# Delta Finance

# Newsletter December 2024-Review

#### Suburban railway and waterport at the port of Rafina.

The upgrading of the port of Rafina to become the second basic and modern gateway of the Attica basin and foreign visitors to the Aegean islands and especially the Cyclades was launched by the government as part of the wider planning for the ports of Attica. However, the port is operating at the limits of its capacity, with known problems both in arrivals and departures of ships and traffic congestion in the wider area. The State Development Fund has initiated the preparation of the strategic development plan (master plan) of the Rafina Port Authority and the accompanying strategic environmental impact study and the public consultation started on 17 April. The most important provisions of the master plan are the construction of a passenger terminal, the extension of the jetty and the construction of new berths and two arrays of moorings which will increase the number of berths for high-speed vessels. In terms of transport infrastructure and fixed railways, the port and the wider Rafina area will be linked to the rest of Attica by suburban rail. The master plan also defines the reserved area for the construction of the building of the suburban railway terminus station, with a surface area of 1,500 m<sup>2</sup>. The proposed works will provide the waterport with sufficient land space for its operation and an infrastructure for passenger handling and control. The proximity of the port to Athens International Airport and the easy access of airport passengers to the port via the Attiki Odos road, as well as to the centre of Athens, make it particularly attractive in terms of passenger and tourist traffic.

#### Green Islands with 3.8 billion investments

With a "dowry" of 25 million CO2 emission allowances from the EU's greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme, valued at €1.6 billion at today's prices, the Island Carbon Fund will start operating, mobilising €3.8 billion of investment the period 2025-2032. The Fund will finance sustainable investments to enhance the energy autonomy of the Greek islands by creating more resilient infrastructure, sustainable water management, promoting electromobility and the green transformation of agriculture, tourism and shipping.At least 50% of the total budget of the Fund will be dedicated to energy development and storage projects on the islands. The second pillar of actions to be financed by the Uncoupling Fund concerns electrical interconnections of the islands, including the electrical interconnection of the Dodecanese.

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#### How artificial intelligence will change the public sector.

A precursor of the changes that artificial intelligence can bring to the public sector is the digital assistant (chatbot) that was recently integrated into the Gov.gr platform and "interconnects the citizen with the information systems of the State to eliminate bureaucracy and provide friendly services". The adoption of artificial intelligence in the public sector allows for faster completion of procedures and efficient search in documents and databases, and thus improves the services provided to citizens. The main benefit of the adoption of AI by the public sector is better use of human resources and a boost in productivity. For example, as the study states, the adoption of a dedicated AI application by a public procurement department would allow for automatic processing and categorisation of bids and immediate identification of inconsistencies such as incomplete data or invalid bids. Therefore, a faster and more efficient evaluation of valid tenders would be possible. Applications based on productive artificial intelligence (PI) can skyrocket productivity and reduce operational costs, which is a key concern for businesses. In tourism, AI can create significant benefits by enhancing the overall visitor experience and promoting the country as a top destination. In shipping, the use of ITS can contribute to the creation of advanced navigation systems that take into account real-time weather data, traffic conditions and ship characteristics. It can help optimise cargo handling and logistics processes in ports.

# Robot-farmer made in Greece goes to the fields alone.

An electric robot-farmer that takes the form of a... tank and operates in a manner reminiscent of ordering a taxi vehicle from apps like Uber has been created by the start-up company Agroverse from its machine shop in Sindos. The robot weighs about a ton and has the ability to do almost exactly what a farmer does, without the intervention or even the physical presence of the latter being necessary. What differentiates the company is the creation of a "nest", a charging facility from which the robot goes to the crop, located up to 5 km away. "This is placed in fields where there is electricity and, through our app, the producer can order the work that the robot undertakes in his field. It performs the task and then returns to the same site to be charged and used by the next one." Still the robot has not gained full autonomy, as the Agroverse team intervenes remotely and in real time if it is found to be facing a situation that it cannot manage. The vehicle currently takes on grower duties for olives and vines, and is capable of adapting to tree crops such as peach trees. Meanwhile, the company has attracted investors with the aim of raising up to 500,000 euros to develop 10 electric robots in the next period, which can be installed - with containers - in 10 villages in northern Greece.

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#### Amazon: 2.75 billion investment in Anthropic.

The battle between tech giants supremacy in the promising artificial intelligence (AI) industry is heating up. In a bid to gain an edge over its competitors, Amazon announced that it is investing an additional \$2.75 billion in AI Anthropic, a major deal from a tech giant looking to compete with names like Microsoft and Google in the frantic AI race. The investments can also be quite lucrative for tech companies, which force AI startups to use the cloud computing services they need to run their products. According to the Wall Street Journal, Anthropic has committed to spending \$4 billion on Amazon's cloud platform over the next five years, while months before Google's investment it had agreed to spend more than \$3 billion on Google Cloud. The US Federal Trade Commission said it is investigating investments and partnerships among the largest tech companies and how they affect the competitive landscape for AI systems, which perform tasks such as conversations and compiling computer code. Anthropic, which was founded in 2021, offers an AI assistant called Claude that competes with OpenAI's ChatGPT.

#### He started by selling granite and became the richest Chinese man.

Zong Qinghu, the Chinese entrepreneur who started with a three-wheeled cart and built one of the country's largest beverage and food empires, has died. Born in 1945 in a war-torn China, Zhong grew up in extreme poverty. Zong didn't finish school and worked various menial jobs, but he always had a dream in his heart to open his own business. That opportunity came in 1987, when at the age of 42 he borrowed 140,000 yuan (the equivalent of \$38,000 at the time) to set up a tricycle from which he sold granite and stationery outside a primary school. His business, which employed two retired teachers, would become Wahaha (meaning "the laughing child"), a food empire in China. In his early days, he worked with a nutrition professor to create a vitamin drink for children, which he called Wahaha Oral Liquid. His product was a great success, bringing in annual sales of about \$19 million in just its third year of release. Zong founded the Hangzhou Wahaha Group after he bought a bankrupt canned food factory. By 1996, Wahaha had expanded into dairy drinks, carbonated soft drinks and bottled water, but Zong's plans for long-term growth required high financing. So Wahaha partnered with Danone. Their partnership broke down in 2007 and the two sides' dispute led to a long-running legal battle that even involved the presidents of the two countries.

#### Chinese campaign against the display of wealth on the Internet.

It is officially considered unethical in China to show off your wealth for promotional purposes, a tactic that is otherwise widely used on social media. The country's major social media platforms last week launched a concerted effort to take down such content. As part of this, the relevant authorities took down thousands of posts and fined dozens of users who promoted 'bad values'. This is one of the most focused regulation campaigns on the Chinese Internet. Of course, Beijing had long ago asked the supervisory companies to check quality of the content published and has already imposed many restrictions on the Internet in general. Among other things, it is forbidden to show off luxury cars or expensive houses in order to promote products and boost the reputation of an influencer. Photos showing large sums of money or people throwing banknotes are also prohibited. It is forbidden to show off luxury services or products in order for the influencer to show that one can get "millions in a month".

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## LVMH: Its exports surpassed French cheeses and wines.

France, the land of famous cheeses and renowned wines, is now more widely known in the world market not so much for Camembert cheese or Beaujolais wine as it once was, but for the bags and perfumes of the luxury goods house Luis Vuitton. According to a study carried out by Asterès on behalf of the famous luxury goods house, LVMH bags and perfumes now account for a larger share of French exports than the famous wines and cheeses and than all agricultural exports. The value of their exports reached €23.5 billion last year, underlining the special weight the sector now has for France's trade balance and the French economy more broadly. luxury goods sector in France also includes Hermès, Chanel and Kering, which owns the Gucci brand, and in total accounts for 12% of the country's exports. LVMH is now one of France's most famous and recognisable brands globally. It still produces the majority of its products in France and Italy in order ensure the quality that allows it to maintain such high prices.

## The ten cities in the world where the housing market is "out of reach".

The top ten of the list with the "unattainable" cities for buying a home are dominated by the US, taking five places, as well as three Australian cities. In first place, however, is Hong Kong, which, as an international financial centre that has always been home to a huge population, is known for its tiny houses of just a few square metres and outrageous rent levels. It is also the only Chinese city covered by the survey. In detail, the list of cities with the most "unaffordable" housing markets based on local earnings in the world: Hong Kong, Sydney, Vancouver, Vancouver, San Jose, Los Angeles, Honolulu, Melbourne, San Francisco and Adelaide, San Diego, Toronto. Prices collapsed in the pandemic when the government closed city borders and implemented a Zero-COVID policy. In addition, new national security measures were implemented which further exacerbated market sentiment. As available land has been restricted in an effort to curb urbanisation, the excess of demand supply has driven up prices"



The biggest "plunge" compared to any other billionaire has been made since the beginning of the year by the fortune of the "king" of fashion and luxury goods. The reason is Bernard Arnaud, who according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index has seen his fortune shrink by 20 billion dollars since the beginning of the yearThe wealth of the head of the LVMH group is still at an unbelievable level of 187 billion dollars. But it has been severely hit by weaker demand for luxury goods, particularly from China. Indeed, after the disappointing results of the fashion house, which has Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior and Tiffany, among others, under its umbrella, shares took a dive and so did Arnaud's fortune.



**Delta Finance** 5, P.C. 15127, Melissia

T.210 6257500 F.210 6257555 E.info@deltafinance.gr W.www.deltafinance.gr