



## Court to hear case of acid attack victim Kuneva

A Piraeus court is set to hear in the next few days the case of Constantina Kuneva, the Bulgarian woman who suffered serious injuries in a 2008 acid attack that was linked to her role as a unionist.

Kuneva, with the support of her lawyer Dafni Vagianou and the GSEE private sector workers' union, is to ask that her injury be treated as work-related. She became blind in one eye and lost the use of her vocal chords after sulfuric acid was thrown at her as she returned home from cleaning at an electric railway station. Nobody has been arrested for

the attack on December 22, 2008.

A month earlier, Kuneva told the International Trade Union Confederation in an interview that she was at odds with her employer, Oikomet, over her role as head of the Attica Union of Cleaners and Domestic Workers (PEKOP).

"I have work colleagues with whom I normally have friendly relations who no longer dare to speak to me, or say hello, in case we are spotted by someone from management," said Kuneva. "I have been accused of theft and have received death threats by phone."



## Top jobless rate in the EU

Greece holds the record among all European Union countries in terms of jobless rates.

Eurostat figures released on Friday showed that the unemployment rate in this country stood at 26.8 percent in October 2012, with Spain coming

in second with 26.1 percent.

Greece also has the worst rate in the categories of jobless men (24.1 percent), women (30.4 percent) and the under-25s (57.6 percent).

In December 2012 the EU had 25.9 million jobless people, of whom 18.7

million were in the eurozone while 1.8 million had lost their job in the euro area within the last 12 months.

Greece also ranked top in the jobless rate increase as it soared from 19.7 percent in October 2011 to 26.8 percent last October.

## Seamen pose new crash test for government

Protesting farmers maintained a strong but peaceful presence over the weekend at key road junctions while striking seamen met to decide whether to continue with rolling 48-hour walkouts.

Farmers, who have been pressing for tax breaks and other concessions despite the government's insistence that the budget has no scope for exemptions, kept their tractors parked near critical junctions in Thessaly and Central Macedonia but stopped short of blocking roads. The largest gathering was at the Nikaia junction on the Athens-Thessaloniki national highway, where more than 1,200 tractors remained parked.

Government sources expressed concerns about the persistence of the farmers, who have been backed by the Communist Party (KKE) and by the main leftist opposition SYRIZA, but the general impression was that the strike front would not grow to the extent that it destabilizes the administration.

KKE leader Aleka Pappariga expressed solidarity with the seamen, who object to government plans to overhaul coastal shipping regulations for fear of job cuts. Noting that thousands of dockworkers face redundancy, Pappariga accused the government of only being interested in "ships that bring revenue to large hotel chains."

Government sources expressed the hope that the seamen's action would fail to gather steam but did not rule out the



possibility of authorities forcing staff back to work, as they did last month with striking metro employees, if rolling walkouts continue indefinitely.

There are fears that workers in other sectors will stage their own industrial action in the countdown to a general strike called by the two main labor unions for February 20.

## Thieves siphon gas from Crete garbage trucks

Unknown suspects have stolen fuel from a municipal rubbish truck depot in Crete's Iraklio prefecture.

The suspects reportedly broke into the garage in the early hours of Saturday and siphoned some 600 liters of diesel from five vehicles.

Reports said this was the second such case in the area over the past few days. Police are investigating.

## Migrant dies after running onto electric railway track at Thisseio

An African man died in central Athens on Friday night after running onto the Kifissia-Piraeus electric railway (ISAP) track at Thisseio station, where he was electrocuted.

Unconfirmed reports suggest that the man, thought to be a street trader from Senegal, was being chased by municipal police officers when the incident occurred.

Witnesses said that there was a heavy police presence in the area late on Friday and that a large group of migrants had gathered near the station. There were unconfirmed reports that authorities used tear gas to disperse the immigrants.

Thisseio, close to the Acropolis, attracts a lot of visitors in the evenings due to the high number of cafes, bars and restaurants in the area.

## Rise of euro threatens to stem Greek export growth

Companies involved in exports are expressing concern at exchange rates for the euro, which in January posted an increase against all foreign currencies, according to a study by the Panhellenic Exporters' Association published on Friday.

According to the calculation of total external trade of all eurozone countries (imports and exports), the association's index combining the exchange rate of all non-eurozone currencies declined by 1.58 percent last month, meaning an increase in the market price of eurozone exports.

Greek exports have been growing over the last couple of years, but the rise in the euro rate since last summer has started to pose a threat to that trend. While the main market for Greek exports is eurozone countries, accounting for 60 percent of their absorption, local enterprises are making an effort to tap into third-country markets whose share in Greek exports is at 40 percent and growing.

