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Hellenic News, Culture & Lifestyle



Samaras calls for common EU policy on EEZs after meeting Cyprus's Anastasiades in Athens

Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras has called on the European Union to take a common stance on the issue of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) after meeting with Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades in Athens.

The two men made brief statements after the meeting, which was part of Anastasiades's first official trip abroad since being elected. They focussed on Cyprus's imminent bailout, the island's possible reunification and the issue of gas and oil exploration in the Mediterranean and Aegean.

Samaras said that the EU should unite behind a common policy on EEZs as both Athens and Nicosia eye future revenues from oil and natural gas.

"It is Cyprus's inalienable right to make use of its EEZ," said Samaras. "There is a need for a common policy on EEZs because the energy reserves of member states are also the energy reserves of the EU."

On the Cyprus issue, Samaras said there was a new chance for a solution after Anastasiades's victory but warned that the new administration did not have a "magic wand" and much would depend on the stance of the Turkish-Cypriot side.

Samaras also expressed hope that Nicosia would be able to extract the best possible terms for its EU-IMF bailout and called for coordination between Greece and Cyprus on issues related to the economic crisis.

"Hellenism is being tested but will come out of this stronger, with an improved political and geostrategic role," said Samaras.

"We are determined to take the measures that will strengthen the state and will help cooperation between the two countries," said Anastasiades, who was also due to meet other political leaders.

"Hellenism is experiencing a crisis but has been through tougher times," he added. "The crisis is an opportunity to overcome any negatives."

Five of seven escaped convicts recaptured in Evros hours after breakout

Five of the seven convicts who escaped from a holding center in Evros, northeastern Greece, on Sunday have been recaptured.

Police said on Monday that three of the escapees, an Algerian, an Egyptian and an Iraqi, were caught by Turkish authorities as they tried to swim across the Evros River.

Two convicts were found by Greek police in the village of Poros, near the Feres holding center from which they escaped.

Searches are continuing for the other two escapees.

The convicts are thought to have used a file to saw their way through the bars on their cell window early on Sunday. Their escape is likely to have been arranged by a Turkish human trafficker, police said.

Seven policemen have been suspended pending an investigation into the breakout.

Tsochatzopoulos claims jail term for not declaring assets was politically motivated

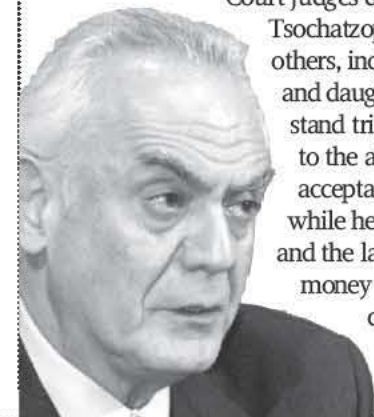
Former Defense Minister Akis Tsochatzopoulos has claimed that his eight-year jail sentence for failing to fully declare his assets in 2008 and 2009 was the result of political intervention. Several days after being handed the sentence, Tsochatzopoulos issued a statement on Sunday accusing the coalition government of making him a scapegoat.

Tsochatzopoulos claimed the court's verdict was "a unique decision in post-junta Greece".

On Friday, the Athens Council of Appeals

Court Judges decided that

Tsochatzopoulos and 18 others, including his wife and daughter, should stand trial in connection to the alleged acceptance of bribes while he was in office and the laundering of this money through offshore companies and property purchases.



Greek researcher creates new food product

Success stories from Greek academia are few and far between at the best of times, and more so in the midst of the crisis, which has taken a heavy toll on university research and innovation programs.

Dimitris Kouretas, a professor of biochemistry and biotechnology at the University of Thessaly, is one of these few shining examples and was among 12 eminent researchers from 10 European Union countries that presented their findings at an event organized by the European Commission in Brussels on February 26 on innovation in the field of medicine and medical technology. The 12 scientists were selected from a list of 600 who submitted their proposals to the EC program, with Kouretas being the only representative from the entire southeast of Europe to be selected.

"It is certainly a great honor and recognition of our work," Kouretas told Kathimerini ahead of his trip to Brussels.

Kouretas has worked at the University of Thessaly for the past 18 years, focusing his research more recently on the health benefits of local products and how these can raise their value and boost regional production.

"We champion localization rather than globalization," Kouretas said, explaining his philosophy for promoting the attributes of local produce and products.

The biggest breakthrough made by Kouretas and his research team in this domain has been on processing the by-products of dairy manufacturing, particularly whey, which until now have mostly ended up being poured into rivers or streams, polluting the natural environment and generating a chain

of negative effects on public health, crops and the quality of drinking water. The problem is particularly pronounced in Thessaly, one of Greece's main cheesemaking regions.

Kouretas and his team spent years studying the makeup of the whey protein which results as a by-product during cheese production and using it to make a food with beneficial qualities.

Protected by an international patent, a description of the product and its multiple beneficial properties has been published by the British Food and Chemical Toxicology industry journal. The whey protein cake is currently available in processed form as the Feedback cake, the Cocoa Protein Cookie and the Feta Bar.

Kouretas sees far-reaching benefits in his team's product, such as ridding the

environment in dairy-producing areas of a dangerous source of pollution while simultaneously creating a highly nutritious food product. The scientists also says that the whey protein cakes can also be used as food aid to countries with high rates of malnutrition.

The work done by Kouretas and his team has not only impressed the technocrats in Brussels, but also Franco-German television network Arte, which is currently producing a documentary on the Greek researcher and his team, "for creating innovative food products that will bring 10 times more revenues to the Greek institution than he earns as a salary," the film's producers note on the benefits of the research to the University of Thessaly.