

**1. Final stretch for three port tenders.** The short list of bidders for the ports of Alexandroupoli, Kavala and Igoumenitsa will be announced in the next few weeks, following the submission of the necessary documents for the bids last Monday. The second and final stage is expected to last three to four months and will be completed with the tabling of the binding offers. It has been some time since the assessment process began, though the documents required were delayed due to travel restrictions in Greece as well as the countries that the bidders hail from, including the US, Italy and Germany.

**2. New law to allow shift of Parnitha casino to Maroussi.** A regulation restoring the law regarding the transfer of the Parnitha casino to Maroussi, after the Council of State deemed it unconstitutional, is due to be ratified by Parliament on Wednesday. It will allow for the transfer of all of the country's casinos within their region's boundaries. The shift of the Parnitha casino to the northern suburbs of Athens constitutes an investment of 200 million euros that is also expected to raise the value of the portfolio of the Hellenic Public Properties Company (ETAD).

**3. Major increase in internet speed last year.** The average internet speed in Greece rose by more than a third last year, compared to 2019. The watchdog's study found that 2020 was the fourth consecutive year during which the download speed in Greece recorded an increase; its average speed across the country came to 27.01 megabits per second (Mbps), which was 34.83% higher than in 2019. The improvement of internet speeds reflects the increasing usage of 50 and 100 Mbps connections, which currently account for the majority of connections Hyperion system users have.

**4. Elliniko development comes a step closer.** Greek lawmakers approved a contract transferring partial ownership of a sprawling former airport site to Greek developer Lamda Development, bringing one of the country's biggest urban redevelopment plans another step closer to being realized. Demolition crews began tearing down the first of hundreds of blocks that need to be removed from the site, which is three times the size of Monaco, last summer after years of delays due to red tape, political resistance and local opposition. The contract approved on Tuesday gives Lamda lease

and ownership rights over part of the former airport, one of the last steps before the developer starts construction work.



**5. Investors eye historic, listed buildings across the country.** Buyer interest in historic and neoclassical buildings across Greece remains strong and enduring, as their considerable history, their architectural elegance and often their location make them objects of great demand for investors, domestic and foreign alike. The catalogue of such properties that are up for sale includes some real gems like the Agnes (quite possibly Athens' first ever hotel), the Grand Hotel de Kifissia that was built in 1885 on Ernst Ziller's designs, the Tourist Hotel (pictured) that has graced downtown Thessaloniki since 1923, and Hotel Helmos in historic Kalavryta.

**6. Green energy meets hydrocarbon extraction.** The state-owned Hellenic Hydrocarbon Resources Management SA (EDEY) is currently seeking out synergies in the green economy by combining hydrocarbon projects (i.e. extracting natural gas) with the development of floating wind parks, the production of blue and then green hydrogen, as well as carbon capture and storage facilities. This combination package by EDEY is seen rendering the Greek energy market more attractive and assisting the country in better handling the departure of Spain's Repsol from the domestic market and the reduction of the exposure of France's Total in Greece.

**7. Plan for Asteria resort in Glyfada secures approval.** The approval of the architectural plans for the modernization of the Asteria resort in Glyfada "sets a significant investment in Attica on implementation track". The plans were approved by the Central Architecture Council. Plans include the refurbishment of a five-star hotel with 400 beds, including 115 luxury rooms; 14 villas; 12 suites; an exhibition space with a multiple-use hall; two restaurants; an archaeological route; a spa; and recreational areas for children and teenagers.

**1. Why Seville oranges are the new green.** Seville's municipal water company is piloting a scheme to produce electricity using leftovers from the city's famous oranges. The project showcases the Spanish city's commitment to the circular economy. In the southern Spanish city of Seville, the municipal water company has introduced a pilot scheme to produce electricity using methane from fermented oranges. EMASESA, a member of Aqua Publica Europea (European Association of Public Water Operators), aims to achieve energy self-sufficiency for its EDAR Copero Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in the city, an existing facility that already generates electricity from organic matter. The plan is to put surplus electricity into the grid by 2023.

**2. Saxony: Where smart rail connections are not just a dream.** People usually associate the future of automated driving with cars and maybe trucks and buses. But as Hardy Graupner reports from Annaberg in Germany, the technology is also making inroads into railroad traffic. It doesn't happen very often that the Saxon town of Annaberg in the Erzgebirge mountains close to the German-Czech border gets the attention of people dealing with next-generation mobility issues. But for a couple of years, it's no doubt been piquing the interest of researchers and businesspeople alike, at least ever since Europe's first fully digital rail switch tower was inaugurated there on a stormy night in January 2018.

**3. The future of the automobile lies in bytes, not horsepower.** The automobile of the future would be battery-powered, linked to networks, and smart in terms of automated driving, the study found. And coupled with that are on-board digital entertainment and shared-mobility features that will also require powerful computing technology. The race to create a software standard for the auto industry is already in full swing, with those companies crossing the finishing line first expected to reap huge profits, likely in the range of the 50% margins usually garnered by Big Tech companies.

**4. Butter wars: Kerrygold wins EU trademark battle.** Kerrygold Irish Butter has long been a dominant brand in Germany, the US and elsewhere. An attempt by another Irish butter company to use the 'Kerry' part of its name abroad has failed in an EU court. The court ruled in favor of Kerrygold, saying that while the Kerrygold and Kerrymaid butter brands

"peacefully coexist" in fridges in Ireland and the UK, if the brands were side by side in non-English speaking EU countries it could lead to confusion among butter lovers.



**5. Tunnel from Northern Ireland to Scotland considered despite massive doubts.** History irrevocably links Ireland and Britain, but even though the six-county statelet of Northern Ireland is officially part of the UK, a physical connection between the two has never been attempted. Various ideas have been mooted and discarded since at least the 1880s but the latest attempt stems from last summer, when Johnson announced a Union Connectivity Review, looking into transport links around the UK. Britain's High Speed Rail Group (HSRG), a rail industry representative body, submitted a proposal to that review calling for a rail link to be established between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**6. Mini cars to go solely electric from 2030.** Roll over purring combustion engine Mini enthusiasts: From 2030, German automaker BMW plans only electric releases of the iconic British-born car. No more combustion models and not even hybrids would emerge next decade, added BMW sources cited by the German news agency dpa. Currently, BMW's only full electric version is the Mini Cooper SE, built at its subsidiary in Oxford, alongside the SUV Mini Countryman as a plug-in hybrid.

**7. Suez Canal blockage: 4 of the biggest trade chokepoints.** The blockage could cost global trade \$6-10 billion (€5-8.5 billion) a week. The cost of shipping oil products, for example, has already doubled and delays to the global manufacturing supply chain, especially the auto industry, could hit consumers. However, Suez is not the most vulnerable bottleneck for world trade. Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Malacca, Suez Canal, Panama Canal.