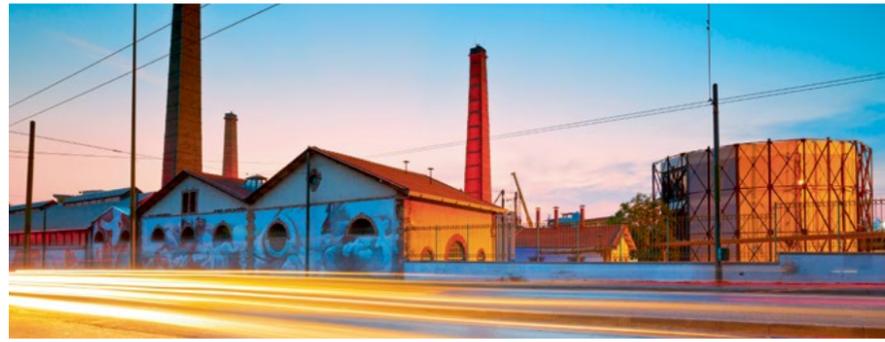


Blockchain for Degrees

The Greek Research and Technology Network (GRNET) is working with blockchain research and development company IOHK on a pilot project that will allow graduates to offer proof of their degree using Cardano blockchain, which was launched in September 2017. The goal is to create transparency and streamline the degree issuing and verification process, saving time, cutting costs and reducing bureaucracy at Greek universities, which currently use a paper-based system. The project, which is the first official use case of Cardano, is being carried out with the participation of three Greek universities: the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the Democritus University of Thrace and the Athens University of Economics and Business. The project is partly funded by the European Horizon 2020 program for research and innovation.



Athens Celebrates 160 Years of Greek Innovation

From January 18 to March 25, 2018, the City of Athens along with Technopolis and the Industrial Gas Museum are hosting an exhibition on the country's industrial development over the period 1860-1970 and the course of de-industrialization in the decades that followed. Titled "160 Years Made in Greece—Industry, Innovation, Novelty" the exhibition includes more than 800 items celebrating Greek ingenuity and mapping the history of 90 industries across eight sectors. The event coincides with the 160th anniversary of the establishment of the Athens Gasworks, which now hosts Technopolis and the Industrial Gas Museum.

Storm Chasers



A new algorithm developed by MIT scientists could help predict precursor conditions to extreme weather events, like Hurricane Irma. Themistoklis Sapsis, Associate Professor of Mechanical and Ocean Engineering at MIT, and MIT postdoc Mohammad Farazmand published the results of their research in the journal *Science Advances*. Sapsis, who has previously published on the occurrence of rare waves in calm waters, believes that the research is key not only to understanding turbulent flows and extreme events but also to better dealing with them. "If we can predict the occurrence of these extreme events," he said, "hopefully we can apply some control strategies to avoid them."

DID YOU KNOW

...
The Olive tree of Vouves on the island of Crete is the oldest olive tree in Greece, believed to be over 3,000 years old

...
Researchers who analyzed traces of olive oil found on pottery shards near Nazareth, in Israel, believe olive oil production dates from as far back as 8,000 years ago

...
Today, Greece is the world's third largest producer of olive oil, behind Spain and Italy, but is first in producing extra-virgin olive oil

...
Greek olive oil accounts for 11% of global production

...
In 2012, 60% of the country's olive oil output was exported to Italy, where it was packaged, labeled and sent around the world as Italian olive oil

...
It takes about 5 kg of olives to produce a liter of olive oil, with some high-end brands using varieties that require upwards of 10 kg for a single liter

...
A tablespoon of olive oil contains roughly 120 calories and 14 grams of fat

...
Studies suggest that as part of a balanced Mediterranean diet, virgin olive oil may actually boost "good" cholesterol and prevent weight gain



ROBOSPECIALISTS PREP CANSAT LAUNCH



Inspired by the silver medal that students of the 1st General Lyceum of Xanthi won at the 2015 World Robot Olympiad in Qatar, Xanthi pupils, par-

ents, teachers and scientists banded together and founded RoboSpecialists, a club-cum-nonprofit dedicated to promoting STEM and providing educational science and tech activities for children and young people in the city. Enthusiastic about robotics, the team are preparing to launch their own micro-satellite in April 2018, as part of the nation-wide Greek CanSat Competition. Selected from 36 original applications to be one of the ten finalists, the team will build and launch a CanSat—a simulation of a real satellite, integrated within the volume and shape of a soft drink can. The CanSat is then launched to an altitude of a few hundred meters by a rocket or dropped from a platform or captive balloon and must then complete its mission: to carry out a scientific experiment and achieve a safe landing.

SPOTLIGHT ON GREECE

U.S. travel agents are set to descend on Athens in numbers in April this year for the ASTA Destination EXPO 2018, the international conference of the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA). The event is expected to contribute significantly to the promotion of Greek tourism, supporting the Hellenic Association of Travel and Tourist Agencies' (HATTA) goal to increase the number of U.S. tourists in Greece by 30%.



New Project to Explore the Genome of Greek Olive Cultivars

A new initiative by the Research and Innovation Department of the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs will set out to study and decode the genome of Greek olive cultivars, aiming to determine the fruit's genomic characteristics and improve production methods and drive added value in olive production. The project will be carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development and Food and the participation of a number of key academic and research institutions that specialize in genomics and molecular biology. In its initial phase, which is expected to take two years to complete, the project will have a budget of €5 million with the possibility of additional funding. The initiative aims to establish state involvement in crucial scientific research into key Greek products such as olive oil, wine, and honey in order to support these in the face of international competition. "Through scientific research and the innovation that comes from this, our goal is to make the most of our country's foremost comparative advantages in the primary and secondary sector," said Deputy Minister of Research and Innovation Costas Fotakis. "This initiative is part of a larger effort to create a new production model based on the knowledge economy."