

# Greeks abroad to vote

Bill allows foreign-based voters to take part in polls without coming to Greece

Up to 400,000 Greeks living abroad are expected to benefit from an imminent change to the law that will allow them to vote in Greece's general elections from their country of residence, which would end the practice of the two big political parties flying over supporters to cast their ballot.

According to information obtained by Kathimerini, the draft law which will make this possible is almost ready and is likely to be submitted to Parliament within a matter of days.

The bill proposes that only those with Greek nationality whose details have also been recorded in municipal lists in Greece will have the right to vote.

Those wanting to vote will also have to register with the Greek embassies or consulates in their place of residence.

They will only be able to vote for the party of their choice, not specific candidates. Their votes will be counted at the embassies or consulates by an electoral committee and the results will be announced at the same time as those from Greece.

The new law will also make every party include three Greeks living abroad on their State List, which is made up of 12 candidates that do not stand in any specific constituency but are elected to Parliament based on the proportion of the vote received by their party.

According to estimates by the Interior Ministry as

well as New Democracy and PASOK, between 300,000 and 400,000 Greeks living abroad will sign up for the right to vote in the general election. Greeks living in the USA, Canada, Australia and Germany are expected to express the greatest interest.

The bill is expected to pass through Parliament easily, as it also has the support of PASOK. It is likely to allow Greeks abroad to take part in the elections from 2011 onward.

Until now, ND and PASOK have invested in flying Greeks over for the election in a practice that was considered unfair to those unable to cast their vote and to the other parties not able to spend on flights.

# Ancient gold treasure puzzles Greek archaeologists



Images provided by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki on Friday. Aug. 29, 2008, a 2,300-year-old gold wreath among human bones in a waterlogged gold jar found is seen. Archaeologists say the discovery, at the ancient city of Aigai in northern Greece, is very important due to the richness of the artifacts and the unusual circumstances in which they were buried. The finds appear to have been removed from a grave and concealed under the marketplace of Aigai, the heart of the ancient city.

**ATHENS, Greece (AP) — A priceless gold wreath has been unearthed in an ancient city in northern Greece, buried with human bones in a large copper vase that workers initially took for a land mine.**

The University of Thessaloniki said in a statement Friday that the "astounding" discovery was made during its excavations this week in the ruins of ancient Aigai. The city was the first capital of ancient Macedonia, where King Philip II — father of Alexander the Great — was assassinated.

Gold wreaths are rare and were buried with ancient nobles or royalty. But the find is also highly unusual as the artifacts appear to have been removed from a grave during ancient times and, for reasons that are unclear, reburied in the city's marketplace near the theater where Philip was stabbed to death.

"This happened quite soon after the

original burial; it's not that a grave robber took it centuries later and hid it with the intention of coming back," excavator Chryssoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli told The Associated Press. "It probably belonged to a high-ranking person."

The "impressively large" copper vessel contained a cylindrical golden jar with a lid, with the gold wreath of oak leaves and the bones inside.

"The young workman who saw it was astounded and shouted 'land mine!'" the university statement said.

Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, a professor of archaeology at the university, said the find probably dates to the 4th century B.C., during which Philip and Alexander reigned.

"Archaeologists must explain why such a group ... was found outside the extensive royal cemetery," the university statement said. "(They must also) work out why the bones of the unknown — but by no means insignificant — person were hidden in the city's most public and sacred area."



A 2,300-year-old copper vat that contained a gold jar in which archaeologists found a gold wreath and human bones is seen. Archaeologists say the discovery, at the ancient city of Aigai in northern Greece, is very important due to the richness of the artifacts and the unusual circumstances in which they were buried. The finds appear to have been removed from a grave and concealed under the marketplace of Aigai, the heart of the ancient city. (AP Photo/ Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, HO)

During the 4th century B.C., burials outside organized cemeteries were very uncommon.

In a royal cemetery at Vergina, just west of Aigai, Greek archaeologists discovered a wealth of gold and silver treasure in 1977. One of the opulent graves, which contained a large gold wreath of oak leaves, is generally accepted to have belonged to Philip II. The location of Alexander's tomb is one of the great mysteries of archaeology.

The sprawling remains of a large building with banquet halls and ornate mosaics at Aigai — some 520 kilometers (320 miles) north of Athens — has been identified as Philip's palace.

Aigai flourished in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C., attracting leading Greek artists such as the poet Euripides, who wrote his last tragedies there. The Macedonian capital was moved to Pella in the 4th century B.C., and Aigai was destroyed by the Romans in 168 B.C.

## Last bear on Mount Olympus found dead

A brown bear, found dead at the foot of Mount Olympus yesterday, was the last of the protected species in the area, conservationists said yesterday, noting that the animal appeared to have been shot or poisoned.

The fact that the bear's mouth was frozen open suggests it had suffered spasms and may have eaten poisoned bait, according to members of the environmental group Callisto. The animal also had chest injuries so it may have been shot.

Callisto, which has been monitoring the presence of bears, wolves and other protected animals on the Greek mainland for years, believes the bear found yesterday was the last of its kind in the area.

Last November the mutilated remains of a bear were found in a forest in Ellassona, central Greece. The bear had been shot and three of its paws, along with its lower jaw, had been removed.

## More endangered turtles born in Cyprus



Tiny loggerhead turtles are seen just after hatching at a beach in Cyprus Aug. 28, 2008. The east Mediterranean island, which pioneered turtle conservation in 1978, has recently seen an upsurge in the number of nests for both endangered loggerhead and green turtles.