



ENTERPRISE GREECE
INVEST & TRADE

NEWSLETTER

MAY 19

**GREEK MARBLE
EXPORTS**

**SEA TOURISM
REBOUND**

**FOCUS ON
LACONIA**

Greek Marble Exports Growing Worldwide

From the Grand Mosque in Mecca to the Shanghai Opera, Greek marble exports have been growing amid rising international demand and as Greek producers turn to foreign markets to expand their business.

In the past five years, Greek marble exports more than doubled to close to €300 million a year, with fine Greek marble – such as the ultra-white varieties from northern Greece – increasing their market share against Italy’s famous but more expensive Carrara marble.

Much of the increase has been fuelled by China’s ongoing construction boom. Since 2014, Greek marble exports to China have almost tripled and last year China accounted for more than three quarters of Greek exports. But Greek marble is increasingly gracing public and private monuments from Singapore to Abu Dhabi.

Boasting more than two dozen varieties and thanks to shifting tectonic plates in the age of the dinosaurs, Greek marble has been famous since ancient times. The marble of Mount Penteli, north of Athens, was famously used for the building of the Parthenon, while the coarse grained marble of

Paros island in the central Aegean was considered among the ancient world’s best marbles for sculpture.

Nowadays, some of the pure white marbles quarried in northern Greece – a variety often associated with the island of Thassos – are particularly prized for their heat reflecting quality and are in high demand in the Middle East.

Even as Greek marble exports grow overseas, the industry is also undergoing a consolidation at home. In the past few years, Greece’s two major marble companies – Iktinos Hellas and Pavlides Marble Granite – have been expanding. In 2017, Pavlides paid €73 million for a majority stake in Mermeren Kombinat, owner of a top quality marble quarry in North Macedonia. And late last year, Iktinos announced a €29 million investment plan that includes, among other things, the acquisition of a new quarry in northern Greece and the licensing of a quarry in the Peloponnese.

Greek Marble Exports are Growing Around the World

Top 5 Importers	Exported value in 2014	Exported value in 2015	Exported value in 2016	Exported value in 2017	Exported value in 2018
World	115,316.00	118,615.00	146,846.00	262,635.00	289,869.00
China	89,538.00	90,955.00	117,794.00	222,508.00	246,932.00
Algeria	2,416.00	4,440.00	4,399.00	6,509.00	6,366.00
Thailand	1,116.00	1,450.00	3,449.00	4,269.00	4,832.00
India	3,782.00	6,089.00	3,942.00	4,449.00	4,604.00
Cyprus	1,821.00	1,352.00	1,695.00	2,269.00	3,924.00

news in **brief**

Budget Surplus

Greece beat its primary budget surplus targets last year by €1.5 billion, reaching 4.3% of GDP, according to Eurostat. That's up from 3.9% in 2017. Greece's general government budget surplus was 1.1% of GDP in 2018, the agency said, up from 0.7% a year earlier.

Credit Upgrade

Canadian ratings agency DBRS upgraded Greece's credit rating by one notch to BB (low) from B (high) with a stable outlook. A separate report by Moody's said that Greece's plans to pay off some of its IMF loans ahead of schedule was credit positive.

Tax Cuts

The Greek government announced plans to cut value-added taxes on food, catering and hospitality services, a move that is expected to further boost the country's tourism sector. The value-added tax rate on a range of food products and catered services will fall to 13% from 24% currently.

Tourism Growth

Greek visitor arrivals rose 7.7% in the first quarter compared with a year earlier, according to data compiled by Greece's Association of Tourism Enterprises, marking a strong start to the year. Reflecting the growth prospects in the sector, UK travel and tour operator Thomas Cook recently acquired two new properties in Greece, which remains among the top five destinations for British travellers according to a recent survey by the tour operator.

Construction Growth

Greece's construction industry is seen growing at a compound annual rate of 4.7% through 2022, according to a report by Orbis Research, after more than half a decade of sharp decline. Renewed investment in commercial and residential real estate, as well as government infrastructure projects is helping to drive the recovery, the report said.

Private Label

For the first time ever, Enterprise Greece conducted a special seminar on private label products for some 80 Greek companies active in the fast growing sector. According to the Private Label Manufacturer's Association, private label products continue to see their market share expand and currently account for around 30% of products in 17 of the 20 European countries monitored by PLMA.

Fur Exhibition

Attendance at the 44th Kastoria International Fur Fair, Greece's leading exhibition for the fur trade, rose 11% from last year confirming the growing importance of the trade fair. The exhibition, held May 2-5, welcomed 1,504 visitors from 42 countries with Russian buyers making up the bulk of this year's clientele.

Blue Flag

Greece was ranked second in the world among 47 countries for the number of Blue Flag sites recognized for their environmental standards in the 2019 quality award list by the Denmark-based Foundation for Environmental Education. In the latest rankings, Blue Flags were awarded to 515 Greek beaches, 15 Greek marinas and four sustainable tourism boats.

Greece's growing cruise tourism sector has rebounded, after geopolitical instability in the Eastern Mediterranean had led to a sharp downturn in recent years. Several major cruise lines have returned to the country, with Greece emerging stronger than before.

Greek Sea Tourism Set for Expansion

Close to five million cruise passengers disembarked in Greek ports during 2018 and cruise arrivals are forecast to rise 8-9% this year. In 2020, Disney cruises will be returning as well.

But other forms of sea tourism, from yachting to diving and kite-surfing, are also seeing growing activity. The recent Posidonia Sea Tourism Forum, held in late May, focused on the significant development potential for the sector in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The revival in fortunes comes as Greece privatizes additional ports and marinas around the country, including its largest marina – the Alimos Marina with more than 1,000 berths – located on the coast south of Athens. The recently opened Four Seasons Hotel is also set to boost the draw of the Athens Riviera by upgrading its private marina.

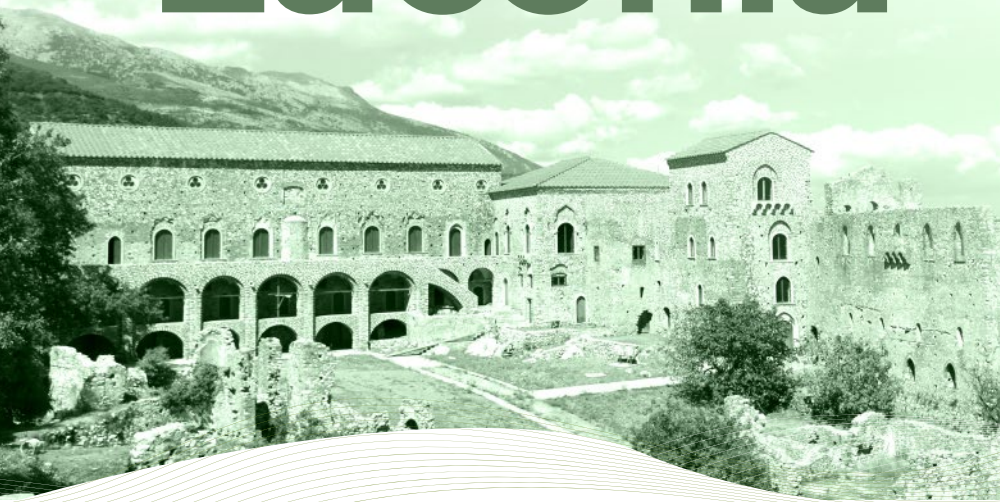
The Port of Piraeus, the largest cruising port in the country, received 524 cruise ships and close to one million cruise passengers in 2018. Plans for a €612 million upgrade, focused on cruise traffic, to the port are underway.

Sea tourism is also providing an additional boost to Greek innovation and manufacturing. The Greek maritime equipment sector has been growing while the BlueGrowth incubator, now in its fifth year, supports start-ups in the blue economy, including sea tourism.





Focus on Laconia



The region of Laconia -- heartland of the ancient Spartans and famous for its fine olives and its internationally recognized Monemvasia-Malvasia red wine – is seeing new investor interest in tourism and renewable energy projects.

Two new tourism projects, such as the recently opened Mystras Grand Palace and the Euphoria Retreat spa and hotel complex currently under development, are expected to help boost visitor numbers to half a million in the near future, up from 350,000 visitors today.

Likewise, the region is well placed to attract a share of the €2.5 billion worth of renewable energy projects being planned around Greece over the next two years, say officials.

But the region's exports, long a mainstay of the local economy, are also growing. In the 19th Century, Laconia and the Peloponnese was known for its currants. Today, the 22,000 hectares of vineyards are primarily known for producing some of Greece's finest wines and fruits.

In mid-May, as part of the agency's Synergassia program, which aims to highlight the comparative advantages of Greece's diverse regions, Enterprise Greece led a delegation of foreign commercial attaches on a tour of Laconia.



- JCK Las Vegas 2019, fashion & accessories trade show, Las Vegas (May 29-June 3)
- Startup Grind Europe Conference, conference on hi-tech startups, London (June 6)
- Enterprise Greece: Dairy products buyers' meetings, Athens & Larissa (June 10-12)
- Enterprise Greece: investor roadshow, Washington DC, New York, San Francisco (June 10-13)
- InvestGR conference, Greek business conference on FDI, Athens (June 11)
- Greek Investment Forum, investment conference, New York (June 11-12)
- Warsaw Humanitarian Expo 2019, humanitarian aid trade fair, Warsaw (June 11-13)
- Greek National Holiday: Holy Spirit Monday (June 17)

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To learn more about the many investment and trade opportunities Greece offers, visit us today at www.enterprisegreece.gov.gr

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