

Greece Launches Space Agency



March 19 marked the launch of the Hellenic Space Organization, Greece's first space agency. The launch was announced by Minister for Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media Nikos Pappas, who outlined the multiple benefits the country can expect from the endeavor, including benefits to its telecommunications infrastructure, defense, medical applications, agriculture, environmental monitoring, and fire prevention and control. While pointing out that the country does not plan to start its own space exploration

program, Pappas stressed the potential of space technologies to boost the digital economy, contribute to information and telecommunication security, and further the country's role and participation in the European Space Agency (ESA), of which Greece has been a member since 2005. "These are services that can make our lives better and Greece stronger, as this industry is at the cutting edge of efforts to revive the country's economy," Pappas said. The newly established agency is also expected to showcase scientific excellence in Greece, attract investment and serve to retain talent in the country. "The establishment and operation of the Hellenic Space Organization will be one of the most dynamic features of our course towards the modern digital economy of the future," Vassilis Maglaras, Secretary General for Communications at the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks, is reported to have told the Athens-Macedonian News Agency. The event also saw the announcement of the Hellenic Space Organization's first Board of Directors. The board members are: Vassilis Anastasopoulos, Vassilis Kostopoulos, Georgios Mantzouris, Athanasios Potsis, and Christodoulos Protopapas. Konstantinos Pilaftsis will serve as the board's Managing Director, while Tom Krimigis will preside as Chairman of the board. Tom Krimigis is a renowned Greek-American scientist, Head Emeritus of the Space Department at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. The Chios-born physicist has contributed to numerous U.S. unmanned space exploration programs and has built instruments that have flown to all nine classical planets of the Solar System. Asteroid 8323 *Krimigis* is named in his honor.

Medical Cannabis Attracts Foreign Investors



The Greek Parliament voted in favor of a bill to allow licensed business to produce, process and sell cannabis for medical purposes, in a move that is set to attract foreign investment to the country. While secondary legislation is pending, interested parties are making preparations, and a number of consortiums have already submitted investment plans totaling over €1 billion, according to newspaper Kathimerini. Among the interested parties are Canada-based heavyweights Aphria and Canopy Growth, two of the largest players in the field, while Shanghai-based Europacific Medical and Netherlands-based HAPA Medical Holdings also have investment plans for Greece.

DID YOU KNOW

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The Academy Awards, as the Oscars are officially known, are awarded annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

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They are a set of 24 awards for artistic and technical merit in the United States film industry

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The first Academy Awards were presented in 1929 at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel

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The ceremony was first televised in 1953 and is now broadcast live in more than 200 countries

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Oscars are solid bronze and plated in 24-karat gold, but due to metal shortages during WWII, they were temporarily made of painted plaster for a period of three years

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The first color film to win Best Picture was *Gone with the Wind*

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Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson hold the records for most Best Actress and Best Actor Oscar nominations respectively

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In 1960, Manos Hatzidakis received an Academy Award for Best Original Song for his song "Never on Sunday" from the film *Never on Sunday*

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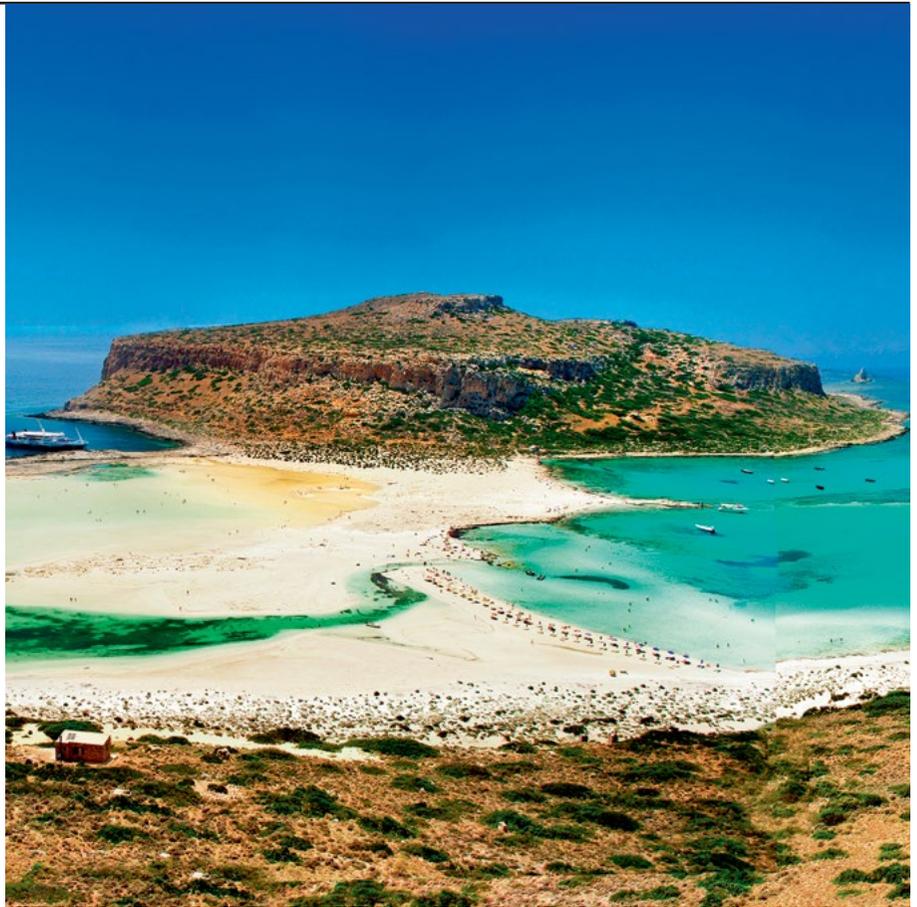
A WORLD OF EMOTIONS



The Onassis Cultural Center in New York is the winner of Global Fine Arts Awards' 2017 Youniversal Award, the program's audience award determined by popular vote. The Center's *A World of Emotions: Ancient Greece, 700BC – 200AD* exhibition, which ran July to November 2017, received the highest number of votes of any exhibition in the four-year history of the award. The exhibition showcased 130 masterpieces from some of the world's foremost museums—including the Acropolis Museum, the National Archaeological Museum Athens, the Louvre, the British Museum, and the Vatican Museums—and explored the ideas and attitudes of people in classical antiquity toward emotion.

TRIKALA GOES 5G

The city of Trikala, in the Thessaly region of central Greece, is set to be the country's first 5G city following an agreement between the General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post of the Hellenic Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks, the City of Trikala and e-Trikala S.A. The agreement concerns a pilot project that is expected to last approximately four months and will involve the installation of a 5G pilot network to offer the city's residents "sustainable urban development solutions" ranging from smart parking and lighting to data collection and analysis aiming to improve services for citizens and local business.



Russia Loves Greeks Beaches

Greece won the Best Beach Destination Europe award at the MITT Annual Awards 2018. The award ceremony was part of the 25th Moscow International Travel and Tourism Exhibition (MITT), Russia's foremost industry event, which was held March 12-14 in Moscow. Greek Minister of Tourism Elena Kountoura, who received the award, highlighted the country's aim to make Greece a year-round, 365-day destination. Russians continue to favor Greece for their holidays, with Rhodes and Crete being among the most popular destinations.

Aegean Airlines Soars

Full-year net earnings for 2017 increased by 87% to €60.4 million for Greece's largest carrier, Aegean Airlines. According to the company, an improved load factor and high sales in a strong tourism year drove a jump in net profit to €60.4 million from €32.2 million in 2016. "The achievement of an 83% load factor, given the seasonality of demand in Greece and rising competition, shows our maturing capacity in managing our route network and ticket pricing," said Chief Executive Dimitris Gerogiannis. Aegean's board is set to raise the dividend to €0.55 per share for 2017, up from a payout of €0.40 for 2016.