

1. Spreading the taxation load. The Finance Ministry has decided to spread the annual burden for taxpayers by increasing the monthly tranches regarding income tax and the Single Property Tax (ENFIA) as of 2022, which means tax declarations will have to be submitted earlier than ever next year. The ministry's objective is to have income tax statements uploaded by end-April or May, when the first monthly tranches will be due. Therefore income tax will be payable in up to 10 installments, spread across the year, just as the ministry has also decided to do with ENFIA from next year. The idea is to have taxpayers pay smaller amounts each month in more tranches and not leave taxes unpaid, while the huge pool of unpaid arrears to the state exceeds 109 billion euros.

2. Second batch of aid to wildfire victims worth €6.7 mln. The Ministry of Finance has deposited the second batch of compensation in the accounts of victims of the wildfires that hit Greece earlier this month. The second batch, worth €6,710,812.67 euros, raises the total compensation paid out so far to over €10.4 million. Specifically, 640 accounts received €3,564,430.80 as downpayments to help restore damaged property; 481 accounts received €1,461,381.87 as compensation for damaged appliances, furniture and fittings; and 620 businesses got €1,682,000 in subsidies.

3. Greek-owned shipping fleet worth \$132 billion. The value of the Greek-owned merchant shipping fleet grew over 32% in the past three years and now stands at \$132.58 billion, data from consultancy VesselsValue show. The active fleet consists of 4,546 ships with a total value of \$117.59 billion. To those add the 187 vessels under construction, worth \$14.99 billion. The increase in value is mainly the result of higher fees for container and dry cargo ships, but even for tankers, where fees have not risen as much, there has been a significant increase in value. It is not only the value of the fleet that has risen over those three years. Its composition and size have also changed. The number of vessels may have not changed much – operating plus under construction ships stand at 4,833 from 4,574 in 2018 – but the average tonnage per ship has increased, according to data by the Greek Shipping Cooperation Committee.

4. GEK Terna-Egis Projects declared preferred bidder for Egnatia Odos motorway concession. The GEK Terna and Egis Projects consortium was declared the

preferred bidder for the award of the services concession contract for the operation and exploitation of Egnatia Odos motorway and three vertical road axes for a period of 35 years, the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (HRADF) said on Thursday. According to a HRADF announcement, the improved financial offer envisages an upfront payment of 1.496 billion euros. The total value of the agreement is 2.766 billion euros.

5. Lift manufacturer Kleemann sees improved results in 2020. In 2020, Kleemann submitted four European patent applications for innovations it has developed based on the Internet of Things. Two of them include recognition of emergencies such as a lift passenger fainting and the provision of information about air quality inside an elevator ahead of entering. This year, Kleemann Hellas decided to issue a €3 million bond and, last year, it increased its capital by €9.9 million; similar increases were undertaken by its subsidiaries in Turkey, Kleemann Asansor (€2 million) and the UK, Kleemann Lifts UK (€7.5 million). The company considers global prospects positive, given the rising demand in China and India, while it estimates that there are 300,000 lifts in Greece over 30 years old, a great part of which need servicing or replacement.

6. Bids for Athens Airport, Attiki Odos management rights in '22. The government expects to proceed with the bids for Attiki Odos, the ring road around Athens, and Athens International Airport in 2022. The airport bid's timing will depend on air traffic recovery and officials hope this will happen in the first quarter of the year. The road bid will take place earlier. The airport bid's timing will depend on air traffic recovery and officials hope this will happen in the first quarter of the year. The road bid will take place earlier.

7. Income tax filing deadline extended to 10 Sept. The deadline for the filing of income tax returns for 2020 has been extended to September 10, following the passing of an amendment in parliament. Moreover, the payment deadlines for the first two tax instalments have also been extended, to 17 September. MPs also voted to exempt properties damaged in the 24-24 July fires in Attica and Corinthia from the ENFIA property tax.

1. Toyota cuts production amid chip shortage and COVID. The Japanese automobile giant has been forced to suspend operations at some of its manufacturing plants because of a global chip shortage. Toyota announced that it needed to slash global production by 40% in September because of the impact of the coronavirus on its supply chain. The car giant had originally intended to manufacture a little under 900,000 vehicles next month, but this figure has been cut down to about 500,000. Affected Toyota models include the Corolla, Prius and Land Cruiser. South Korean company Samsung has taken a revenue hit on its mobile phone business due to rising cases in Vietnam. The pandemic-related chip shortage has not only affected car companies such as Toyota, but also electronics firms. Electronics giant Sony, which is also based in Japan, has struggled to produce enough units of its latest Playstation 5 to keep up with demand. In order to boost the supply of chips, countries such as the United States and Germany are trying to lure semiconductor leaders such as Taiwan's TSMC into building new factories on their territory.

2. Afghans struggle with empty ATMs, soaring prices. Afghans have been left scrambling for cash as banking and money transfer services remain suspended. The Taliban have named an acting head of the central bank to help ease the economic turmoil, which seems a tall order. Over a week after the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan's capital Kabul, its residents are reeling from a severe shortage of cash as banks remain shuttered and remittances from abroad dry up. ATMs across the city are empty and money exchange is unavailable amid uncertainty surrounding exchange rates and fears of looting. With no new shipment of dollars arriving to shore it up, the local currency, afghani, has crashed to record lows, sending prices soaring. Prices of staples like flour, oil and rice have risen by as much as 10%-20% in a few days.

3. From timber to timbre: Violin-makers sound out Germany. The eastern German town of Brandenburg hosted an international workshop for violin-makers. It took a Canadian living and working there to stage the event, which sounded promising right from the start. It would be an unusual scene for any downtown church in Germany. Imagine the main hall filled with tables and workbenches. A motley crew of people sitting

around them, bending over woodworking tools and focusing on the delicate, ancient craft of making cellos, violins and bows. Yet this unlikely scene is exactly what happened throughout last week in St. John's Church in the eastern German town of Brandenburg an der Havel, some 80 kilometers (50 miles) west of Berlin. A group of 25 people from 11 nations descended for the town's first European one-week workshop on violin-making to exchange ideas and the tricks of their trade. Some participants in the Brandenburg workshop had known one another from a traditional and larger workshop in Oberlin, in the US state of Ohio, but there had long been a wish among European craftspeople to meet up somewhere closer to home.



4. Can hydropower withstand a future of extreme weather? Hydropower has long been seen as a reliable renewable energy source. But during drought and heavy rain, hydropower plants often come to a standstill. Will climate change spell the end for this clean energy alternative? For many years, the thinking around the use of hydropower as a clean energy source has been that once built, a plant can reliably generate electricity at any time. As recently as 2019, more than half the world's renewable electricity was generated from hydropower. But as the climate changes, so does the potential of this water-powered source of energy. This year, droughts made more frequent and severe by rising temperatures have caused the biggest drops in hydropower generation recorded for decades.

5. Germany's Axel Springer to buy US media outlet Politico. Axel Springer announced that it is acquiring Politico, a prominent US media outlet and a longstanding business partner for the German digital media company. As part of the deal, Axel Springer will gain control of not just Politico's US and European editions, but also the tech news website Protocol.