



## Australian Travel Advisory Includes Greece as a Concern

According to a travel advisory issued from the Australian government regarding safety concerns regarding European countries, Greece is included in alert travel issues.

As stated in the announcement published by the ministry of Foreign Affairs of Australia, the announcement was made after an advisory from the United States for possible terrorist attacks in Europe.

The Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls its citizens to be very careful when visiting Greece because of a possibility of terrorist attack.

It is also noted that in Greece frequent bomb attacks have taken place in public and private buildings. Violent demonstrations also prevail.

There is also a statement on the frequent strikes. As stated in the advisory, strikes also take place in public transports.

Last Thursday the government of Australia warned Australian travelers for possible attacks taking place in 30 countries of Europe including Greece, without changing the alarm level.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that many countries are facing possible attacks. It has warned their citizens, including USA, Japan, Sweden and UK.

According to media reports the Eiffel tower in Paris and the Berlin central station are included in the possible targets announced by secret services of Western countries.

# Greek Islands For Sale As a Result of Greek Debt

According to Bloomberg Businessweek, the Greek government is planning to sell some islands and other luxury properties to reduce the country's debt. The only problem is that the government does not know the islands' owners. The majority of Greek islands belong to private hands and their price is estimated between 3 to 150 million Euros, even if the government does not own them. The administration benefits from taxes and development while plenty of job opportunities are created. Unfortunately the Greek bureaucracy does not help selling become reality. No sales have been taken place since Papandreu first came up with this idea. There are lots of private islands; Scorpis the famous island of Aristotle Onassis, Spetsopoula island owned by the Niarchos family, Koronida, along with others. The only problem is that

the state, local, military and religious regulations, laws and edicts have made it impossible for the islands to be sold because no one can agree on who owns what.

But Greece is not the only country in history needing to sell some of its property to reduce its debt. Between 1993 and 1995, 20,000 of Russia's 27,000 enterprises were sold for about 10 percent of their value to raise capital.

The director of the Greek real estate firm NAI Global Mike Vassiliou says that offering islands may lure all sorts of buyers who could end up making badly needed investments in Greece: "The problem is that so far Greek government refuses to create offerings that attract entrepreneurs and investors. If you come in with 200 million euro to invest, the government claims it will help you cut through the bu-



reaucracy. A penny less and you're on your own in the labyrinth.", Vassiliou says.

Confusion over land value is apparently only one of the challenges buyers and sellers face when attempting an island transaction. "Eight ministries, from Culture to Defense, are involved in the initial purchase of a Greek island," Samaropoulou says as twilight settles over Holy Ghost. "Then, once you

have the eight ministries signed on, and depending on where the island is and its legal status, you go back to the Finance Ministry to see if they want to buy it at the tax-office price."

All non EU citizens must undergo a further check by the Defense Ministry to ensure they don't pose a military threat to Greece in the event of a Turkish invasion. "The most traumatic transaction in Greece is buying an island," Samaropoulou says. "You're looking at around 2,500 official licenses and permits to conclude a sale. My 60 serious foreign clients interested in buying islands find this amazing and unbelievable.

"We estimate the government will put 300 billion euro of state land on offer, a minimum 15 percent in luxury beachfront and island properties," Samaropoulou continues. "Can you imagine the chaos?"

## 40,000-50,000 Vacancies in Germany's Work Force

Through a press release, the Greek German business association refers to the lack of human resources in technicians, experts and engineers in Germany. Currently there are 40,000 to 50,000 vacancies in the German labor market. The public release includes a statement referring to Ms. Maria Bohmer's meeting with representatives of immigrant organizations on this issue in the beginning of this week in Berlin. Ms. Bohmer pledged to promote a draft law for the degrees recognition to be voted in the German parliament.

## AMAC: Truth must prevail in Macedonian issue

The Australian Macedonian Advisory Committee's (AMAC) annual function, last Friday, was attended by three generations of Greek Australians. Chairman Con Kouremenos welcomed guests while emphasising the changes in AMAC.

"One third of AMAC's membership comprises of third generation Greek Australians," he said.

He said AMAC is an advisory body which assists in the preservation of the truth in the face of the "falsification of history in the area of Macedonian identity".

Professor John Melville-Jones from the University of Western Australia spoke about the "importance of preserving historical truth in light of attempts to distort Macedonian history."

He relayed how he learned Ancient Greek and Latin as a young boy during WWII. After travelling to Greece in the 1960s he became a scholar of Byzantine history.

"What makes Greek culture different to others is its continuity throughout the ages," Prof Melville-Jones said.

He said he felt "sorry" for those from the former



Kon Kouremenos (L) with Mr Marcus Templar from Chicago

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia because "they are trying to create an identity from what does not exist - they don't want to be Bulgarian, Albanian or Serbian," he said.

Prof Melville-Jones said FYROM activists are "indoctrinated to believe" in the "myth" and that it was "too easy for myths to be accepted".

Marcus Templar from Chicago has conducted ex-

tensive research into Macedonian history. He was critical of the "Greek power elites" for not taking a more aggressive stance against a concerted effort by FYROM to "usurp Greek history"

Mr Templar criticised the lack of a real Hellenic lobby in the United States and the way various Non Government Organisations, like the Centre of Democracy and Reconciliation in South Eastern Europe, were acting as trojan horses for anti Hellenic campaigns.

He said the "prevailing opinion is that the Slavic population of FYROM feel humiliated by not having an identity" as a result of the internal conflict between Albanians and Serbs.

"It's not a fault of the Greek people that the Slavic people of FYROM cannot adopt a name," he said. Among the 150 in attendance were Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Planning: Jenny Mikakos, member for the federal seat of Higgins: Kelly O'Dwyer, and President of the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria: Bill Pastergiadis.

(source: neos kosmos)