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## Will Kerameus' education reform make the cut?

Just three in a succession of education ministers since the restoration of democracy managed to carry out reforms that touched the essence of the contradictions prevailing in Greek society. All three also happen to be women. The first two – Marietta Giannakou and Anna Diamantopoulou – were rewarded for their efforts by being voted out of Parliament when the next election rolled around.



Despite the fate of her predecessors, incumbent Niki Kerameus has also taken the plunge with a reform package that strikes at the heart of two cultures

that divide us: that of progress and healthy competition in the framework of the European Union, and that of conservatism, insularity and hostility toward excellence.

Clientelism is a phenomenon that has been rife since the establishment of the modern Greek state. Cronyist appointments to the civil service and state-run companies gave birth to monsters that we are now trying to hold at bay – lest they gobble us up – with cushy voluntary redundancy programs that are being paid for by taxpayers. The situation is even worse in the education sector.

An imperfect system introduced after World War II that gave all the power to professors became even more rotten during the 1967-74 military dictatorship. Then, in 1982, along came the “charismatic” Socialist prime minister Andreas Papandreou, granting junior academics tenure – even those who were unqualified – and entrenching political parties deep in the university system.

In August 2011, leftist SYRIZA leader Alexis Tsipras ranted in Parliament about university departments operating in most parts of the country with no other purpose than to pander to clientelist relationships. He called them “schools of nothing.” Today, Kerameus is trying to shut down these schools of nothing, only to be accused by the opposition leader of pandering to the private education sector.

However, the greatest threat to Kerameus' reform program is not Tsipras' change of heart nor the chest-thumping tactics of a few fringe groups. The changes she seeks to make are an affront to much more deeply established vested interests and mentalities. And those interests will not go down without a fight just because the reforms were passed into law, just as they did not give up in the face of the Diamantopoulou reform.

When the schools of nothing start closing down, who's to say that lawmakers with the ruling conservative New Democracy party who are elected in these regions – who rely on the support of businesses that rely on the business from students – will not react as well?

These lawmakers will find allies in the rectors facing the threat that they will lose their iron grip on all the power, and in the conservative part of SYRIZA that will be deprived of a traditional pool of support – which turns out to be the most reactionary part of society.

The Giannakou and Diamantopoulou laws were eventually defeated by conservatism. Will the Kerameus law make it?



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## Creation

Louis A. Palivos



Evolution is controversial. Creationism is controversial. Evolution, on one hand, and Creation on the opposing hand, marshal their respective evidence to advance their respective worldviews. But just what is the evidence on each side of these two world views? Some propose a third world view, that is, Theistic Evolution. According to this view, God created the building blocks and the natural laws which eventually emerged life from non-living matter. Similarly, Evolution postulates that life emerged from

(Continued p.2)



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### THE PLATFORM OF THE GREEK PRESS

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# Creation

non-living matter into more and more complex life forms over millions of years. This article will advance the notion that God created life directly from nothing or from non-living matter fully functioning to be able to reproduce!

The reader is encouraged to read my article on "Creation or Evolution" and the pamphlet "Have you been Brainwashed." This pamphlet changed my life and it is on my web page: [www.louisapalivoslawoffice.com](http://www.louisapalivoslawoffice.com).

Can Evolution be proven scientifically? The plain answer is NO! The scientific method requires that scientific laws be verifiable and repeatable. So here we are. Since the publication of Charles Darwin the "Origin of species by means of Natural Selection or Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle of Life", in 1859, there still is no scientific proof that Evolution is a fact. Many worthy scientific discoveries have revolutionized humanities understanding of electronics, computers, genetics, geology, physics, astronomy, etc. However, on the scientific topic of origins various theories keep emerging: molecular drive, punctuated equilibrium or order out of chaos, etc. Yet, the basic evolution theories are these five:

- 1) Evolution as such; 2) Common Descent; 3) Gradualism;
- 4) Multiplication of Species; and 5) Natural Selection.

Notice that these are all *theories*. There must be scientific proof for a theory to become a law and presently there is NO PROOF! Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the theory of Evolution is a philosophy.

Theistic Evolution is extremely deceptive; because on top of Evolution which is matter and evolutionary factors (chance and necessity and mutation and selection and isolation and death) and very long time periods, then, God is added.

A critical analysis against Theistic Evolution was summarized, as follows:

- 1) Misrepresents the Nature of God. Evolution requires millions upon millions of years for change. However, God's work is "very good," Gen. 1:31 and is "perfect," Deut. 32:4;
- 2) God Becomes a God of Gaps. This implies that God is Himself evolving;
- 3) Denial of Central Biblical Teachings. The Lord Jesus Christ vouched for the history of creation, man, animals and plants. He is the Creator of all things, "visible and invisible." Col. 1:16. Evolution denies these teachings;
- 4) Loss of the Way for Finding God. In evolution there is no sin so as to repent and to seek God;
- 5) God's Incarnation is Undermined. Jesus, the Word, became "flesh" Jn.1:14 and in the "likeness of men." Phil. 2:5-7. Did Jesus evolve from the apes?
- 6) Jesus' work of Redemption is a Myth. Evolution cannot acknowledge that Adam was the first man to have sinned. Rom. 5:12;
- 7) Loss of Biblical Chronology. Holy Scripture provides a framework from the Genesis Creation to the consummation in the Book of Revelation. Evolution time scales fluctuate to billions of years;
- 8) Loss of Creation Concepts. Ex Nihilo creation is controverted by evolution;

# Creation

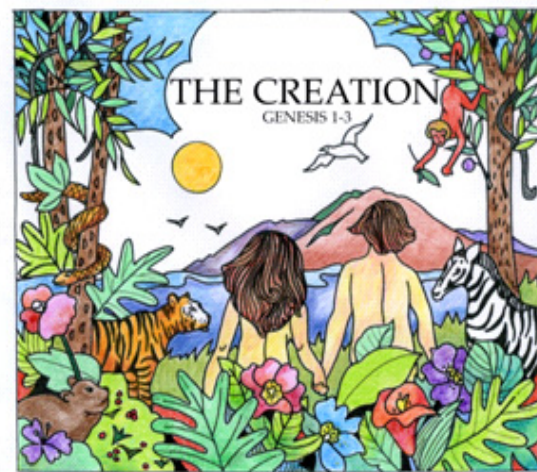
constant changing evolution theories; and 10) Missing Purpose. Holy Scripture provides a purpose, that God created man in His "image and likeness" Gen. 1:27, and his destination is to be "partakers of the divine nature" 1 Pet. 1:14.<sup>1</sup> The Orthodox Holy Fathers call this *Theosis*! Evolution's purpose is constant Evolution and survival.

**Patristic Theology on Creation is nicely summarized by St. John Damascene:** The earliest formation of man is called creation and not generation. For creation is the original formation of God's hand, while generation is the succession from each other made necessary by the sentence of death imposed on us on account of the transgression. Eve was begotten of Adam and not conceived of a mother, but as it were brought forth of man alone.<sup>2</sup>

Evolution according to many of the Holy Fathers, St Basil, St. Maximos, St. Theophilus, Theophan the Recluse, St. Nectarios, and Justin Popovich, is a myth. As St. Nikolai stated, "It takes a million years for a monkey's spine to become straight and for a monkey to become a man."<sup>3</sup>

Some Orthodox Theologians, are taking gigantic steps to harmonize Creation with Evolution. Such steps are that the Holy Scripture and the

Holy Fathers seem to suggest that there is a "progressive evolution"; that there is a distinction between "created matter" and "uncreated matter," or "uncreated energy"; and that the basic understanding of Creation is that it is a myth.<sup>4</sup> Further, some attempt reconciling Creation and Evolution by distinguishing that science should answer the questions of "how" and "when" and religion answer the questions of



"who" and "why."

How, then, to best understand Evolution and Creation? The best answer, aside from true science, which is repeatable and verifiable, is to try to understand the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ and what *He* thought of Creation!

The Lord Jesus Christ understood the Genesis Creation as being literal, historical, accurate, and inspired by God. He understood that God's word is truth, Jn. 17:17; that Scripture cannot be broken, Jn. 10:35; that He refers to Adam, Mat. 19:4-5; that He refers to Abel, Math. 25:35; to Noah, Math. 24: 37-39; to Abraham Jn. 8:39-41; to Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah, Lk. 17: 28-32; to Jonah, Math. 12:39-41; to Genesis, 1:17 and 2:24 and that He speaks of male and female from the beginning of Creation, Mk. 10:6.

The tract that changed my life asks "Have you been brainwashed?" Today, we should ask, "Are we being brainwashed now?" Unfortunately, the answer to both these questions seems to be yes. As history moves forward, please pause and contemplate Saint Peter's profound prophecy that Naturalism will be advanced and Creation ignored and mocked.

First of all you must understand this, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own passions and saying "Where is the promise of his coming?" For ever since the Fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of Creation. For this they willfully forget that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 2 Pet.3:3-6

In closing, recently the "Intelligent Design Theory" has surfaced, which is incredibly interesting. Thou this theory is not needed; because, Almighty God is the Designer, it raises the idea of incredible design inside a cell. Does this incredible design happen by chance? How many times must this design happen, over and over during millions of years? Well, one can accept design happening over and over, again and again by chance. However, another one may accept that there was the Supernatural Creation, contrary to the scoffers, who deliberately spin the myth of Evolution and deny God's Creation. This Naturalist worldview is the bad news but really it is the good news of the Lord's soon return; because, it proves that St. Peter's prophecy is unfolding. Moreover, the sad news is, as St. Paisios stated, "Christ's ancestor was the ape! What blasphemy! And they don't understand that they are blaspheming."<sup>5</sup> The good news is that we were created "in the image and in the likeness" of God and are sustained by God!

1. Werner Gitt, *10 Dangers of Theistic Evolution*, Answers in Genesis, Sept. 1, 1995.
2. Fr. Seraphim Rose, *Genesis and Early Man: The Orthodox Patristic Understanding*. St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, Cal. 2011.
3. Theron Mathis, *Is Theistic Evolution Orthodox*, March 20, 2018.
4. Vasilis N. Makrides, *Evolution and Orthodoxy in Greece: Modern Attempts to Reconcile in Critical Analysis*, Neusis, Athens, Gr. 1998, 173-220.
5. *Gerontas Paisios' view on the Theory of Evolution*, Gerontas Paisios the Athonite.



# Tourists see Athens as Covid-safe



Greece is considered a particularly Covid-safe destination, according to foreign tourists who got a chance to visit in 2020. This sense of security in relation to the pandemic is the second most important reason for choosing to visit Athens, after its archaeological sites and its culture, according to a survey by the capital's hoteliers.

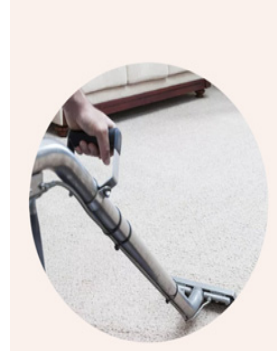
The Visitor Satisfaction and Hotel Performance survey by the Athens-Attica and Argosaronic Hoteliers Association found that 43% of recreational tourists arriving in Athens last year said they chose it as a safe destination, a rate that climbs to 60% among the 18-25-year olds.

Foreign visitors in Athens said they were quite well informed about the Greek measures against Covid-19, giving it a mark of 7.6 out of 10. Both Greeks and foreign respondents said they felt very safe in their hotels (with a mark of 8.9 and 9.2 respectively). A similar assessment for sites of interest, restaurants and taxis fetched marks above 8 out of 10 in all cases. Only public transport fared worse among foreigners, with 6.9/10.

In total, visitors from abroad last year marked the Greek measures with 7.3/10, saying that they did not affect their experience in Athens to a great extent. The survey further found that the pandemic did not have an impact on spending in the Greek capital, which ranged around the same amount as in 2018 and 2019 on a per-visitor basis, at 115 euros per person. Consequently the overall satisfaction marks notched in slightly higher at 8.2 out of 10, from 8.1 in 2019.

Of course despite the high satisfaction rate among tourists and the security they felt, tourism demand was exceptionally low. Overall the association considers last year as "catastrophic" for the hotel sector. Taking into account the hotels that did not operate, the capital's occupancy rate came to just 19.7%. The loss of revenues in the Attica hotel market last year is estimated at \$700 million.

Nevertheless, rival destinations such as Rome and Barcelona had even lower occupancy rates and only Istanbul fared better, with a 30% occupancy rate.



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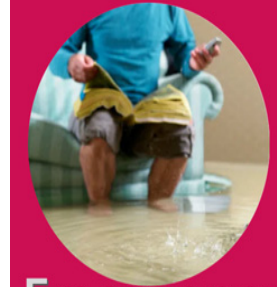
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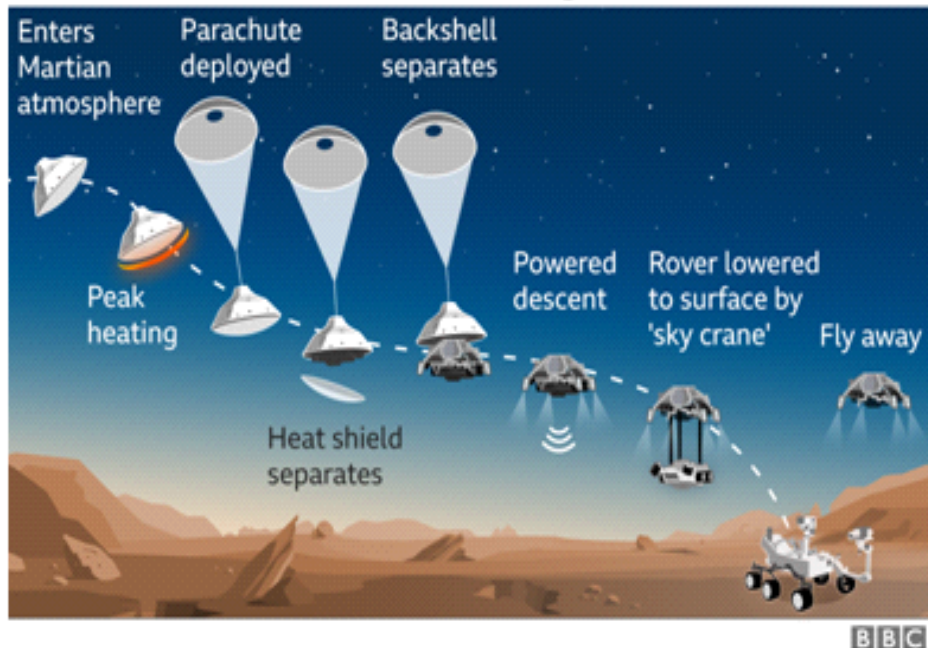
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## The journey to the surface of Mars made by the Perseverance rover

### Nasa's Perseverance landing on Mars



Nasa has released stunning videos of its Perseverance rover landing on Mars. The movies cover the final minutes of last week's hair-raising descent, up to the point where the robot's wheels make contact with the ground.

The sequences show a whirl of dust and grit being kicked up as the vehicle is lowered by its rocket backpack to the floor of Jezero Crater.

Perseverance was sent to Mars festooned with cameras, seven of which were dedicated to recording the landing.

Their imagery represents vital feedback for engineers as they look to improve still further the technologies used to put probes on the surface of the Red planet

#### Key questions about Nasa's Mars rover

How Perseverance will search for signs of life

"We have taken everyone along with us on our journeys across the Solar System, through the rings of Saturn, looking back at the 'Pale Blue Dot' and incredible panoramas on the surface of Mars. This is the first time we've been able to actually capture an event like the landing of a spacecraft on Mars," he told reporters.

"We will learn something by looking at the performance of the vehicle in these videos. But a lot of it is also to bring you along on our journey."

All the cameras employed in the descent and landing were off-the-shelf, ruggedised sports cameras, with next-to-no modifications.

image caption The mast has been raised and the main science cameras are now snapping the local terrain

The cameras were positioned to capture key hardware events - from the release of the supersonic parachute, through the jettisoning of the entry capsule's heatshield and flight of the backpack, or "sky crane", all the way through to touchdown and the backpack's disposal.

This corresponded to roughly the final four minutes of the rover's seven-minute descent to the surface.

"We collected a little over 30 gigabytes of information, and over 23,000 images of the vehicle descending down to the surface of Mars," explained Dave Gruel, who led the camera effort at JPL.

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One of the three cameras looking up at the parachutes failed, but the other six cameras worked flawlessly. Nasa had hoped also to record the sound of the descent with a microphone, but unfortunately this didn't succeed.

However, the team has managed to get a mic operating on the ground so there is the possibility of hearing Perseverance go about its exploration duties in the coming weeks. Already, the muffled sound of the wind in Jezero Crater has been played back.

Controllers will this week perform the critical task of transitioning Perseverance away from the software that got it safely down to the surface of Mars to one that enables the robot to rove and use equipment such as its robotic arm

This is likely to take four Martian days, or Sols (a Martian day lasts 24 hours and 39 minutes). We might see a wheel wiggle and the first test drive of a few metres come the weekend.

There's huge interest in the mini-helicopter that travelled with the rover. The 2kg device will perform the first powered flight on another world.

But first Perseverance needs to find the right place to put this aircraft down to conduct its experiments. Mission planners said on Friday it would be a few weeks yet before the robot reached this chosen location, meaning it's probably going to be April before Ingenuity, as the little chopper is known, takes to the skies.

"The descent stage (backpack/sky crane) is about 700m away from where Perseverance is on the surface. The parachute is about 1.2km and the heatshield about 1.5km. And so it's very exciting that we can see all these different components," said Jessica Samuels, the Perseverance surface mission manager.

## Tiger Woods suffers 'multiple leg injuries' in Los Angeles car crash



Tiger Woods is in surgery after suffering "multiple leg injuries" in a car crash in Los Angeles, California.

that it "responded to a single-vehicle rollover" accident in which the "vehicle sustained major damage".

The 15-time golf major champion, 45, had to be "extricated from the wreck" by firefighters and paramedics. Woods' agent Mark Steinberg said: "He is currently in surgery and we thank you for your privacy and support."

Steinberg confirmed the detail about the American having sustained "multiple leg injuries". Woods was at the Riviera Country Club in LA at the weekend as host of the Genesis Invitational tournament.

A statement from the LA County Sheriff's Department said it responded to the crash "on the border of Rolling Hills Estates and Rancho Palos Verdes" on Tuesday morning local time.

It added: "Mr Woods was extricated from the wreck with the 'jaws of life' by Los Angeles County firefighters and paramedics, then transported to a local hospital by ambulance for his injuries."

"Units dispatched at 07:22 and found a single-vehicle rollover. One adult male was assisted out of the vehicle and transported to a local area hospital in serious condition." World number three Justin Thomas is one of Woods' best friends on the tour and expressed concern for his compatriot.

"I'm sick to my stomach," Thomas said. "You know, it hurts to see one of your... closest friends get in an accident.

"Man, I just hope he's all right. Just worry for his kids, you know. I'm sure they're struggling." A statement from PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan



said: "We are awaiting further information when he comes out of surgery.

"On behalf of the PGA Tour and our players, Tiger is in our prayers and will have our full support as he recovers." Woods was involved in a car crash in November 2009 which eventually led to admissions of infidelity and the breakdown of his marriage. He then took a break from golf but returned shortly afterwards. Following five wins in 2013, Woods started just 24 events in the next four years because of chronic back pain and multiple surgeries.

In 2017 Woods was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence when he was found asleep at the wheel of his car. He later pleaded guilty to reckless driving. He had five prescription drugs in his system as he recovered from the spinal fusion surgery that ultimately gave him a second golfing career. Woods ended an 11-year wait for a major title when he won the Masters at Augusta in 2019. He jointly holds the record for most PGA Tour wins at 82 with Sam Snead and is three behind Jack Nicklaus' mark of 18 major titles.

Woods recently said he had hoped to play in this year's Masters in April after having a fifth back surgery in January. He ended 2019 sixth in golf's world rankings but is now 50th.

BBC golf correspondent Iain Carter told BBC Radio 5 Live: "Tiger Woods has had this extraordinary life which has had such massive highs on the golf course but some extraordinary lows in his personal life.

"This is now a very serious situation for his career." He was on American television on Sunday. A lot of observers were concerned at how hesitant he was about the nature of the progress that was being made in terms of his recovery and whether or not he would be fit for the Masters. "All thoughts of that now go completely out of the window and are no longer a priority."



# NEWS FROM GREECE

## Think tank hits back at critics of its supposed soft stance on Turkey

The Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) published Friday a long rebuttal to criticism it has faced lately for its alleged “soft” stance toward Turkey.

ELIAMEP provided a condensed version of its rebuttal on its Twitter account. The text of the Twitter thread follows:

“Let us re-introduce ourselves. ELIAMEP has been an independent, non-governmental, non-profit research foundation & think tank for the past 30-plus years. It has no members but researchers or consultants, who freely express their views, without committing (ELIAMEP) or being bound by it.

Our journey has been public and transparent; events, statements, publications, financial data and sources of funding (mainly competitive EU programs, research excellence programs) are all accessible on the ELIAMEP website.

Greece's most internationally recognizable think tank, one of the most important at regional, European & global level. It was crowned in 2017 by the Academy of Athens “for the important work in the fields of Foreign Policy, Defense and Security.”

With numerous international publications and events, over the past 8 months we have highlighted the full range of Greek-Turkish relations, and engaged in an international debate over the revisionist role of Erdogan's Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean.

We address ourselves to thinking people by systematically supporting our country in international dialogue fora. Without shouting, with seriousness, credibility and a measured tone. That is what we will continue to do. And we will not be afraid of some intolerant people, nor will we take patriotism lessons from anyone.”

## Holding thumbs for Mario Draghi

Calling on former ECB chief Mario Draghi to form a coalition government may have been Italian President Sergio Mattarella's option of last resort, other than calling early elections. And Draghi, “the Italian who saved the euro,” could just turn out to be “the European who saves Italy,” as former prime minister Matteo Renzi, put it. However, it turns out, though, Draghi's mandate marks the beginning of a chapter that could have interesting implications for European politics, too.

The challenges that the highly respected former head of the European Central Bank faces are many. First is that of legitimacy. Not having been elected, he will face questions from all parts of the political spectrum – not least because of the strong strain of populism that resulted in the Five Star Movement and the League being the biggest parties. Secondly, running a government with various parties, governing a nation with many special interest groups and chronic problems, is not the same as running an organization that has a strict mandate and clearly defined role.

It was Draghi's famous decision to “do whatever it takes” which allowed him to bend the ECB's rules and save the euro. To save Italy he will have to bring discipline to a political scene in which everyone demands everything at the same time. To take difficult decisions he will need to ignore the political cost, while for the parties backing him this could mean their political downfall. This will be his biggest problem: He will depend on the continual backing of politicians who will be looking to exploit his every mistake and appropriate his every gain. Every day, he will be on “sufferance,” without the fixed term and strict hierarchy on which he depended at the ECB.

However, Draghi is in a better position than Mario Monti, the patrician “technocrat” who was prime minister between late 2011 and early 2013. Draghi's role in saving the euro provides him with undeniable credibility even though he is not elected. More importantly, even Italian populism may have run its course. Draghi may be backed even by members of the Five Star Movement who want to avoid early elections, and by Matteo Salvini and his (anti-EU) League, who would like to be back in government.

For the EU, too, the stakes are high: not only does the bloc's third largest economy need a steady hand at the wheel, but, also we need to see how a political field that is dry of talent and ideas could attract serious, successful players for the very difficult task of governing.

## Political fallout over rape case gets ugly



Government accuses SYRIZA of using trolls to spread slander while PM initiates House debate

The political controversy that has erupted in the wake of allegations about the former director of the Greek National Theater, Dimitris Lignadis, who is accused of raping minors, will be transferred to Parliament

this Thursday at the initiative of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

Moreover, with recent reports suggesting that the case could only be the tip of the iceberg and social media politicizing the issue – where a hashtag campaign is holding ruling New Democracy responsible for the scandal – deputy party spokesperson Aristotelia Pelsoni said on Monday that the House discussions will focus on

the quality and standards of the public debate on the issue.

Pelsoni stated that the president of SYRIZA, Alexis Tsipras, will be asked to clarify whether he agrees with the tone of the public debate and the #ND\_pederasts hashtag on social media.

For his part, Tsipras said the main issue is not the standard of public debate, but the crime itself and the mistakes made by the government.

In response, the Prime Minister's Office denounced the leftist leader and his party for “having embarked on an unprecedented campaign of vulgarity.”

“SYRIZA and Mr Tsipras, sometimes openly and sometimes hiding behind their army of trolls on the internet, have reached the extremes of mudslinging, even talking about #ND\_pederasts,” the PM's office statement read. It also accused the opposition of degrading a major issue such as the Greek #metoo movement and pedophile cases – which also concern the 2017-2018 period when SYRIZA was in government – by looking for conspiracies, tantamount to a “Greek QAnon.”

Meanwhile, government sources said legislative initiatives are being drafted to establish a strict “code of conduct” to prevent any form of abuse and cultivate social coexistence and “dignity from all to all.”

With regard to calls by the main opposition party and artists' unions for Mendoni's resignation over her handling of the Lignadis case, Pelsoni said this will not take place. However, she did concede that Mendoni's remarks last week that Lignadis is a “dangerous” man who “deceived” her, were “unfortunate” as this is something that will be adjudicated by the justice system. Nonetheless, she expressed the government's support for the culture official, saying that she is a good minister.

## Vaccinations program rolled out to small islands



Katerinana Sakellaropoulou is greeted by local children on Monday during a visit to the Diapontia islands as Greece's vaccination program against the novel coronavirus rolls out to the inhabitants of the small Ionian Sea cluster. Some 725,000 jabs have been administered nationwide since the program began, a Health Ministry official said Monday. Primary Healthcare General Secretary Marios Themistokleous said that Greece is above the European Union average in terms of vaccination coverage and in fourth place as far as rates are concerned. He estimated that by Easter there will be a good “percentage of immunity.”

## Turkey's ‘harassment’ claims



Sources inside the Hellenic National Defense General Staff (GEETHA) have rejected claims by Ankara Tuesday that Greece's military harassed a Turkish research vessel in the Aegean Sea.

The same sources said that the Hellenic Air Force carried out an exercise involving 29 aircraft in the central Aegean Sea.

They said an air space notice, or Notam, designating the area was issued on February 9, five days before Turkey's illegal navigational warning (Navtex).

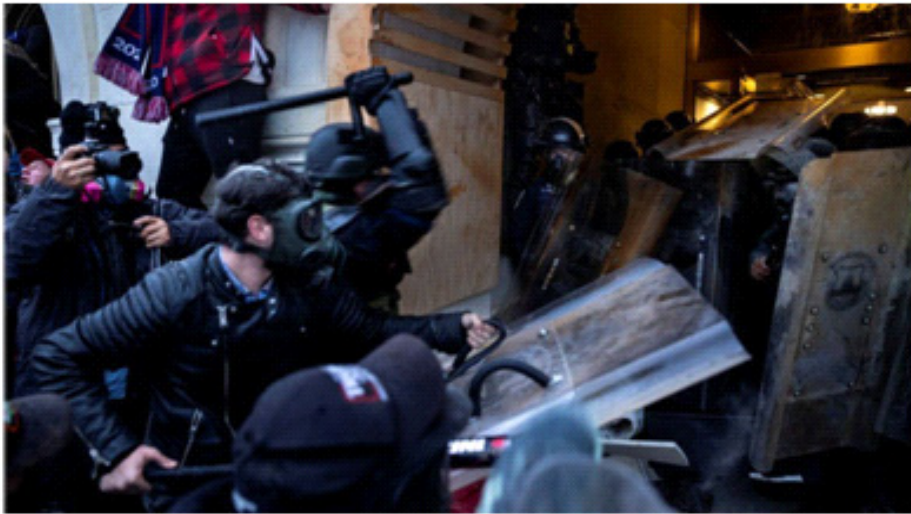
The Greek jets took off around 1.30 p.m. and wrapped up the drill at 2.40 p.m, the sources said. They were not carrying chaff or flares.

More specifically, the exercise was carried out between the islands of Agios Efstratios and Kyra Panagia and to the south near Psara. Throughout the exercise, the TCG Cesme was sailing in the sea area west of Limnos island. The closest the Greek plane came to Cesme was 10 nautical miles, the sources said. It was flying at 19,000 feet.

“Claims published in the Turkish media have nothing to do with reality,” the sources said.



# Security officials testify Capitol rioters 'came prepared for war'



Police and rioters clashed for hours in the halls of Congress. *image caption* Police and rioters clashed for hours in the halls of Congress.

US Capitol security officials who were ousted in the wake of the 6 January attack on Congress have blamed intelligence failures for the breach.

Testifying to a Senate committee, the officials said that the rioters "came prepared for war" with weapons, radios and climbing gear.

Ex-Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund said he had prepared for a protest, not "a military-style coordinated assault".

Four people died after pro-Trump protesters stormed the US Capitol.

Three of the four officials testifying on Tuesday to the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee resigned in the immediate wake of the attack, in which one Capitol Police officer was killed.

Acting Washington DC police chief Robert Contee III told lawmakers, who are holding the first public hearing into the attack, that he was "stunned" by how long it took for the Pentagon to deploy National Guard troops to help quell the riots. Democrats charge that the attack amounted to an insurrection, and impeached former President Donald Trump for allegedly inciting the mob. He was later acquitted by the Senate, becoming the first president in US history to be impeached twice.

All three officials agreed that there appeared to be a level of co-ordination and planning from the crowd. Mr Sund said that pipe bombs that were placed at the edge of the security perimeter appeared to be intended to draw law enforcement away from the Capitol building.

"When the group arrived at the perimeter, they did not act like any group of protestors I had ever seen," said the 30-year police veteran.

"A clear lack of accurate and complete intelligence across several federal agencies contributed to this event and not poor planning by the United States Capitol Police," he added. Capitol Police Captain Carneysha Mendoza described the clashes, telling lawmakers that she has chemical burns on her face from attackers that still have not fully healed.

"Of the multitude of events I've worked in my nearly 19-year career in the department, this was by far the worst of the worst," she said.

"We could have had 10 times the amount of people working with us, and I still believe the battle would have been just as devastating."

The officials also said that an FBI report, warning that protesters had been preparing for "war", had failed to reach security officials on the eve of the attack. Former House Sergeant-at-Arms Paul Irving said that despite media reports, "optics played no role in my decision around security".

He denied reports that officials did not want military troops at the Capitol out of concern that it would generate bad publicity.

His account appeared to be in direct conflict with Mr Sund, who testified that Mr Irving had "stated he was concerned about the 'optics' of having National Guard present". "We all agreed the intelligence did not support" calling in the troops, said former Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Michael Stenger.

Mr Sund added that no civilian police force would have been equipped that day to repel the massive crowd.

Senator Amy Klobuchar, who is leading the hearing, said Pentagon officials will be called next week to testify about the deployment of National Guard troops. Senators say the hearings will help determine new security measures - including a permanent fence - being considered for the Capitol in the wake of the attack. At the time, US lawmakers were meeting inside the Capitol to certify Joe Biden's presidential victory.

There was a pro-Trump rally that day on the National Mall, at which the former president spoke. Did Trump's words at rally incite the riot? He repeated unfounded claims that the election was stolen from him, and told those gathered: "If you don't fight like hell you're not going to have a country anymore." He also told them to protest peacefully but encouraged them to go to the Capitol and have their voices heard.

Thousands of his supporters then made their way to the seat of government, overwhelmed the security and smashed their way into the building.

At least 200 people have been charged for their role in the Capitol breach.

Over 140 Capitol police officers and 65 Washington DC police officers were injured in the hours-long melee.

Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, a 12-year veteran of the force, was killed in clashes with protesters. Two more Capitol Police officers took their own lives in the weeks after the riot.

# from-the-us-to-china- and-greece-s-interests

The pandemic has changed a lot in the world around us. Societies were tested, economies collapsed, alliances were shaken.



The "day after" will include changes to the geopolitical chessboard, a result of economic reshuffling. It is now clear that, in the medium-term, there will be a global face-off between the United States and China.

Tensions between the world's two largest economies have been escalating for years and everything points to a protraction; and the change in the US leadership will not fundamentally change that. Joe Biden stated that he will not have the same attitude as his predecessor towards China; he noted that he does not seek conflict, but also made it clear that he expects "extreme competition."

Beijing is clearly the counterweight to the US in terms of competitiveness, production infrastructure and economic size. China is making inroads in Europe on many fronts, and Cosco's investment in the port of Piraeus should be seen in this context.

Greece, beyond its participation in the European Union, is strategically investing, alongside Cyprus, in cooperative endeavors with Israel, Egypt and other Arab states. At the same time, it looks to the stabilizing role of America, especially with the White House's experienced new occupant who, having served eight years as vice president and 36 as senator, many of those on the Foreign Relations Committee, has a firm grasp of the Eastern Mediterranean conundrum. When it comes to economics and trade, important investments in Greece will be decided based on commercial merits, but wider national advantages are also part of the equation. Athens is attempting to attract foreign investment - western, Israeli, Chinese, Arab - without wavering on its commitment to the Euro-Atlantic partnership. There are many opportunities in Greece. The most prominent example are the country's ports, and not just Piraeus. There are many others with suitors from many important players of this geopolitical and economic competition, from the US and China, to Russia, Italy, Germany and Israel. Many companies from these countries are contending for Greek ports: from Alexandroupoli in the north to Crete's Iraklio in the south and from Igoumenitsa and Astakos in the west to Volos and Kavala in the east.

Some of Greece's airports are also drawing interest, as are numerous other sectors of the economy, especially in digital technology.

Greece is facing threats in its region. Hence, its economic decisions will naturally be affected by the level of understanding and material support provided by potential partners in its efforts to effectively deal with them.

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## AstraZeneca to miss second-quarter EU vaccine supply target by half, EU official says

AstraZeneca expects to deliver less than half the Covid-19 vaccines it was contracted to supply the European Union in the second quarter, an EU official told Reuters on Tuesday. The expected shortfall, which has not previously been reported, comes after a big reduction in supplies in the first quarter and could hit the EU's ability to meet its target of vaccinating 70% of adults by the summer. The EU official, who is directly involved in talks with the Anglo-Swedish drugmaker, said the company had told the bloc during internal meetings that it "would deliver less than 90 million doses in the second quarter."

AstraZeneca's contract with the EU, which was leaked last week, showed the company had committed to delivering 180 million doses to the 27-nation bloc in the second quarter.

"Because we are working incredibly hard to increase the productivity of our EU supply chain, and doing everything possible to make use of our global supply chain, we are hopeful that we will be able to bring our deliveries closer in line with the advance purchase agreement," a spokesman for AstraZeneca said, declining to comment on specific figures.

A spokesman for the European Commission, which coordinates talks with vaccine manufacturers, said it could not comment on the discussions as they were confidential.

He said the EU should have more than enough shots to hit its vaccination targets if the expected and agreed deliveries from other suppliers are met, regardless of the situation with AstraZeneca.

The EU official, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity, confirmed that AstraZeneca planned to deliver about 40 million doses in the first quarter, again less than half the 90 million shots it was supposed to supply.

AstraZeneca warned the EU in January that it would fall short of its first-quarter commitments due to production issues.

It was also due to deliver 30 million doses in the last quarter of 2020 but did not supply any shots last year as its vaccine had yet to be approved by the EU. All told, AstraZeneca's total supply to the EU could be about 130 million doses by the end of June, well below the 300 million it committed to deliver to the bloc by then.

The EU has also faced delays in deliveries of the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech as well as Moderna's shot. So far they are the only vaccines approved for use by the EU's drug regulator.

AstraZeneca's vaccine was authorised in late January and some EU member states such as Hungary are also using Covid-19 shots developed in China and Russia. While drugmakers developed Covid-19 vaccines at breakneck speed, many have struggled with manufacturing delays due to complex production processes, limited facilities and bottlenecks in the supply of vaccine ingredients. According to a German health ministry document dated February 22, AstraZeneca is forecast to make up all of the shortfalls in deliveries by the end of September.

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## Olympic champion adds voice to #MeToo movement



Before she could join sailing classes near her home in Athens, Sofia Bekatorou had to show an instructor she could tie a basic knot properly. Passing the test at age 8 changed her life.

Bekatorou spent her first afternoons in a bathtub-sized sailboat stuck in circles, but coaches took note of the girl's determination. By her 12th birthday, she was outperforming the boys in competitive races and on a path to winning gold medals as a world champion and at the Olympics.

But the most successful woman in modern Greece's sporting history revealed in January that an incident almost 23 years ago had marred much of her personal happiness and professional career – an alleged sexual assault by a Greek sailing federation official at a hotel in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

Her disclosure was made at a little-advertised online sports seminar, but it gained national attention and elicited statements of support for Bekatorou from the country's prime minister and first female president. It was followed by dozens of public claims of sexual misconduct and workplace intimidation in the worlds of elite sports, the performing arts, and academia.

Bekatorou, 43, said she hoped the reaction marked a turning point for Greek society, which often seems resigned to official cronyism and impunity.

"I'm very happy that they came forward and spoke out," she said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We need to embrace people who have lived through such experiences, because it's a very big step, even talking about it."

Bekatorou won a gold medal in the women's double-handed dinghy event with teammate Emilia Tsoulfa at the 2004 Summer Olympics, which was held in Athens.

Greeks caught televised glimpses of the many successes that followed: the keelboat race that returned her to an Olympics podium four years later in Beijing, and opening the parade of nations for the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Summer Games as the first female flag-bearer ever to lead the Greek Olympic team.

Bekatorou dedicated the honor at Maracana Stadium to her older sister, Varia, who had died of brain cancer four months earlier. Her long run in top-tier competition included a battle with a career-threatening back injury and, as she recently revealed, years of therapy. Reserved and soft-spoken, Bekatorou says the sailing federation official sexually assaulted her in 1998, on the day she celebrated qualifying for the Sydney Olympics. Neither she nor prosecuting authorities have publicly identified the accused official, who has denied the allegations.

Along with her Olympic medals, Bekatorou brought home four World Championship titles and a shelfful of national and European trophies. She was twice named World Sailor of the Year. In recognition of her accomplishments, she was given the rank of major in the Greek army.

But she alleges that the official who assaulted her also undermined her position on the national sailing team over nearly 20 years, arguing that priority should be given to younger competitors.

"It's a very big weight that we carry in our personal life. And these are things that can actually put you in a deep depression for a very long time," Bekatorou said. "And unless you have the [right] help and environment, it's not easy to overcome it and move on." The accused official was fired last month from senior posts at the Hellenic Sailing Federation and the Hellenic Olympic Committee. He called Bekatorou's allegations "defamatory and deceitful." The alleged assault has exceeded a 15-year statute of limitations, but a public prosecutor has agreed to examine the case for other possible victims.

Greek Justice Minister Kostas Tsiaras said the government planned to make legal changes to make it easier for sexual assault victims to report crimes.

Bekatorou said the impact of her revelations had taken her by surprise.

She smiled when asked about future plans and the test given to her when first learning to sail. Demonstrating her knowledge, and the skill she picked up as an 8-year-old, she looped a piece of microphone cable into a bowline knot.

"I'll have to sail on bigger boats that are less physically demanding, but I don't really like the idea of being called a former competitor."

She is happy, she said, to be associated with the #MeToo movement that followed the allegations of past sexual misconduct that exploded in 2017 and the subsequent conviction of Hollywood film producer Harvey Weinstein.

When the allegations emerged in the entertainment industry, "I was feeling, you know, something really strong coming from inside, but I wasn't ready to deal with it. And I didn't want just to talk about it. I wanted to change something," Bekatorou said. "And I knew that in order to change something, I had to be ready, whether someone would follow me or no one would... Now, I'm ready."

## Time to talk with Russia rather than about Russia



Today, I am travelling to Moscow. The last time an EU High Representative visited Russia was four years ago. The main purpose of my visit is to discuss the issues that are causing us concern related to Russia's place and role within Europe and its broader international engagement.

EU-Russia relations have been deteriorating over the past decade and, especially since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol in 2014, they have been marked by a lack of trust. Today, we fundamentally see each other as rivals and competitors and not as partners.

We have strong disagreements when it comes to the conflicts in our immediate neighbourhood, from Ukraine and Belarus to Libya and Syria, and when it comes to human rights and fundamental freedoms. The poisoning of Alexey Navalny, his arrest and consequent condemnation, and the arrest of thousands of demonstrators over the past days are painful reminders of the shrinking space for opposition, civil society and independent voices in the country. Russia's actions over recent years do not match its commitments neither as member of the Council of Europe nor participating State of the OSCE. Let's remember that these institutions are at the heart of cooperation, peace and security in Europe.

We need to have a frank exchange with Russia on the state of our relations. The point of diplomacy is precisely to engage, to pass messages and to try to find a common ground. Diplomacy is essential when things are bad. Our channels of communication should always be open. However, we have been talking more about - or even past - one another than with each other. This only perpetuates mistrust and does little to address the challenges ahead.

We must be clear about our concerns. At the same time, we must also acknowledge that we are closely interlinked with our biggest neighbour, not only historically or geographically. The European Union is still Russia's first trading partner and its greatest source of foreign direct investment. Russian students are the largest non-EU beneficiaries of Erasmus+ university exchanges and Russia is the country where the most Schengen visas are issued. Our ties remain mutually important.

We therefore have to follow a multipronged approach, as reflected in the set of guiding principles agreed by the EU for its relations with Russia. This will be the frame of reference for my visit to Moscow. It includes selective engagement on issues in the interest of the EU, as well as reaching out to and supporting Russian civil society. This is something that cannot be done via videoconference.

In spite of all this, there are issues where we can work together, and when we do, we can achieve results. The best example being the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – the Iran Deal, which is still one of the cornerstones of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. Many regional crises would benefit from closer understanding and joint efforts by the EU and Russia.

The global challenges of our time require global solutions, starting with the Covid-19 pandemic. We need more cooperation, transparency and exchange of information, not less. We need to fight disinformation, which in this particular case is especially harmful and can put people's lives at risk. We have seen activities in this field coming from Russia.

We want to engage further with Russia on climate challenges. We count on Russia's commitment to make COP26 in Glasgow a success. Only by seizing opportunities for a just and fair transition for all can we safeguard prosperity, whilst saving the planet.

Finally, we must tackle the new threats and opportunities emerging in the digital sphere and cyber space. We have witnessed many cyber-attacks in the recent past, which have become symptomatic of new rivalries. On the EU side, we have been clear on our commitment to settle international disputes in cyberspace by peaceful means. But this does not mean that we do not respond. We have introduced sanctions against perpetrators of malicious activities and we will not refrain from continuing to do so, if need be.

In line with the Helsinki Final Act, stability in Europe must be based on cooperation, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of nations, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Engaging in dialogue does not mean we go back to "business as usual", but we need to find areas of understanding to rebuild trust progressively.

I will inform EU leaders on the outcome of my visit in a forthcoming strategic debate on EU-Russia relations. It remains crucial to ensure clear direction and unity in our engagement with Russia.

Back in the 1990s, we dreamt of a different Europe, all working together to face global challenges. In 2021, these dreams unfortunately do not match reality. They should nevertheless continue to inspire us and we should engage in making them happen. Josep Borrell is the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.