



Devastating Wildfires Helia, a Year After

On the 24th of August a memorial was held in Helia to mark the first black anniversary since devastating wildfires broke out in the Helia prefecture claiming high toll in human lives. The wildfires spread to bordering Arkadia and Messinia prefectures burning down tens of thousands of hectares of forest and agricultural land but the worst of all was the tens of people killed in the fires. On the occasion of the sad anniversary, NET will broadcast a special report on Zaharo and Artemida and a review on the reconstruction work in the area during the evening news bulletin. Fires that broke out in Kardamila, in Hios, Amfilohia and Hrisa, in Xanthi have been brought under partial control.

Best Countries for Business #53 Greece

Between Panama and Peru

... lies Greece, at #53, in Forbes' 2008 ranking of 'best countries for business.' Down three notches from 2007, Greece continues to be weighed down from bureaucratic and investor rights issues.

Rank-previous year 50

GDP Growth	3.7%
GDP/Capita	\$30,500
Trade Balance	\$-36.4 bil
Population	10.7 mil
Unemployment	8.4%

Rank vs. 2007

Trade Freedom	46
Monetary Freedom	47
Property Rights	38
Innovation	58
Technology	50
Red Tape	110
Investor Protection	111
Corruption	45
Personal Freedom	33
Corporate Tax Rate	28

Greece has a capitalist economy with the public sector accounting for about 40% of GDP and with per capita GDP at least 75% of the leading euro-zone economies. Tourism provides 15% of GDP. Immigrants make up nearly one-fifth of the work force, mainly in agricultural and unskilled jobs. Greece is a major beneficiary of EU aid, equal to about 3.3% of annual GDP. The Greek economy grew by nearly 4.0% per year between 2003 and 2007, due partly to infrastructural spending related to the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, and in part to an increased availability of credit, which has sustained record levels of consumer spending. Greece violated the EU's Growth and Stability Pact budget deficit criteria of no more than 3% of GDP from 2001 to 2006, but



finally met that criteria in 2007. Public debt, inflation, and unemployment are above the euro-zone average, but are falling. The Greek Government continues to grapple with cutting government spending, reducing the size of the public sector, and reforming the labor and pension systems, in the face of often vocal opposition from the country's powerful labor unions and the general public. The economy remains an important domestic political issue in Greece and, while the ruling New Democracy government has had some success in improving economic growth and reducing the budget deficit, Athens faces long-term challenges in its effort to continue its economic reforms, especially social security reform and privatization.

British passport holder dies on Greek highway

ATHENS (AFP) — An elderly cyclist with a British passport died on a Greek road after being hit by a car, police said Sunday.

Police said the cyclist was around 70 years old and had bags tied to his bicycle, but could not be immediately identified.

"He carried a British passport but there was some difficulty matching him to the person listed on it," a police spokesman told AFP.

The incident occurred on the Athens-Salonika highway near Nea Erithrea on Saturday afternoon. A Volkswagen car that hit the bike disappeared, but media reports said witnesses took down the car's registration number and a Greek driver was detained two hours later. The driver was to appear before a prosecutor on Sunday.

Greek Diaspora Wrap Up

Albania

The ethnic Greek minority political organization, Omonia, has requested the Albanian government make Greek the second official language of the country. (As Albanian is the second language of FYROM.) There are varying reports as to how much the Greek language is spoken daily in Albania.

Georgia

Greece has sent over 100,000 Euros in humanitarian aid to the conflict zone of the Caucasus. In addition, the Greek government will be giving each ethnic Greek in South Ossetia 500 Euros for immediate needs.

Australia and South Africa

The newly formed SAE Youth Network held two meetings; one in Melbourne, and one in Pretoria; as the organization begins to try and bring together the various youth groups from different brotherhoods, associations and sullogi.

Top photos in Cyprus

FOR the first time, the annual World Press Photo Exhibition will be in Cyprus next month.

The World Press Photo 2008 exhibition will be hosted at the Electricity Authority of Cyprus (EAC) headquarters from September 25 to October 15. The event is co-organised by the EAC and the Dutch embassy in Nicosia and is part of efforts to promote relations between Cyprus and The Netherlands.

World Press Photo is an independent, non-profit organisation based in Amsterdam. Founded in 1955, the organisation is known for holding the world's largest and most prestigious annual press photography contest.

Donations of organs on rise

There has been a substantial rise in the number of people who have donated their organs for transplant operations, the National Transplant Organization (NTO) said yesterday.

By this time last year, there had been 78 transplant operations in Greece, thanks to organs donated by 36 people. This year, there have been 117 transplant operations that were made possible by 61 donors.

The NTO recently praised the decision of the father of Doujon Zammit, the 20-year-old Australian tourist killed on Mykonos, to donate his son's organs. They were used to save the lives of four people.

Greece has one of the lowest organ donation rates in Europe with just eight donors per million of the population. The apparent rise in the number of donors bucks a recent trend, which saw donations drop in recent years.

The average waiting time for a transplant in Greece is six years. There are some 900 people on waiting lists.