

Skopje given ultimatum

Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis hardened his stance against the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), warning that Greece would block a scheduled investment of 50 million euros toward infrastructure in the neighboring country unless Skopje stops its provocative behavior.

"Let us be entirely clear: As long as a climate of provocation, nationalism and bigotry is cultivated, not one euro will be disbursed," Karamanlis told Parliament in reference to the 50 million euros Greece has pledged toward the construction of FYROM's section of the pan-European Corridor 10, connecting Serbia in the north to Greece in the south. "The decisions by Skopje, apart from anything else, are jeopardizing the funding, and swift progress,

of pan-European Corridor 10," the premier added. Karamanlis was reacting to the news that FYROM's prime minister, Nikola Gruevski, has decided to name this highway Alexander the Macedon, after the ancient Greek warrior Alexander the Great. The move was criticized by European Union officials earlier this week.

Karamanlis said the decision by officials in Skopje displayed a lack of respect for Greece and its historic heritage and would not win them any friends in the international community. "All they are doing is confirming, in everyone's eyes, their obstinacy and fixation on a murky past of fanaticism and nationalism," Greece's premier said.

Karamanlis added that the development would do

little good for Skopje's European Union and NATO bids. "FYROM cannot be accepted if they continue to ignore the basic principles of good-neighborly relations and both alliances have made this very clear," he said.

The Greek premier also slammed FYROM officials for obstructing progress in United Nations-mediated negotiations aimed at solving the Macedonia name dispute. "They have attempted to derail the talks from their focus and to throw up barriers to procedures," he said.

Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis, speaking from Vienna yesterday, said solving the name spat was crucial and criticized Gruevski for his "excessive provocation of the Greek people."

Survey shows strange mobile phone habits

Almost one in two Australians admit to using their mobile phone while on the toilet and a quarter of men believe the mobile is an acceptable way to propose to their partner, a survey reveals.

The survey, commissioned by Microsoft and completed by 2,500 people across Australia, China, India, Japan and Taiwan, was conducted to determine just how integral the mobile phone has become in society.

It found that 48 per cent of Australians admitted to using the mobile phone while in the toilet, compared to 66 per cent of Chinese people who do so.

Of the occasions surveyed, 80 per cent of people said they would use their phone while eating a meal with others, 62 per cent said they'd use it while driving and 48 per cent would do so while trying to sleep.

The survey also examined how people use mobile phones in their personal



lives, with those living in Melbourne more likely to go through their partner's text messages and call list than those living in Sydney.

Married women were also more likely to check their partner's phones than married men, while 30 per cent of people admitted to using their mobiles to flirt with someone other than their spouse or partner.

A quarter of Australians would use a GPS to track their partner's whereabouts, while 13 per cent said they would use their phones during "extremely intimate moments".

It was also revealed more than double

the amount of men (24 per cent) to women (11 per cent) believed it was acceptable to propose to their partner using their mobile phone.

"Other than showing some of the more unconventional uses of phones, these results show how entrenched in all aspects of our lives mobile phones have become," Microsoft director of mobile communications business Grace Kerrison said in a statement.

The survey also found that when choosing a phone, Australians go for functionality ahead of style, and almost three quarters believe children under 12 are too young to own a mobile phone.



Deputy FM visits Greek Diaspora Youth being hosted in Greece

Deputy Foreign Minister Theodoros Kassimis visited young people of Greek descent from the southern hemisphere who are being hosted in Greece by the Secretariat General for Hellenes Abroad.

One-hundred young people of the Greek diaspora, aged 18-25, are staying at a downtown Athens hotel from 11 January until the end of the month in the framework of the "Program of Greek language and civilization". During their 20-day visit they will attend Greek language lessons, visit archaeological sites and meet with youth organizations.

Eat a donut - fat people are happy

Fat people are happy, a poll has found.

Nine out of 10 overweight people are satisfied with life and the person they are. The Newpoll of 1,200 people, which looked at people's happiness and their attitudes to weight and health, found more than half the population thought they were overweight. Women were more likely to think they weighed too much. Men were twice as likely to eat unhealthily or not care about what they ate. The poll, commissioned by weight loss company Weight Watchers, asked overweight people about their habits.

Almost half of them said they ate healthily most of the time, although more than 80 per cent of them admitted they did not get enough exercise.

The poll also looked at the general happiness of the population, regardless of weight - and found Australians were a pretty contented bunch.

Almost half those surveyed were very satisfied with their work, while a third were somewhat satisfied.

More than 60 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their relationships.

Generally, older people were happier, and women were a little happier than men.

NSW Greenslips to rise by up to \$70

Greenslip prices are set to rise by up to \$70 a year for NSW motorists.

The Motor Accidents Authority (MAA) has approved a seven per cent base premium increase across the board for compulsory third party fees from February 1, The Daily Telegraph reports on Monday.

The increase comes on top of the \$10 government levy increase in November's mini-budget and means that drivers have seen their base CTP rate jump by 14 per cent, three times the national inflation rate. A spokesman for the MAA said the global financial crisis had affected insurance company investments, creating the need for the rise.