

Six charged with hooliganism at soccer match

Six people are to be charged with hooliganism-related offenses at a Panathinaikos-Olympiakos soccer match last March.

The police on Friday handed to the Athens first instance prosecutors' office a case file identifying four Greeks, aged 31 to 38, and

two foreigners, aged 24 and 33, as being involved in the violence that disrupted the game.

Panathinaikos and Olympiakos basketball clubs were fined a total of 31,700 euros on Friday for fan misbehavior at the cup final between the two teams on Sunday.



Xenios Zeus sweep in Athens leads to 85 arrests

A police sweep in central Athens on Friday as part of a crackdown on undocumented immigrants code-named Xenios Zeus led to 611 people being detained and 85 of these being arrested on a string of charges. A similar operation last month in the western port of Patra, Greece's main gateway to Western Europe and a favored smuggling route of human traffickers, led to 170 migrants being detained and 70 of them being arrested.

Cracking the Chinese market



CHINESE investors in Paphos are paving the way for holidaymakers from the vast and as yet untapped Chinese market. During the last year or so, many of the homes sold in Paphos have been to Chinese clients.

Nassos Hadjigeorghiou, head of the Paphos regional board of tourism, said Paphos was not focusing on tourists from China per se but believes they are an achievable goal. "We haven't actively done anything to attract them but I know that steps have been taken to open up new opportunities," he said.

Hadjigeorghiou said the Cyprus Tourism Organisation (CTO) has had a number of meetings with Chinese tour operators, as well as discussing establishing direct air connections between Cyprus and China.

"Until now, nothing concrete has been decided," said Hadjigeorghiou. "Many of the Chinese in Paphos are second-home buyers, but it is possible in the future to develop this market as a tourist market - if we manage to establish direct flights. This is the first step, and it will then open the market up for tour operators and individuals."

Chinese investors have been purchasing homes in Paphos, in an otherwise generally quiet time for house sales. In terms of actual numbers results are not impressive but they are encouraging say officials.

"If we take the official figures, I think only around 1,000 Chinese visited here last year. The figures haven't been listed separately in the official statistics for last year, probably because the number is so small - but it's around this figure. This is such a small number from a huge country, but there is a lot of potential there," said Hadjigeorghiou.

As non-European nationals, prospective Chinese buyers need to make a minimum property purchase of €300,000, and prove they have adequate finances to stay in Cyprus. They are then entitled to apply for and receive a permanent residency permit for themselves and their family.

According to Charalambous, Chinese buyers in Paphos are choosing properties mainly close to the sea and in the Akamas region. Cyprus is an attractive destination for Chinese investors as it can function as a stepping stone to mainland Europe.

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