA learned from the coronavirus crisis. We learned that we can find good solutions when we work with others. With the International Council of Marine Industry Associations and the European Boating Industry, we set safe operating guidelines that we are recommending to our government.
As a global leader in ship repair solutions, how would you describe the shipping industry in the future?

Arsenios Papatheodorou, Founder and CEO, BPCO

As a global leader in ship repair solutions, how would you describe the impact of the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) sulfur cap on BPCO’s business and what opportunities are emerging from this new paradigm?

BPCO represents Panasia, which is a Korean manufacturer and one of the leaders in the area of scrubber unit manufacturing. In order to adapt to the IMO’s 2020 sulfur regulation, each shipping company has two options. On the one hand, shipowners could continue using marine gasoil (MGO), but with a very low-sulfur gasoil. However, in this case we have refused to undertake a job. We know when a project cannot be done properly and our aim is to offer services that please our clients in the long run.

Arsenios Papatheodorou, Founder and CEO, BPCO

Can you tell us about your partnership with Panasia and how your collaboration has resulted in a number of innovative products?

It took a lot of effort from our side to make Panasia understand how crucial after-sales service is. Eventually, they trusted BPCO to run the after-sales service in Greece. It is understandable that Panasia has been operating in a more ‘closed’ system and has avoided sharing their resources and know-how, but once they examined and understood our reasoning and motive, they supported us fully.

As a company that relies on new technologies to help shipowners boost efficiencies and adopt greener practices, what is your vision for driving innovation and sustainability in the maritime sector?

As BPCO, we have a certain code of ethics that we follow throughout every step of our work. If we have the means and know-how to undertake a job, we will. We check every aspect of a job on behalf of our clients in terms of technical and, from a larger perspective, commercial outlook. It is extremely crucial that our work is carried out in a timely and efficient manner. I can recall many cases where we have refused to undertake a job. We know when a project cannot be done properly and our aim is to offer services that please our clients in the long run. This is why we have a trusting relationship with our clients and they choose us. I believe that any decision we make must be for the benefit of the shipowner.

BPCO provides 38% of the Greek market with scrubbers, in accordance with the IMO 2020 sulfur cap. Between 2018 and 2019, BPCO’s revenue increased by €400 million, BPCO’s flagship partner, Panasia, accounts for 70% of the company’s projects.

As a major alternative investments fund manager, what is DECA Investments’ outlook for Greece, considering the strides it had made in its recovery prior to the emergence of COVID-19 and the surge in business sentiment recorded recently?

I would say that we are cautiously optimistic. In the past, Greece had a lot of weaknesses in terms of economic model and business development. There was some significant resistance in having the structural changes that needed to be made, but some of them were made. Greece now is in a significantly better position in that respect than in 2008. We have seen determination by the current administration to continue with the necessary changes.

Nicos Koulis, CEO, DECA Investments

“Operating in just the Greek market used to be much less desirable, forcing companies to play in bigger leagues. This meant that they had to be more efficient and scale up.”

Nicos Koulis, CEO, DECA Investments

In your dealings with foreign investors, have you noticed a substantial change in their perception of Greece as a lucrative investment destination?

The majority of investor funds are coming from abroad. I would describe us as a quasi-foreign investor. We focused more on export-oriented companies. We are more optimistic now, partly due to the new administration’s perspective on the country and partly because this is specific to what we do.

Operating in just the Greek market used to be much less desirable, forcing companies to play in bigger leagues. This meant that they had to be more efficient and scale up. In our portfolio, we have a fintech company, Viva Wallet, which is currently expanding all over Europe. This is clearly a sector that has done well and can do even better. There are quite a few other high-tech companies based in Greece that are doing well. Greece happens to have great quality in terms of electrical engineers, who are paid considerably less than their U.S. or U.K. counterparts.

So, you would say that the more outward-looking Greek companies better weathered the financial crisis?

I believe that there has been a change in the paradigm. Back in 2015, people and owners of companies stuck with their businesses after managing to salvage them through the early years of the crisis. Now, we see that more and more people are realizing that, in order to add economic value for their shareholders, they need to grow on an international level. When it comes to companies that we want to acquire, we see them being much more willing to listen to the fact that, with our help, they may not have 100 percent of their business’ profits but they will be wealthier in terms of value.

What will be the fund’s investment strategy as it enters the new decade?

We have just completed our investment period, having invested in 10 companies. Now, we are focusing on continuously adding value in our existing investments. In addition, we will be monitoring and preparing our existing investments for the “exit”. On another note, we are laying the groundwork for the creation of a new fund. Besides the Hellenic Brewery of Atalanti (EZA), we have moved forward with the acquisition of a well-established and historic Greek company, with more than 100 years of history in the food sector, Minerva. Before that, we added Phasis, a respectable pharma company, to our portfolio.

There are 10 companies in DECA Investments’ portfolio.

We have just completed our investment period, having invested in 10 companies. Now, we are focusing on continuously adding value in our existing investments. In addition, we will be monitoring and preparing our existing investments for the “exit”. On another note, we are laying the groundwork for the creation of a new fund. Besides the Hellenic Brewery of Atalanti (EZA), we have moved forward with the acquisition of a well-established and historic Greek company, with more than 100 years of history in the food sector, Minerva. Before that, we added Phasis, a respectable pharma company, to our portfolio.

Do you have any final message for the readers of Newsweek?

I believe that it is elementary that those who are interested in investing in Greece need a local partner. I hope that the remaining structural changes that are required to be made in Greece, which the current government has been pushing quite heavily, will be implemented eventually, as they are going to make a huge difference.

www.country-reports.net

Greece
Supporting film and TV productions with a slew of incentives

Panos Kouanis, President and CEO, EKOME, describes the agency’s support measures as well as Greece’s inherent advantages

The National Center of Audiovisual Media and Communication S.A. (EKOME) is a strategic Greek agency founded just three years ago with the overarching objective of promoting all sectors in the audiovisual industry. Tell us a bit about the agency’s mission as well as its three key pillars—invest, digitize and educate.

On the financial crisis, EKOME was set up in an attempt to save a sector that had been hit severely. Companies were closing and we found a niche in the market that we wanted to support. We had to initiate and create incentives, both for the local industry as well as for foreign productions to come to Greece. We started a cash rebate program, in which we give producers 35 percent of their total expenses back if they come to Greece to shoot films, TV series, documentaries and video game material. This has been really successful. In the last two years, we have had more than 90 projects, with a total investment of about €80 million, meaning that we are going to give the production companies more than €20 million in cash back. We also have another incentive coming out which is related to tax relief. It is complimentary to the cashback incentive and provides a 30 percent tax return for the people that invest in productions in Greece. These are two strong incentives toward the local industry and international producers.

“From concept to materialization, EKOME provides any creator, artist and producer with the right kind of tools so that they can bring their idea to fruition.”

Panos Kouanis, President and CEO, EKOME

On another note, we support many educational programs talking about media information literacy. This starts from the very beginning, from elementary school going all the way through to professional training. We have sent several proposals to the Ministry of Education to incorporate audiovisual education into the curriculum at various levels of study. We are expecting the Ministry of Education to respond to that and incorporate audiovisual education hopefully from the next year. We are also supporting internships through the development of education into the curriculum at various levels of study. We are expecting the Ministry of Education to respond to that and incorporate audiovisual education hopefully from the next year.

As an outside observer now based in Greece, what is your outlook for the economy and how valuable is the boost in confidence that many speak of?

I have been really impressed by the knowledge and experience of people here. Greek professionals are highly skilled, perform excellently in their respective fields and have great potential for further development and success. In addition, ever since the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) was selected as the preferred route for natural gas from the Caspian region into Europe, we have had incredible support from the Greek state, which demonstrates the commitment to assisting with the implementation of strategic investments. That level of support is also a significant factor in creating a healthy, attractive environment for future investments that can lead to substantial economic growth.

Once on stream, what will be the impact of TAP in terms of energy security and diversity of supply for Europe?

TAP is a very important and strategic project for the European Union, and specifically for the region of Southeast Europe and Greece. The pipeline itself is 878 kilometers long and crosses three host countries. Greece, with 550 kilometers contains the most. We are developing a pipeline that will transport natural gas from the Caspian region to Europe. Even though TAP does not own the gas to be transported, it does enable the provision of gas to Greece and to Southeast Europe from the Caspian region to Europe. Even though TAP does not own the gas to be transported, it does enable the provision of gas to Greece and to Southeast Europe from the Caspian region to Europe.

Could you explain how the development of the pipeline is progressing?

The way that we have built the pipeline is through extensive preparation, professional project management, application of best practices and responsible behavior. I would like to think that our project will not be valued solely by the result, but also by the way it was carried out.

In Greece, we have successfully completed the introduction of hydrocarbons in all 590 kilometers of the Greek section of the pipeline, following rigorous testing. As of May 2020 natural gas is also being gradually introduced into Albania, while the offshore section under the Adriatic Sea was concluded this past June. TAP is progressing on schedule, and we are looking into completing commissioning and starting commercial operations within 2020, potentially within the last quarter of the year.

What will be the legacy of TAP in Greece and how will its social and economic impact evolve once the taps are open?

TAP has left quite a substantial financial and social footprint. We have invested around €1.5 billion, which is one of the largest foreign direct investments Greece has received over the last decade. We procured goods and services from more than 800 local companies over the project’s implementation period, which has provided them with valuable know-how. Besides the obvious geopolitical and financial benefits of the pipeline, we think that TAP could be a really valuable blueprint for future large-scale projects.

What would be your final message for the readers of Newsweek?

2020 is the year during which major landmarks are anticipated for TAP overall and for Greece specifically, as the first host country to receive gas from the Southern Gas Corridor via the pipeline’s commercial operation. In conclusion, we hope that the successful completion of our project and the lessons learned during its implementation will serve as the foundation and the road map for further endeavors, as Greece will play a more pivotal role in TAP’s next phase.
A return to world-class shopping for tourists to Greece

George Velentzas, Executive Chairman, Hellenic Duty Free Shops, assesses the prospects for the country’s tourism sector

What is behind Greece’s successful management of the COVID-19 crisis and what impact will that have on the country’s tourism sector?

Without a doubt, the international praise we have received is nothing but a testament to Greece’s effective handling of the pandemic. There is no other country that has managed to do more to protect its citizens and tourists, which is why Greece is now considered a safe destination and a priority place to visit for foreign travelers.

The situation we and the rest of the tourism sector are experiencing is indescribable, unprecedented, not easy and we must now face reality and work out how we can overcome this crisis. I believe that we should not expect much tourism from markets like the U.K., France, Italy and the U.S., which have been severely hit by COVID-19 and will have serious issues, especially in the first phase of reopening our borders. At this point, we need to address other countries that have suffered less, as they have shown better results in their fight against the pandemic—Israel, for example, Norway, Finland, Denmark and the Balkan countries. We can also take advantage of road and domestic tourism.

Businesses have to strategically deal with this crisis and take gradual steps to overcome it as soon as possible. We must not lose our composure, as recovery will take some time. I estimate that, as far as HDFS is concerned, our sales will return to their previous levels in 2022.

What are the main lessons to be learned from the coronavirus crisis for Greece and its tourism sector?

Firstly, Greece’s strong tourist culture that covers a significant part of the Mediterranean, the most frequented tourist destination worldwide. Secondly, the financial crisis in 2007 and Greece’s effective handling of the pandemic weren’t a matter of chance. Our tourism sector has been the backbone of Greece’s economy, and we must continue to work to ensure its success.

What reforms are needed to help revitalize the Greek economy?

There are still difficult but fundamental structural reforms to be done—for example, the holistic revamping of public administration and judicial systems, the stabilization of a competitive taxation system, improving labor law flexibility and the liberalization of closed markets and professions. Obviously, the post-pandemic economic recovery will depend on reigniting tourism and investment in new sectors, such as technology and innovation-related advisory business, while injecting innovation and digitalization into all businesses. This has already been achieved by adapting our workforce to the new realities of the future and by creating a center of development, creative thinking and productivity—the Deloitte Greece Competence Center in Thessaloniki—that supports Greek entrepreneurship and employment by investing in the potential and talent of young graduates, but also delivering projects with an emphasis on new technologies and innovation.

We work closely with our clients in the public and private sector, across various industries, to imagine and deliver their digital ambitions. Moreover, through our close collaboration with various federation bodies, we are actively supporting the digital transformation of particular sectors of the Greek economy for the Industry 4.0 era. Athens has the potential to become a startup hub, as the success of certain startups in raising significant funds has shown. Deloitte Greece is acting as an accelerator of the Greek scale-up ecosystem, bringing together the country’s funding mechanisms, large organizations searching for investment opportunities and scale-ups seeking new rounds of funding.

Multidisciplinary local expertise with global reach

Dimitris Koutroupolos, CEO, Deloitte Greece, gives his outlook for the country and explains how his firm is promoting Greek innovation

Deloitte Greece is a leading provider of audit and assurance, consulting, financial advisory, risk advisory, tax and related services, and part of the global Deloitte network. What is your current assessment of the Greek economy and its government’s €24 billion stimulus package?

In our opinion, the government adopted a pragmatic, prudent approach to the pandemic following scientific advice, while the Greek people supported this restrictive stance and behaved responsibly. Thus, early taken measures contributed to a successful outcome so far. There is still significant uncertainty ahead but the impact on the Greek economy can only be expected to be hard, as the crisis predominantly hit critical sectors like tourism and transportation. At present, the European Commission forecasts a -9.7% growth for Greece in 2020. The Greek government is more optimistic, on the basis of the predicted effects of its stimulus measures.

The government doesn’t have unlimited resources, especially following a 10-year recession and accumulation of public debt, to embark on a gigantic stimulus program. However, its general response to the crisis seems to be pragmatically right. Currently, the main effort focuses on supporting smaller businesses and households because smaller enterprises represent the backbone of the Greek economy and the ability of households to consume is vital for the economy. Obviously, critical sectors for the Greek economy, like tourism and transportation, should be supported too.

How quickly can Greece bounce back from COVID-19?

The economy overly depends on tourism and this heavy dependence is a structural issue itself. So, unavoidably, the recovery will depend on reigniting tourism. Despite this temporary drawback, there are many great opportunities for investing in Greece and, under the current administration, foreign strategic investors are welcomed to consider such opportunities and the advantages arising from Greece being a European Union and eurozone country.

How have Deloitte Greece and the country changed and embraced innovation since the financial crisis in 2008?

Having weathered the crisis, Deloitte Greece has been holistically transformed into a genuinely multidisciplinary member of a truly globalized organization. It has been rapidly expanding to non-traditional services, especially technology and innovation-related advisory business, while injecting innovation and digitalization into all its businesses. This has been achieved by adapting our workforce to the new realities of the future and by creating a center of development, creative thinking and productivity—the Deloitte Greece Competence Center in Thessaloniki—that supports Greek entrepreneurship and employment by investing in the potential and talent of young graduates, but also delivering projects with an emphasis on new technologies and innovation.

How do you sum up the expectations at the country’s tourism sector?

What reforms are needed to help revitalize the Greek economy?

What reforms are needed to help revitalize the Greek economy?

How have Deloitte Greece and the country changed and embraced innovation since the financial crisis in 2008?

Having weathered the crisis, Deloitte Greece has been holistically transformed into a genuinely multidisciplinary member of a truly globalized organization. It has been rapidly expanding to non-traditional services, especially technology and innovation-related advisory business, while injecting innovation and digitalization into all its businesses. This has been achieved by adapting our workforce to the new realities of the future and by creating a center of development, creative thinking and productivity—the Deloitte Greece Competence Center in Thessaloniki—that supports Greek entrepreneurship and employment by investing in the potential and talent of young graduates, but also delivering projects with an emphasis on new technologies and innovation.

How do you sum up the expectations at the country’s tourism sector?

What reforms are needed to help revitalize the Greek economy?

How have Deloitte Greece and the country changed and embraced innovation since the financial crisis in 2008?

Having weathered the crisis, Deloitte Greece has been holistically transformed into a genuinely multidisciplinary member of a truly globalized organization. It has been rapidly expanding to non-traditional services, especially technology and innovation-related advisory business, while injecting innovation and digitalization into all its businesses. This has been achieved by adapting our workforce to the new realities of the future and by creating a center of development, creative thinking and productivity—the Deloitte Greece Competence Center in Thessaloniki—that supports Greek entrepreneurship and employment by investing in the potential and talent of young graduates, but also delivering projects with an emphasis on new technologies and innovation.

How do you sum up the expectations at the country’s tourism sector?

What reforms are needed to help revitalize the Greek economy?
Cooper Pharmaceuticals is an established leader in the Greek pharmaceutical market. From your scientific viewpoint, what key elements allowed Greece to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic so effectively?

Most importantly, Greece assessed the threat, and responded maturely and swiftly, applying strict measures not seen or not apparent in other countries. The government included scientists in their decision-making process and applied a collective strategy that prioritized health and wellbeing, while trying to balance out the effects on the economy. People we made to feel part of the collective strategy and that they were participating in the government’s plan. Another important thing is that we were provided with very detailed data analysis every day by a professor of medicine.

How has COVID-19 affected your business priorities and did Cooper tweak its production during this period in a similar way to how—one of Greece’s oldest pharmaceutical companies—supplied key medical products to the Red Cross during World War II?

There are two aids to this. One is that we had products that really were essential medicines for patients that were hospitalized due to the coronavirus—mainly antibiotics for the respiratory system and products for anesthesia. We had to expand and grow to support all of the state hospitals, especially those allocated to coronavirus. The crisis also negatively influenced all the other parts of our operation. Everything was focused on the products that were needed for COVID-19.

Cooper learned how to operate differently as well. We were hesitant about working from home but introduced new technologies and saw that people working from home but introduced new technologies and saw that people

By the end of the World War II, Greece’s pharmaceutical sector had grown and expanded significantly. How did it transform into an industry that provides about 85 to 90 percent of its medicine needs through local production? I hope the government appreciates that, during this pandemic, the Greek pharmaceutical industry supported the healthcare system and that it understands that the claw-backs and rebates it is imposing on the sector hamper growth and make investments more difficult. The sector’s high levels of activity in R&D and new product development have a positive impact on the economy. As for Cooper, we have to look into further investments because there are more opportunities in Greece and outside. Our products are exported to over 30 countries. During the coronavirus crisis, we kept exporting to countries with big problems, such as in the Far East and Europe. In the future, we will keep investing in new production lines, in optimizing our production and capacity, and in all areas that will improve production.

Cooper has embraced the growing demand for its products in markets like the Middle East, Africa and Asia. How did it transform into an international player?

To expand and grow we had to expand our production facilities and look outside Greece. Our first move was to become a dominant player in our region. Progressively, we expanded into the Middle East and then the Far East. We have two big lines of products: injectables for hospitals and products for ophthalmology, which is a niche market with few operators.

Can you outline your vision for the company?

Cooper’s pharmaceuticals provide an annual turnover of €35m.

Cooper’s products are exported to more than 30 countries.

Greece manufactures almost 90% of its domestic pharmaceutical needs.

The pharmaceutical sector has a substantial manufacturing footprint in Greece. We have 28 production units and very strong R&D centers.

The Greek pharmaceutical industry is a key growth sector.

Theophilo Tryfon, President, Panhellenic Union of Pharmaceutical Industries

The Greek pharma sector represents 22 percent of Greece’s total investment in R&D and 8 percent of all private sector investments. In what research areas does Greece stand out and what potential do you see in the relatively underdeveloped field of clinical trials?

Greek companies are endeavoring into the development of both generics and added-value products which are based on known molecules that address healthcare needs and deliver relevant improvement for patients, healthcare professionals and payers, in terms of better efficacy, safety and tolerability profile, ease of use and increased therapeutic adherence. This requires the extensive use of resource planning and quality assurance systems to address the complexity of the different business functions. Especially in terms of production process, systems automation and artificial intelligence play a significant role in order to monitor and control quality in all stages of production.

Greece could do much better in the area of clinical trials, however this requires the creation of a business/research ecosystem whereby large multinational companies would find it interesting and efficient to invest, especially for phases one to three. The pillars of this environment consist in the infrastructure, in the availability of a patient pool and the establishment of rigid procedures in terms of timelines and deliverables. There are sufficient incentives to invest in Greece now, as a recent legislation provides that a part of investments in production and R&D are offset with the clawback that companies are burdened by. Thanks to this, 17 Greek companies have been projecting specific investments plans to a total of €500 million in production and R&D within the next four years. These investments would advance production increase market size and potentially set a cap over the clawback, mimicking the best practices from other countries.

Why does Greece do so well in pharmaceutical exports?

We have a very strong industrial base and, over numerous years, we have formed a robust commercial network covering many countries and companies that we cooperate with. We tend to build strong bonds with our business partners, based on our product quality, uninterrupted supply and competitive price.

As well as being president of PEF, you are vice president of ELVEN, a leader in dry powder inhalers, generics and experimental biomedical research. What are ELVEN’s priorities as it enters a new decade?

Our first priority is to further strengthen our production base. We currently have three production units and are building a fourth, mostly dedicated to the respiratory market. Furthermore, we are expanding our research and training centers, and running new training programs, seminars and research protocols. Our goal is to create a hub to facilitate companies to enter the sector. This is a project that we have already put on track, in collaboration with the government and with funding from the state and the EU.
Feel the rippling tides of history like the gentle waves that beckon you to the water’s edge.

TIMELESS TEMPTATIONS

RHODES