



## Greek FinMin expects upturn as early as October

Greece will begin to recover from five years of recession and the repercussions of an unprecedented debt crisis as early as this October, Finance Minister Yannis Stoumaras told Greek newspaper Kathimerini during an interview in which he blamed former premiers George Papandreou and Costas Karamanlis for failing to take bold measures that could have averted the economic meltdown.

Noting that Greece has significant potential to increase its production, Stoumaras said he believed the recent stabilization of the economy would allow the first signs of recovery to appear as early as October. "The gap between what we could be producing and what we are producing is higher than 25 percent," he said, adding that he expected "a significant recovery in 2014."

Greece is on track to produce a primary surplus this year, he added, noting that the government aims to give concessions to low-income groups. "We have agreed that 70 percent of the excess will go to social benefits or to tax cuts," he said.

He also directed strong criticism against former Prime Minister Papandreou, who led Greece to its first international bailout, and the latter's predecessor, Karamanlis,

whom Stoumaras accused of overseeing a massive increase in public spending. "That period after 2006 can only be described as a derailment," Stoumaras said, noting that state spending as a percentage of gross domestic product skyrocketed to 53.8 percent in 2009. Stoumaras slammed Papandreou for ignoring Karamanlis's belated appeal for cutbacks to state spending and for seeking to honor his pre-election promises despite the dire economic situation. "If he had taken measures immediately, we would certainly have had better terms," Stoumaras said, referring to the conditions attached to the first bailout. "We might have entered the memorandum with the terms of Portugal or Ireland."

Questioned about the insistence of opposition SYRIZA leader Alexis Tsipras that the government's austerity policy has failed, Stoumaras challenged the leftist to reveal the reaction of German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble and of the International Monetary Fund to SYRIZA's alternative proposal. "There can be no stabilization program without reducing incomes for a period of time," Stoumaras said. "There were never any magical solutions."

## GREEK SUPERLEAGUE

### Atromitos shatters Reds' invincible dream

After scoring 16 wins and three draws in the first 19 rounds of games in the Super League this season Olympiakos conceded its first loss, with Atromitos emerging as the unlikely winner in the clash at the Karaiskakis Stadium with a 3-2 score.

The Peristeri club had to come from behind, as it trailed 2-1 at half time. It had scored the opener through Brito in the very first minute, but Olympiakos equalized courtesy of Rafik Djebbour and led just before half-time via Djamel Abdoun. However, in the second half Atromitos scored two spectacular goals through long-range shots by Thanasis Karagounis and Elin Dimoutsos to force the Reds' first domestic loss after 302 days.

New Olympiakos coach Michel attended the game after signing his one-and-a-half-year contract with the champion. Olympiakos announced he will be officially presented on Monday afternoon.

Therefore Panathinaikos on its 105th birthday has found out it has preserved the distinction of being the sole team ever to finish a league season unbeaten, back in 1963-64.

The Atromitos victory overshadowed two other very eventful games in this 20th round,

the 2-2 draws between Asteras Tripolis and Panathinaikos and the Thessaloniki derby of Aris against PAOK.

Panathinaikos almost brought about Asteras's first home loss on Saturday, leading 2-1 up to the last minute of time added-on thanks to a wonderful brace by Ibrahim Sissoko, but its defender Jean-Alain Bounsang conceded a penalty (a harsh handball decision) that allowed Emanuel Perrone to equalize for Asteras.

Aris and PAOK shared an entertaining four-goal thriller at the Kleanthis Vikelidis stadium, with PAOK leading twice through Stefanos Athanasiadis and new signing Abdoul Camara, but David Aganzo replied as many times for Aris, the second from the penalty spot. PAOK finished one more game with a man's disadvantage after Dimitris Constantinidis's second bookable offence.

AEK has moved further away from the danger zone after defeating Panionios 1-0 thanks to a Roger Guerreiro goal, while Veria scored a much-needed 2-0 victory over Panthrakikos at home.

In other weekend games OFI downed Kerkyra 2-0 on Crete and Xanthi saw off struggling Plataniias with the same score.

## NEWS FROM CYPRUS

### Who will save the Karpas?



GREEK Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are mobilising to try and stop the carving up of one of the last bastions of nature in Cyprus, the remote Karpas peninsula in the north, which is being destroyed for the sake of a road but no one is listening.

People on both sides have been left shocked and horrified at photos posted on social media during the week showing the extent of the destruction being visited on the last remaining wilderness in the north, and the second last on the island after the Akamas.

Reports suggest that the widening of the old country road leading from Rizokarpaso to Apostolos Andreas is being carried out to facilitate a techno music festival to take place at the unspoilt Golden Sands beach in September, which locals hope will attract up to 80,000 visitors, according to the organisers' website.

The Karpas peninsula is home to a diverse range of species and wildlife now being destroyed by bulldozers and trucks, protesters say.

"The Karpasia SEPA (Special Environmental Protection Area) is under direct threat even though it is still unclear which agency or authority is behind the project," a statement from Greek Cypriot activists said.

An online petition has been set up under the title 'Hands off Karpas', which was sent to the 'government' in the north but without success, and the works are continuing.

Last Sunday, having heard of the Turkish Cypriot administration's plans to 'repair' the old road from Rizokarpaso to Apostolos Andreas, a group of around fifty concerned Cypriots (mostly Turkish, some Greek) travelled to the area to see for themselves what they feared was taking place. Their anxieties were confirmed when they saw that rather than repairing the road, huge

mechanical diggers were now forging a brand new one designed to cut out the numerous meanders and twists of the old one.

"It is as if they put a ruler on a map and followed its line," head of the Society for the Protection of the Karpas National Park Umut Akcil said. He added: "They have already torn down hundreds of carob, olive and juniper trees, and they have flattened two hillsides highlighted by [the EU's] Natura 2000 project as important nesting sites for migratory birds".

The Greek Cypriot group said the reasons behind the construction of the wider road are unclear. "Some say it's the work of the Turkish embassy... others claim the project is run by the municipality of Rizokarpaso ahead of the festival. The details are unclear and the only clear fact is the destruction of the Karpasia SEPA, happening as we speak," they said.

"It seems that the local residents felt threatened by the activist presence against the development of the road, since they had been given promises about improvements to their quality of life and development for the area."

It said locals were being seduced by the promise of more jobs and added income, and were unable to realise that protection of the natural heritage they are surrounded by, was their best available tool for long-term and sustainable development through ecotourism.

"Instead, they were ready to verbally and physically abuse the activists, despite the presence of the police who flared up rather than calm the situation," said the group.

Despite the protests, the work is continuing and activists say their greatest fear is that development will not stop with a mere road, despite warnings from the European Commission, which has funded environment assessments in the area.

### New green centre opens

THE ENVIRONMENTAL Information Centre in the village of Episkopi some 12km from Paphos opened its doors for the first time on Sunday.

According to head of the Episkopi local council Andreas Charalambous, the centre includes a reception hall, exhibition hall, a screening room, environmental education room and a workshop while the centre's exterior will host a botanical garden.

The exhibition hall contains various photographs, stuffed animals and birds, audiovisual presentations of the natural environment, butterfly and insect collections, and wood and other geological exhibits.

Inside the screening room, visitors can watch a film production on local flora and fauna, vegetation, traditional buildings and other important elements of the region.