

**1.A truly contactless delivery company.** Svuum, a Greek startup whose onomatopoeic name is the noise made as a motor vehicle speeds up, since May 2019 has focused on becoming a super-advanced courier company. Although it was founded last year, it was the start of the pandemic that saw the company become really active in the courier sector, enjoying a major increase in orders. Svuum is not a conventional courier company: “Many enterprises require the customer’s signature as proof of delivery. At Svuum, this procedure has become automatic, and the delivery experience is truly contactless: Once a consumer has completed their purchase online, they are informed about the delivery procedure and receive a six-digit number on their cellphone associated with their purchase. When the driver delivers the product – always maintaining a safe distance – the only thing the recipient has to do is tell them the six-digit number to collect it.



**2.Delivery from smart lockers.** “Smart lockers” is the business idea that local startup Freshlime has successfully floated into a new network for distributing online orders. The company founded by Vassilis and Yiannis Papoulias used to install personal item storage spaces at concert venues and waterparks. Now these lockers, with the development of the right software, have shifted into retail commerce, becoming automatic pickup points where consumers can collect products ordered online. While this facilitates e-commerce, the Freshlime founders believe it is an extension of brick-and-mortar stores, as their significance is enhanced instead of diminished.

**3.DESFA lands LNG project in Kuwait.** Greece’s gas grid operator is making a dynamic entry into the international scene after landing a significant project in Kuwait. The Hellenic Gas Transmission System Operator (DESFA) has undertaken the operation and maintenance of a new liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal under construction in the Gulf country, which

is expected to start operating in 2021. DESFA outbid six other suitors short-listed by KIPIC, a subsidiary of the state oil company of Kuwait, to secure the management and maintenance of the LNG station being constructed at al-Zour, some 90 kilometers from the country’s capital city. The Greek company announced that the contract it has secured with KIPIC will last for a minimum of five years, and DESFA earned it after the completion of the second and final stage of the tender.

**4. Consumers to spend 34% less this Xmas.** Consumers are set to spend an average of 34% less this festive season, which practically means that a third of Christmas turnover will be lost this year, according to a survey conducted by the Association of Business and Retail Sales of Greece (SELPE). It found that 73% of respondents expect a reduction in their Christmas spending, with only 5% expecting to spend more this year. Most of those planning to spend less (39% of the total) estimate that the drop will amount to more than 50%, and 14% of respondents plan to spend nothing this Christmas. More than half (55%) say they will not spend more than 100 euros this holiday season. Based on the answers compiled, the survey concludes that the average amount that will be spent this Christmas season will come to €128 per person.

**5. Greek mink farmers expected to raise production.** Denmark’s coronavirus-driven mink cull has put the fur business in a spin, with industry officials expecting fashion houses such as Louis Vuitton, Dior and Fendi to snap up fox and chinchilla to fill the gap. The global fur trade, worth more than \$22 billion a year, is reeling from Denmark’s decision to kill 17 million farmed mink after Covid-19 outbreaks at hundreds of farms led to the discovery of a new strain of coronavirus in the mammals.

**6.Two new vehicles for Elliniko.** Lamda Development is set to form two new consortiums with major domestic and international groups from the sector of real estate and institutional investments, aimed at developing two new projects at the landmark cluster of Elliniko on Athens’ southern coast. The first project concerns a high-rise, around 150 meters tall, near Vouliagmenis Avenue. The other project also concerns a high-rise that will host apartments and is set to be constructed near the seafront and the marina.



## GLOBAL MARKETS

**1. Flying in 2021 — It can only get better.** When the pandemic first struck, the raison d'être for aviation disappeared almost overnight and came right after a record year in 2019. This year, airlines have carried barely a third of last year's 4.5 billion passengers. The industry is still reeling from €100 billion (\$122 billion) in losses, according to International Air Transport Association (IATA), an airline lobby group. Ask any airline CEO for their predictions for 2021 and you will receive answers of cautious optimism. "2021 will be a better year," said IATA boss Alexandre de Juniac. The industry association predicts losses of just 40% of 2020 figures. "I am sure we will see a significant upturn in the course of next year," Lufthansa CEO Carsten Spohr told. He believes his airline will achieve half of 2019's passenger levels next year and maybe up to 70% in the summer.



**2. 125 years after cinema was born: Does it have a future?** The Lumiere brothers organized the first film screening in Paris 125 years ago. During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, cinemas are in danger of closing down. When the Lumiere brothers sent out invitations to the first public film screening on December 28, 1895, they caused quite a sensation. The show, which took place in the cellar of the Grand Cafe in Paris, lasted 20 minutes. A century and a quarter later, that would actually be a reason to celebrate. But because of the coronavirus pandemic this year, no workshops or events have been organized — in stark comparison to events that took place five years ago when cinema turned 120. Instead, the streaming business is witnessing a boom, with the sales figures of companies like Netflix and Amazon overtaking those of standard cinemas. Many film production companies are looking to see whether they could do away with theaters entirely. *Soul*, the latest Pixar film, for example, will bypass theaters and directly premiere on the streaming platform Disney+.

**3. French chefs struggle to reinvent themselves amid uncertainty.** Shutdowns due to COVID-19 have dealt a heavy blow to restaurants in France, the birthplace of haute cuisine. As chefs try to adapt, some are wrestling with fundamental questions about the live fine dining experience. Viktor Mercier attended a prestigious culinary school in France, worked in Michelin-starred restaurants and made it to the finals of the popular television show "Top Chef." Last year he opened his first gourmet restaurant in Paris. Now, the 30-year-old makes hot dogs. Mercier is grateful for the government's support. But unlike some restaurants that are offering a stripped-down version of their gourmet menus for takeaway, he's skeptical of replicating the experience of fine dining, where precision timing and presentation is a priority.

**4. Pinterest pays \$22.5 million to settle gender discrimination lawsuit.** Former chief operating officer Francoise Brougher brought her case against the San Francisco-based company in August. She says she was sidelined after raising concerns about sexist conduct at the firm. Social media firm Pinterest will hand \$22.5 million (€18 million) to a senior female executive who was fired after she pushed for equal pay. Former chief operating officer Francoise Brougher brought her case against the San Francisco-based company in August. She says she was sidelined after raising concerns about sexist conduct at the firm. Social media firm Pinterest will hand \$22.5 million (€18 million) to a senior female executive who was fired after she pushed for equal pay.

**5. Working from home: Not all that glitters is gold.** The coronavirus crisis has taught us many things, like that working from home offers many opportunities. Clear rules and regulations will be required. From your bed to the bathroom and then on to your desk to start your working day — since March this has been the new normal for many Germans. For many, the first weeks and months of remote working were especially stressful. Women were hit particularly hard. In many cases, they mainly look after the kids and do a larger share of household chores. Managerial positions will once again go to their male colleagues. Balancing both child care and your profession is almost impossible. The closing of schools in spring made the situation even worse.