



Phone may hold clue to Greek girl's killer

MOBILE phone records could lead police to a mystery caller as investigations continue into the murder of a trainee restaurant manager in Glasgow.

Police leading the hunt for the killer of Eleni Pachou, 25, are thought to be a step closer to finding the person who phoned her mobile minutes before she was stabbed.

It's possible the number could be obtained if the person does not come forward.

Eleni was found stabbed to death in the kitchen of West End restaurant Di

Maggio's in Ruthven Lane off Byres Road.

Police said Eleni, who was originally from Greece, met a "horrific" death at her workplace. Her body was found by a member of staff at 8.20am on Friday.

She worked as a waitress at the Italian chain for a year until May last year but rejoined them in October 2007, when she won a place on their trainee management programme.

Her father and brother have travelled from Athens to be with another brother who is at Strathclyde University. Eleni's death comes a year-and-a-half since her

mum passed away.

Her family attended a memorial service for Eleni on Sunday at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St Luke in Downhill Glasgow.

Father Constantine Papageorgiou said: "Parishioners described Eleni as a very happy, a very open girl and we wanted to remember her on behalf of the community and to say prayers for her family."

Her employers described her as "a beautiful, sparkling young woman".

Police have said one possible motive for the crime was robbery.

Blue flag beaches up; Greece takes 2nd place

The Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature (HSPN) said the number of blue flags awarded to Greek beaches this year increased to 430 from 428 previously, ranking the country in position No 2 on a list of 40 nations.

Blue flags, awarded to beaches on qualitative criteria, were placed in regions throughout the country, with many being granted in Rhodes, Crete and Halkidiki. Swimmers interested in going for a nearby dip in Attica have nine blue-flag beaches to choose from, including Varkiza and Voula. HSPN runs the flag program for Greece, which rates beaches based on the quality of the seawater and organization of the swimming area, among other factors. Denmark's Foundation for Environmental Education, a non-governmental group, operates the Blue Flag scheme internationally. It assessed more than 3,300 beaches last year across Europe, South Africa, Canada, New Zealand and the Caribbean.

First Greek gay marriages spark judicial battle

ATHENS (AFP) – A heated debate on gay rights opened in Greece on Tuesday hours after the country's first same-sex civil marriages were held on the small Aegean island of Tilos, sparking an immediate judicial reaction.

Greek Justice Minister Sotiris Hatzigakis quickly declared the marriages "non-existent" and accused the local mayor of "arbitrarily" overstepping his authority.

"There is no legal framework for the holding of same-sex weddings in Greece," Hatzigakis said in a statement.

But Greece's main homosexual association Olke pledged to fight back.

"A step forward for equality has been taken... We're going to fight for the recognition of our rights," said Evangelia Vlami, 47, a prominent Olke member who was one of the newlyweds on Tuesday.

She married a woman of similar age, who was not identified.

The sole other newlywed to be



named is another longtime gay activist, Dimitris Tsabrounis, who married a 25-year-old man.

Around 30 people including witnesses, local residents and gay activists attended the two ceremonies conducted by Tilos Mayor Anastassis Aliferis shortly after dawn.

Greek gay rights groups exploited a loophole in a 1982 law that does not specify that a civil union must involve a man and a woman.

The exact timing and location had been shrouded in secrecy until the last minute as a similar attempt in Athens had to be abandoned in March.

The issue is considered taboo for Greek society, where homosexuals have only begun seeking greater visibility and voice in recent years, holding the country's first Gay Pride event in 2005.

The influential Greek Orthodox Church officially frowns upon same-sex relations, with its late head Archbishop Christodoulos famously condemning homosexuality as a "defect."

The prosecutor of Rhodes island -- the administrative centre of the Dodecanese island group -- on Tuesday called on the mayor to annul the marriage and opened a preliminary inquiry to examine the

mayor's prosecution for breach of duty.

But Mayor Aliferis, a socialist, said there was no legal obstacle to the ceremony taking place.

"I have no intention of annulling the marriages," he told AFP.

"Under European law, there can be no discrimination, and I hope the authorities keep that in mind to avoid ridiculing our country," he said.

Gay activists launched the initiative after the government introduced a cohabitation law for unmarried couples that made no reference to homosexuals.

The Church's reaction was muted Tuesday.

"These people are outside the Church, they can do what they want," said Father Timotheos, spokesman for Christodoulos' successor Archbishop Ieronymos.

A poll by Ethnos daily in April showed Greek opinion is split on the issue.

Over 48 percent of respondents said they oppose the legalisation of same-sex relations against 45.1 percent who are in favour.

The move in Greece comes days after a court in neighbouring Turkey ordered the closure of a leading Turkish homosexual rights lobby group after prosecutors accused it of breaching morality and family norms.

MADE IN GREECE

Mastic has been a prized commodity throughout history used for medicinal purposes, as a flavoring in liqueurs and sweets, or even as a base in paints and lacquers. It was probably the world's first chewing gum, popular among the ancient Greeks who acknowledged its healing powers on teeth, gums and even the digestive system. The mastic evergreen tree, called Schinos, flourishes throughout the Mediterranean but only the trees on the southern region of the Aegean island Chios can be tapped for the unique resin. Mastic is widely known for its therapeutic benefits in spa treatments, and it is used in various other products.

