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Is Greece losing its reform drive?

By Hugo Dixon

Is Greece losing its reform drive? Prime Minister Antonis Samaras has stuck to a harsh fitness program for two years. But just as it is bearing fruit, he has sidelined some reformers in a reshuffle. There is only one viable path to redemption for Athens: stick to the straight and narrow. The Greek economy is not out of the woods yet, although the measures taken to balance public finances and restore the country's competitiveness are having their effect. Athens partly regained access to the bond markets in April. Banks have been able to issue equity on the markets. The unemployment rate has fallen for four months in a row, albeit to a still terrible 27 percent. The economy has also either just stopped shrinking or will do soon.

Greece's top industry, tourism, is set to reach new highs this summer following last year's record. Meanwhile, foreign investors are looking to take advantage of cheap labor, cheap real estate and a better investment climate. Only last week, the Chinese prime minister was in Greece, signing \$4 billion of commercial deals and declaring that the country could become China's gateway to Europe.

One might have thought Samaras would stick with the team that helped deliver this success. But the prime minister was scared after his center-right New Democracy party was beaten into second position in the European Parliament elections last month by SYRIZA, the radical left group, and so he has promoted some populist politicians. In the process, Yannis Stournaras, the former finance minister, was moved to the less critical if still important role of central bank governor. The ministers for economic development and health, who had been among the most effective reformers, were also demoted.

The new finance minister, Gikas Hardouvelis, a respected economist, has attempted to reassure the euro zone governments, which are Greece's main creditors, that the country remains committed to its reform program. But some of the other new ministers have started criticizing the measures Greece has already agreed to implement. Even if Samaras reins them in, the new team is unlikely to be as effective in executing the plan as the old one. What's more, the head of the quasi-independent tax agency was forced to quit. This was because he had made a mistake in issuing a circular saying that holders of Greek bonds would face retrospective taxation, according to two officials. His replacement will be chosen by a committee which includes France's top tax official, so there's no risk of cronyism, they say. Greece's euro zone partners and the International Monetary Fund are not totally convinced by the explanation. Given that one of Greece's deepest problems has been tax evasion, they are anxious that politicians shouldn't start meddling with the tax agency again.

The extended grace period is especially important as private investors would no longer worry about Greece running out of money for many years. Athens could then issue longer-term debt on the bond markets. This, in turn, would mean that the government wouldn't need to beg for more cash from its euro zone partners for the foreseeable future. Th snag is that Greece's creditors will not formally agree to this debt relief deal until they are satisfied that Athens is sticking to the approved reform program – and the reshuffle has just raised questions about that. As a result, the IMF's review of Greece's progress, which starts in the autumn, could drag on into next year. For its part, the government is concerned that it won't just have to convince its creditors that it is still on track with reforms but that it will have to wait until it is clear how much, if any, extra money it has to pump into its banks. Although there will be some visibility on this after the European Central Bank completes its stress tests on large euro zone lenders in the autumn, the government is anxious that it will be forced to wait several months after that to clarify whether the market will provide the funds. As a result, the premier is worried that he'll have to fight an election without a debt deal under his belt. amaras' best bet is to convince Greece's creditors that he isn't wobbling on reform and that they should complete the debt deal by year-end. His singleminded aim should be to have a really good story about how reform pays off if he has to face the Greek people in the spring.

PanHellenic Scholarship Recipients Receive \$250,000 in Cash Awards at This Year's Event



The well-deserving 2014 Scholarship Award Recipients were called one by one to the stage to receive their certificates and scholarship checks in a room filled with close to 500 friends and supporters of the Foundation on Saturday June 14, at the International Ballroom of the prestigious Hilton Chicago. At this Awards Ceremony, a total of \$250,000 was distributed to 40 of the "best and brightest" Greek American students from across the country, all of them great academic achievers, with some of them attending several of the country's most prestigious universities.

"It is with great pride that we offer these awards as we believe our young "stars" deserve the recognition and encouragement while they receive meaningful support so that they can successfully continue their academic journey" said **Chris P. Tomaras**, Founder and Chairman of the Foundation. Of the 40 students, 20 with economic need received \$10,000 each while another 20, from a more comfortable economic background, received \$2.500 each.

An exceptional performance by **Pete Zervakis** as Master of Ceremonies, a product of the Foundation as a 2008 scholarship recipient himself, provided an outline of the background and the success of the organization, followed by an address and advice to the students by the Foundation's Executive Director **Yanni Valsamas**, and words of admiration regarding the high caliber and academic excellence of all the candidates by the Chairman of the Academic Committee, **Dr. George Alexopoulos**, prior to the distribution of the Awards.

This year's Paradigm Award was offered to **James D. Speros**, Executive Vice President and Chief Creative Officer of Fidelity Investments who delivered a powerful speech and advice to the scholarship recipients urging them to be proud of their name and carry it responsibly, with honor and respect, while always applying in their daily lives the values of Hellenism and Orthodoxy.

Mr. Tomaras concluded the Awards Ceremony by first expressing his thanks and gratitude to the many benefactors and donors for their support of the Foundation, then to the Board of Directors, the independent Academic Committee for their selection of the scholarship recipients, the very supportive Advisory Board and all the staff members and volunteers for their dedicated work on the Foundation. In his message to the scholarship recipients, Mr. Tomaras offered three words with profound meaning: Live, Learn and Lead. He advised the recipients to live life to the fullest and absorb the benefits from every new experience but to also "live honorably, with respect for yourself, your family and others, to act responsibly, proud of your ethnic identity with dignity, maturity

(Continue p. 2)

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- 6.To install Americanism in the Greek-American cvommunity
 - 7.To advance the just causes of Hellenism.
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PanHellenic Scholarship Recipients Receive \$250,000 in Cash **Awards at This Year's Event**

and wisdom." He encouraged the recipients to never stop learning, and closed by saying "I want you to become leaders with passion, excitement and with the ability to innovate and create." After the success of Hellenic Birthright, a study abroad and cultural enrichment program sponsored by the Foundation in cooperation with Anatolia College, for students who never visited Greece before, Mr. Tomaras announced that the American College of Greece in Athens, known as Deree, has offered exclusively to all past and present PanHellenic Scholarship Recipients, a \$3,000 study abroad scholarship per student, per semester. Students would be able to earn up to 15 transferable credits per semester, while experiencing Greece's culture and history.

With the conclusion of the Awards Ceremony, guests enjoyed delicious appetizers and dinner, with musical entertainment by the Hellenic 5 Orchestra and the songs of Babis Tsertos, who came from Greece exclusively for this event and offered his performance pro-bono A number of Church and Community leaders attended the event that included His Eminence Metropolitan lakovos of Chicago, the Hon. Consul General of Greece in Chicago Ioanna Efthymiadou, His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, the Hon. Judge Paul Lillios, the Hon. Judge James Booras, the Hon. Judge Louis Apostle, the Provost of Deree College, Dr. Thimios Zaharopoulos, and several educational and business personalities and members of the press. "Indeed, this year's Gala turned out to be a celebration of the impact the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation has had on the youth of the Greek American community over the last 12 years under your dedicated commitment' said Dr. Thanasis Bournakis, a former professor of Energy Economics at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The Foundation expresses a special thanks to all of the donors who took part in the Chairman's Challenge initiative. T the following list is the **Premier Benefactors** who each provided a \$10,000 scholarship. "We are deeply indebted to everyone for their donation whether large or small. Together, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of Greek American college students who will become life-long significant achievers" said Mr. Tomaras.

Premier Benefactors:

Ms. Helen Tomaras Astin, The Nicholas J. & Anna K. Bouras Foundation, Dimitri & Eleni Bousis & Family, Robert & Violetta Buhler Family, Tassos F. Chronopoulos Family, The Jaharis Family, Mr. & Mrs. George Marcus, Drs. A. Tom & Katherine Petropulos, Dr. George Skarpathiotis Family.

2014 Scholarship Award Recipients:

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Maria Anastasia Arianas, University of Illinois at Chicago

Aristos Athanasiou Athens, Stanford University

Nicholas Chingas, Saint Joseph's University

Marie Steven Christophell, DePaul University

Costa Dimitrios Christopoulos, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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Peter Michail Danos, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Talia Lasandra Davis, Arizona State University Christopher Steven-James Deloglos, Virginia Commonwealth University

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Sophia Joy Gianou, University of Wisconsin - Whitewater

Julia Mary Horiates, East Carolina University

Jason Keith Ioannides. Virginia Tech

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Christina Khouri, Illinois Wesleyan University

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Katerina Christina Svigos, New York University

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Dimitris S. Tselepatiotis. University of Illinois at Chicago

Sofia Eleni Vatougios, Saint Xavier University

William George Vergados, University of Illinois at Chicago

Victor Angelos Zaharopoulos, University of Kansas

About the Foundation

Established officially in 2002, the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to building a better America through Education and Hellenism. After awarding \$250,000 earlier this June, the Foundation has awarded a total of \$2 million to 264 outstanding Greek American undergraduates to date.

For more information about the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation, please visit our website.

STEP INTO SUMMER WITH THE HELLENIC AMERICAN ACADEMY

By; Kathryn Donaghy



Students of the HAA Summer Enrichment Program after their successful car wash.(From left to right: Pano Giannetos, Zoe Marika Sarris, Sofia Gorgees, Daniel Ghannad, Andrew Ghannad, Stephanos Sarris, George Fousekis. Photo taken by: Kathryn Donaghy, program leader.)

The Socrates Day School has initiated Step into Summer, a new summer program that combines academic review and enrichment with recreational activities. With summer in full swing, students are playing sports, hanging out with friends, and spending time with their families. The Socrates Day School wanted to give students the opportunity to gap the time between the school year by participating in an upper grades enrichment camp.

This four week program concentrates on reading and math skills while incorporating activities, such as photography, movie making, and theater to name a few. This past week, students learned a basic business model by having a car wash. Students used graphic design to market their car wash and a budget portfolio to determine their margins. After a successful car wash on Friday, June 27th, students will use their profits to purchase a flip camera for the 2014-2015 News Crew program, an enrichment class held at the day school. "Students are taking pride in their community, in their learning, and in themselves," says Mary Giannetos, Principal and facilitator of Step into Summer.

Although the academic enrichment camp is half over, there are still spots available for the first two weeks in July, ending on July 11th. Students are given the opportunity to explore their many interests or develop a new one. Stop by the Socrates School at 1085 Lake Cook Rd. in Deerfield, IL for more information about this summer enrichment program or other educational opportunities this learning environment has to offer, or visit www.hellenicamericanacademy.org.

Greek teenager takes swimming world aback



_Eighteen-year-old Apostolos Christou has surprised the world of swimming by breaking the world junior record twice within 24 hours, in the process of grabbing gold at the 100 meters backstroke in the European Juniors Championship held at Dordrecht in the Netherlands.

The Olympiakos swimmer clocked 54.41 seconds in the semifinal on Wednesday to knock three tenths off the old record by Italy's Simone Sabbioni. Then in Thursday's final he claimed the top spot clocking 54.04, i.e. 37 seconds off his own record, while leaving Sabbioni in second.

Christou is one of the swimmers to represent Greece at the Young Olympic Games in China next month, after choosing this event over the European Swimming Championships.

He admitted that his main ambition is to make the Rio de Janeiro Olymic Games in 2016: "It's everyone's dream. I want to be in Brazil in two years' time and be able to stand out."

Why Sex is Better After 50

50 years and above aren't called the golden years for nothing! Maybe it's getting closer and more intimate with your partner, or just that you suddenly have more time to spend. Whatever the reason, anyone over 50 will tell you that the sex just gets better as you get older and we'll tell you why!

1. Self-Confidence

At 50 and above, you are the best version of yourself ever! You know who you are as an individual and what you seek in life. You know that you should focus on those things that are important to you. This new found self-confidence can help you in the bedroom to live in the moment and embrace your choices, especially the choices you make in your love and sex life.

2. Spontaneity

Once the children have already left the house, suddenly an air of spontaneity and risk-taking enters your life, and even expresses itself in your sex life. Whether you and your partner suddenly decide to embark on a vacation or spend a romantic evening together in bed, you have to admit that there are a number of benefits to having an empty nest.

3. No Pressure

Once you've reached a certain age, the level of pressure on your physical performance in bed disappears. It becomes more about how you feel in the moment and not about how long you can last in the sack. Sex after 50 is more about connecting with your partner and finding out what pleasures both of you the most.

4. Leaving the Past Behind

When we are young, we tend to compare past sexual partners with current ones, but after 50 these competitive or even guilty feelings disappear. Today, you are able to understand your sexual relations as a natural, intimate and even beautiful way to demonstrate your love for your partner.

5. No Worries

Once you have reached 50, it's really all down here from there! This is not only true in your daily level of stress, but also in your love and sex lives. At younger ages, the tendency is to think about the meaning of sex and what the implications could be, but at older ages, these considerations are no longer relevant and it's time to wave goodbye to a ticking biological clock.

6. Spirituality

Believe it or not, but sex can even be a spiritual experience. Spiritual sex is known in some cultures as 'tantric' sex, which refers not only to the physical and emotion pleasure of experiencing an organism, but the profound and even mystical bonding that occurs when you make love. In spiritual sex, two people can connect, see their souls merge, and learn more about their partner and what they enjoy. Although it may sound a bit kooky, it's definitely worth a try!

7. The Orgasm

Some people claim, especially women, that after 50 it is possible to reach an organism even more times and more easily. At an older age, the body is more sensitive and during sex, its sensors have a party! This makes it easier for women to orgasm faster and more powerfully than they may have in their youth. This also means that the men get a bit of a break in terms of their workload.

8. Free Time

This is a major game-changing factor in your sex life. Whereas before, there were a million things rushing through your head, making it hard to focus on the passionate action at hand, once you have reached the retirement age, you have a lot more free time and a much lighter burden on your shoulders. You should use this free time to get to know your partner's wishes, desires and what makes them feel good, for it is certain that these wonderful insights will dramatically improve your time together in bed.

9. Clarity

At younger ages, sex is a complicated, emotion-filled experience that is difficult if not impossible to describe. Once you reach 50, you have spent time with your spouse and know how sex works and feel more comfortable hopping in the sack. After 50, you begin to realize that life is short and that it's worthwhile to take chances and let yourself go during sex. Your sense of clarity and balance can help skyrocket your sexual pleasure to new and greater heights!

Hotel rates drop on Folegandros but soar on Myconos

Folegandros is the Greek destination with the biggest decline in hotel rates this month compared with a year earlier according to data processed by the Trivago travel website.



Online hotel prices on the small Cycladic island have dropped 27 percent from July 2013 to reach an average rate of 97 euros per double room for a night's stay.

Rates have also fallen at Koukounaries on Skiathos (24 percent) and on Spetses (23 percent).

The biggest increase was noted on Myconos, where rates have soared

by 61 percent to reach an average of 322 euros per double room per night. Lefkada has also seen a 38 percent rise.



THE JEWISH QUARTERBACK

The coach had put together the perfect team for the Chicago Bears. The only thing that was missing was a good quarterback. He had scouted all the colleges and even the Canadian and European Leagues, but he couldn't find a ringer who could ensure a Super Bowl win.

Then one night while watching CNN he saw a war-zone scene in the West Bank . In one corner of the background, he spotted a young Israeli soldier with a truly incredible arm. He threw a hand-grenade straight int THE JEWISH QUARTERBACK

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Then one night while watching CNN he saw a war-zone scene in the West Bank . In one corner of the background, he spotted a young Israeli soldier with a truly incredible arm. He threw a hand-grenade straight into a 15th story window 100 yards away.

KABOOM! He threw another hand-grenade 75 yards away, right into a chimney.

KA-BLOOEY! Then he threw another at a passing car going 90 mph. BULLS-EYE!

"I've got to get this guy!" Coach said to himself. "He has the perfect arm!" So, he brings him to the States and teaches him the great game of football. And the Bears go on to win the Super Bowl.

The young man is hailed as the great hero of football, and when the coach asks him what he wants, all the young man wants is to call his mother.

"Mom," he says into the phone, "I just won the Super Bowl!"

"I don't want to talk to you", the old woman says."You are not my son!"

"I don't think you understand, Mother," the young man pleads. "I've won the greatest sporting event in the world. I'm here among thousands of my adoring fans."

"No! Let me tell you!" his mother retorts. "At this very moment, there are gunshots all around us. The neighborhood is a pile of rubble. Your two brothers were beaten within an inch of their lives last week, and I have to keep your sister in the house so she doesn't get raped!" The old lady pauses, and then tearfully says,.......

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Read Bill to See Where Taxes Go, Including for TIFs, Pappas Says

Information: Maria Pappas (312) 603-6202

Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas said today that property owners would be receiving bills that show where their tax dollars are going, including for the first time how much of a payment is for a Tax Increment Financing District

"It takes a little study, but if you read your bill you will have a better understanding of what's behind it," said Pappas, whose office this week mailed bills for the Second Installment of Tax Year 2013, with a due date of August 1, 2014.

Bills carry taxes from seven to 20 local governments – taxing districts – and show how much owed goes to each. These bills now will show how much of the amount owed will go to a TIF, a taxing district which receives revenues for a fund to finance development. About 220,000 of Cook County's nearly 1.8 million bills will include TIF data.

The four general categories listed on each bill are:

- * Miscellaneous Taxes
- * School Taxes
- * Municipal-township Taxes
- * Cook County Taxes

"Within these categories are listed the specific taxing districts – municipalities, schools, public safety, parks, libraries and others – that levy taxes on your home, business or land," Pappas said, adding that TIF information would be listed under "Municipal-township Taxes." "The TIF information is a major step forward for transparency," Pappas said. "If government taxes your property, you should know why."

To avoid late interest of 1.5 percent per month, on-time payment can be made:

- * Online at cookcountytreasurer.com
- * At more than 400 Chase Bank locations across Illinois
- * From an account at more than 200 participating community banks
- * By mail with a U.S. postmark no later than August 1, 2014



Two migrants were found dead and 11 rescued late on Thursday after the boat they were sailing in from Turkey sank off Samos in the eastern Aegea. Another 22 were thought to be missing.

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Missing climber's body found in Alps after 32 years



Mont Blanc, western Europe's highest mountain. Thousands of climbers risk the dangerous terrain of Mont Blanc each year. Mountain climbers have discovered the frozen body of a young climber who disappeared 32 years ago in the French Alps, French media reports say.

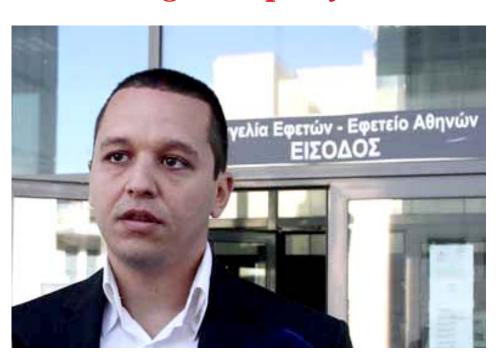
Patrice Hyvert was last seen alive on 1 March 1982, when he took a solitary climb in the Mont Blanc mountain range on the French-Italian border. The 23-year-old did not return after the weather took a bad turn.

Rescue officials say the mountaineer's frozen body was found with his ID and all of his ski equipment still on him. His body was found by two climbers on 3 July on the Talefre glacier at an altitude of 2,687 metres, local newspaper Dauphine Libere reported.

His father, Gerard, told RTL radio that he had given up hope of finding his son's body. "I'm a mountain man, and I would have preferred him to stay up there...He was better on a mountain than in a coffin. He was in his element," he said.

Thousands of climbers risk their lives on the dangerous terrain and inclement weather of the Mont Blanc range, with dozens killed each year. Nine climbers died in the French Alps when they were swept away by an avalanche in 2012.

Golden Dawn spokesman detained, paving way for trial against party



The spokesman for neofascist Golden Dawn, Ilias Kasidiaris, was remanded in pretrial custody on Thursday after testifying before magistrates leading a criminal probe into the party, paving the way for the trial of GD lawmakers and members in November after a 10-month investigation.

Kasidiaris, who was transferred to Korydallos Prison, became the ninth Golden Dawn MP to be put in pretrial custody, joining party leader Nikos Michaloliakos and the latter's second-in-command Christos Pappas among others at Attica's high-security penitentiary.

The two magistrates leading the investigation and a prosecutor overseeing the probe agreed that Kasidiaris should be detained in pretrial custody after deeming that he was likely to commit further offenses if he was left free. The fact that he attacked cameramen and reporters following his conditional release in November last year is said to have partly influenced the decision.

The party spokesman, who had been on conditional release pending trial on charges of running a criminal organization, said the new charges against him – possessing illegal weapons with the intent to supply a criminal organization – were "ridiculous" and that the case against him was "clearly political."

JULY-AUGUST, 2014 National Hellenic Free Press

Position of Vice President for Secondary and Primary Education `at the American Farm School

About our Schools and Educational Programs

The American Farm School's historic Secondary School offers contemporary academic instruction in science and technology, and practical skills instruction in ecologically sound agriculture and food technology methods. The majority of students in the Secondary School board on campus and the School offers a comprehensive residential life program. Recently, the institution successfully launched an innovative primary education division with a focus on environmental education. Perrotis College, which offers B.Sc. degrees in the fields of Environmental Systems Management, International Business and Food Science and Technology, is also under the institutional umbrella of the American Farm School.

English language proficiency, the teaching of Science and information technology, and a learn by doing approach are essential elements of all our programs. The educational farm and science laboratories give students applied research and hands-on experience (www.afs.edu.gr).

Position scope

Reporting to the President of the Institution, the Vice President for Secondary and Primary Education will provide leadership and direction consistent to with the goals and mission of the institution and to-its Secondary and Primary Schools.

Job description

The Vice President for Secondary and Primary Education, in collaboration with the Secondary and Primary Schools Principals, oversees and is personally responsible for the successful operation of these Schools and more particularly for:

- academic excellence, organizational efficiency and financial sustainability;
- curriculum development and implementation, with emphasis on the experiential teaching of STEM;
 - the extra-curricular programs;
 - teacher recruitment, coordination, evaluation and development;
 - participation in the development and implementation of academic stra-

tegic planning;

- · development of innovative academic initiatives and projects;
- · representation of the School(s) in national and international academic networks, government bodies and the community; and
 - the boarding department and student life services.

Qualifications and characteristics

Candidates should possess:

- · Terminal degree (Ph.D.) in educational leadership, curriculum development, Agriculture or Natural Sciences;
- · a Bachelor or Masters degree in one of the Natural Sciences, Technology or Agriculture;
- ten years of teaching experience in <u>secondary education</u>, preferably in an international school environment;
 - · demonstrated success as an academic administrator; and
- · excellent English writing and speaking, even though Greek is the primary language of instruction.

Additional personal characteristics: commitment to academic innovation and excellence, experience in experiential and student-centered educational approaches, high work ethics, professional integrity, exceptional interpersonal and communication skills, strategic and analytical capacity and a collaborative work style.

A competitive salary and benefits package is offered that may include housing on campus. The appointment will start on September 1st.

Interested candidates should send electronically a letter of interest, a curriculum vitae and the names and contact details of three referees to the e-mail address: dtheod@afs.edu.gr. Referees will be contacted only in the cases of selected candidates. The e-mail should be titled: Application for the VP Position. For more information, please contact the Human Resources Department, Despina Theodoridou, tel.: +30 2310 492740.

Applications will continue to be accepted until the new Vice President is appointed. The American Farm School is an equal opportunity employer.

Applications will be treated in strict confidentiality.



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Jobless rate continues its slow decline



Unemployment is continuing to decrease slowly but steadily, as it contracted by 0.2 percent in April from the same month in 2013 to amount to a seasonally adjusted rate of 27.3 percent, according to data released on Thursday by the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT). In March it had also stood at 27.3 percent.

The number of people employed in April 2014 came to 3,471,930, while the financially inactive population stood at 3,370,392 and the unemployed numbered 1,303,454, down 26,944 from a year earlier. Among the most vulnerable age group, aged 15-24 years, the jobless rate fell from 58.9 percent in April 2013 to 56.3 percent a year later.

What is most worrying, however, is the high rate of the long-term unemployed (those without a job for at least 12 months): A recent survey by the Manpower Organization (OAED) showed an 18.5 percent rise (or 69,744 people more) in May from the same month in 2013.

Fruits and Vegetables with Low Risk of Pesticides.



I'm sure that you have all been told that if you want to live a healthy life and eat healthy food then you should "switch to organic". This means eating organic fruits and vegetables which have not been treated with chemical fertilizers or pest control products. There are many reasons why organic food is so much better for us and for the environment, but they are also much more expensive then regular fruits and vegetables. So what if I told you there is a great way to balance the health benefits of organic food with a decent price? Some fruits and vegetables are a lot less exposed and vulnerable to the chemicals used by conventional agriculture and as such as very safe to eat. By going over this list of products you can reduce the cost of your shopping cart by only buying the organic food that you really need to protect your family. You can feel safe to buy these non-organic items, and can save quite a bit of money by doing so:Onio

Because of its strong smell and taste, the onion doesn't attract many pests, and therefore doesn't need to be treated with any pesticides. This makes the onion a safe choice to buy from just about anywhere, with no need to pay extra. Just make sure that the one you buy doesn't have any soft spots or signs of damage.

Avocado

The avocado has a thick skin that protects the green flesh from pesticides. Search for one without any holes or missing parts in the skin and also one that's not too soft. It is still advisable to wash the avocado before cutting it to avoid any leftovers of chemicals from the outside mixing with what you'll eat.

While corn does normally take a lot of fertilizers to grow, it's very unlikely that you will find any pesticides on it. A good way to tell if you are getting a healthy, clean, corn is to feel the green leafs around it. If they are smooth but not greasy to touch then you are safe to buy the corn.

Pineapple

Like the avocado, the pineapple has a hard "shell" that keeps the inside unaffected by most of the things farmers spray on their crops. Don't be tempted to buy the ones that smell too sweet or too strong, as they are usually too ripe.

Look for bright consistent colors like red yellow and orange with a strong fruity smell. This will guarantee that you take a mango that has not been harmed by any pesticides or other hazardous compounds.

Asparagus

This is another kind of vegetable that's not really affected by pests and therefore isn't exposed to any chemicals, so you don't have to buy the organic kinds to avoid them. Any kind with a light green color and slightly purple tips is fine to buy, regardless of size.

Peas are one of the least likely vegetables to have any leftovers of pesticides on them. Go for the big and green pods and you can safely say that you have a healthy, clean product.

That hairy brown skin might taste bad but it works wonders when it comes to keeping harmful chemicals away from the sweet center. Much like other items on this list, it is still recommended to wash the kiwi before eating it.

Cabbage

Cabbages are very easy to grow, so they aren't exposed to many fertilizers or pesticides. Pick any cabbage that looks shiny but still feels strong and crunchy, avoid any with yellowish spots and always remove the most outer layers of the cabbage.

Eggplant

With a smooth and thick skin to protect it, the eggplant is a safe buy, organic or not. Look for ones that still feel hard to touch but have smooth, even color.

While pesticides are known to be found on the skin of the papayas, it has also been found that a good wash with water and a simple towel will remove almost all of them. If you see one in the store that looks a bit wrinkled it's still ok to buy, just give it a few days

Watermelon

If you are having trouble opening a watermelon then you can be sure that hardly any fertilizers and chemicals can make it past its hard exterior. If you want to make sure you pick a sweet one have a look at the stem, dry and small will mean you are in for a sweet healthy treat.

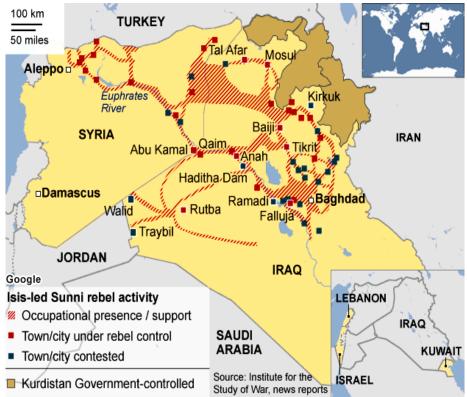
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Iraq rebels 'seize nuclear materials'

Iraq has warned the UN that Sunni militants have seized nuclear materials used for scientific research at a university in the city of Mosul. In a letter seen by Reuters, Iraq's envoy to the UN said nearly 40kg (88lb) of uranium compounds were seized. The letter appealed for international help to "stave off the threat of their use by terrorists in Iraq or abroad".



But the UN atomic agency IAEA said the material was "low grade" and did not pose a significant security risk. US officials have also reportedly played down the threat, saying the materials were not believed to be enriched uranium. They added that it would be difficult for the rebels to use the materials to make weap-



Chemicals seized

"Terrorist groups have seized control of nuclear material at the sites that came out of the control of the state," Ambassador Mohamed Ali Alhakim said in the letter. "These nuclear materials, despite the limited amounts mentioned, can enable terrorist groups, with the availability of the required expertise, to use it separately or in combination with other materials in its terrorist acts," he added.

However, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) spokesperson Gill Tudor said on Thursday it "would not present a significant safety, security or nuclear proliferation risk". But she said that "any loss of regulatory control over nuclear and other radioactive materials is a cause for concern". Mosul, some 400km (250 miles) north-west of Baghdad, was last month seized by Isis-led (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant) insurgents.

The letter comes a day after Iraqi officials confirmed that the rebels were in control of a disused chemical weapons factory. Iraq said the Muthanna complex, north-west of the capital Baghdad, housed remnants of rockets filled with sarin and other deadly nerve agents. The UN and US have said the munitions are degraded and the rebels will be unable to make usable chemical arms from them.

Meanwhile, tensions are building between the central Iraqi authorities and the autonomous Kurdistan regional government, one day after Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said Isis militants were being harboured in the Kurdish city of Erbil. A spokesman for Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani said that Mr Maliki had become hysterical and urged him to step down. He said: "You have destroyed the country and someone who has destroyed the country cannot save the country from crises."

Kurdish ministers have also said they would not attend cabinet meetings until further notice in protest at Mr Maliki's comments. In recent weeks, Isis insurgents have seized huge swathes of north-western Iraq. Kurdish troops moved into areas abandoned by the Iraqi forces during the Isis onslaught, including the oil-rich region of Kirkuk. The UN has said at least 2,417 Iraqis, including 1,531 civilians, were killed in "acts of violence and terrorism" in June.