

Startup Incubator in Ioannina

At first, they decided to give it a try, to see what it was like, as 20-year-old Giannis Morfidis, a sophomore in the Department of Computer Engineering and Informatics at the University of Ioannina, put it. In the end, however, they liked what they created and decided, alongside their studies, to start building their own startup from scratch. It all started with the hackathon held last year as part of the TechFuse technology conference in Ioannina. There, he and the rest of the team—Ioannis Vongelis, Thanasis Giannopoulos, and Thomas Gouda—all students in the same department and passionate about programming—were challenged to find a solution to one of the problems facing Epirus, specifically Ioannina. So, using their technology, they set out to find more affordable housing for students, while also helping to utilize properties that are primarily aimed at families. They developed a platform for finding suitable roommates, known as Unimates, which operates similarly to popular dating apps like Tinder. “You fill out a questionnaire, and based on your answers, the platform finds potential roommates; you swipe left or right, and if you’re interested, a match is made.” It may be famous for its breathtaking landscapes and rich cuisine, but lately, the city of Ioannina has begun to gain something else: an active startup community. Even when the Greek startup ecosystem was still in its infancy, during the 2009–2013 period, some of the first startups in Greece began operating in Ioannina. However, for about a decade (2013–2023) and despite the operation of the Epirus Science and Technology Park, very few startups and spin-offs were established by the University of Ioannina.

"Gray Areas" in Organized Boat Marinas

Greek bays and coastlines are preparing to welcome one of the world’s largest fleets of recreational boats again this year, as the country establishes itself as the top destination for chartering boats over 25 meters in the Mediterranean. However, this dominance reveals a sharp paradox, since Greece, while emerging as the leader by accounting for 24% of global activity, remains at the bottom of the list in terms of revenue for the national economy. The burden is not limited to visual nuisance or the exclusion of beaches, but extends to the environment, specifically to the protected Posidonia seagrass beds, which are affected by unregulated anchoring. Joint Ministerial Decision 3000.0/44137/2025 was the key development, regulating the installation of permanent mooring buoys to which recreational vessels tie up in marine areas outside ports and marinas.

Tourists now eat in their rooms

More and more Greek tourists are preparing their meals at the accommodations where they are spending their vacations—and not just breakfast; they bring various foods and snacks to the beach, avoiding ordering from restaurants (tavern, beach bar, café) and even go so far as to buy detergents and other household items. Specifically, according to NielsenIQ data, six out of ten Greek tourists always or almost always prepare breakfast on their own, four in ten also prepare their own lunch at their accommodation, while 65% prepare savory or sweet snacks, with the latter category including purchases from retail stores rather than restaurants. Although smaller, the percentage of those—27%—who always or almost always prepare dinner during their vacations is by no means negligible. Although foreign tourists mainly consume the main meals of the day at restaurants and hotels, a significant percentage—41%—prepares and/or buys the snacks they want for the beach from retail stores. Additionally, 23% of foreign tourists always or almost always prepare their own breakfast, while the corresponding percentage for lunch is 19% and for dinner just 15%. The main shopping channel for locals and foreign tourists to purchase what they need to prepare their various meals is well-known supermarket chains (45%), which explains their significant expansion in tourist areas, local supermarkets (42%), and discount supermarket chains (e.g., Lidl) at 26%. The latter are preferred mainly by foreign tourists (primarily Germans, Romanians, and Poles), as they exhibit similar consumer behavior in their countries of permanent residence.

Real Estate: Higher prices and shortages are reported in construction materials

The first signs of pricing pressures in new construction projects are now beginning to emerge, as a result of the hostilities in the Middle East. According to market sources, difficulties are being observed in placing orders, as more and more suppliers are refusing to commit to the availability and the quantity of materials, but and for the price, with the result being that builders are unable to reliably calculate their costs. Other suppliers, on the other hand, such as for example those who supply to the market with plastics (e.g., pipes), have already implemented significant price increases of up to 30%, without, again, committing to the smooth fulfillment of orders. Similarly, the first significant increases of 15%–20% are also being observed in other material categories, such as aluminum. In any case, the current market practice involves payment at spot prices, without “locking in” the price at the time the order is placed by the manufacturer. In The “front line” of price increases naturally includes any material that relies most heavily on fossil fuels for its raw materials or production process. Thus, plastics—which are petroleum derivatives—as well as artificial stone materials (e.g., bricks) stand out, while price increases are expected across the entire spectrum of materials, from steel and cement to rebar and aluminum. In fact, as noted, the problem will not be resolved immediately, even if the war were to end tomorrow, as it will take several weeks for the situation to normalize.

Increased demand for electric passenger cars in Europe

Car sales in Europe improved last month as consumers turned to the electric vehicle market, taking advantage of new subsidy programs and choosing from an ever-wider range of affordable models. New vehicle registrations rose by 1.7% in February compared to the previous year, reaching 979,321 units, according to the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association. Sales rose in Germany, Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom, offsetting the nearly 15% decline recorded in France. The growth rate of electric vehicles offset the sharp decline in cars with internal combustion engines. Sales in Germany for rechargeable vehicles rose by a total of 27%, as low- and middle-income workers began taking advantage of a new subsidy program. In France, demand for battery-only electric vehicles rose by 28%, while sales of gasoline, diesel, and hybrid vehicles declined. While total deliveries remained nearly flat, the outbreak of war in Iran and the broader flare-up in the Middle East could deal a blow to the expected recovery in car demand in Europe due to economic uncertainty.

Estée Lauder is in talks about a merger with the Spanish company Puig

The American cosmetics giant Estée Lauder is considering a potential merger with Puig, the Spanish company behind popular fragrances such as Rabanne and Jean Paul Gaultier. With brands such as Clinique, Bobbi Brown, and Tom Ford, Estée Lauder is one of the world's leading manufacturers of skincare, makeup, and fragrance products. A deal could create a \$40 billion beauty giant, according to the Financial Times. Puig, based in Barcelona, was founded in 1914 and remains controlled by the Puig family. The group, which also owns the fashion brand Dries Van Noten and the fragrance giant Carolina Herrera, sells its products in 150 countries and had revenues of over €5 billion in 2025. Estée Lauder, who died in 2004, founded the cosmetics company that bears her name in 1946 in New York, with her husband Joseph. It started with just four products, but today it is the second-largest cosmetics company in the world after L'Oréal. Her talks with Puig follow a series of deals in the beauty sector, such as the acquisition of Hailey Bieber's Rhode skincare brand by Elf Beauty in a deal worth up to \$1 billion. Kering, owner of Gucci, also agreed last year to sell its beauty business to L'Oréal for four billion euros.

A craze for fitness and beauty in the U.S.

These days, when Americans spend money, they're more likely to spend it on a yoga class or Botox injections than on shoes or clothes. For the first time in history, the amount of space leased in the U.S. for service-based businesses exceeds that available for retail stores. In line with current trends, hair salons, spas, and gyms are proliferating. According to data from the real estate data firm CoStar, cited by the Wall Street Journal, service-sector tenants accounted for just over 50% of total commercial space in 2025. And this, even though fifteen years ago these tenants accounted for only 40% of total leases. Manhattan neighborhoods are filling up with saunas, Pilates studios, and athletic apparel boutiques. Many Americans are turning to such venues even for socializing, with gyms now often replacing bars.

The war is affecting food, medicine, and technology

The new conflict represents a structural upheaval that simultaneously affects food production, the pharmaceutical industry, and cutting-edge technology. Today, the problem lies at the very foundation of agricultural production: fertilizers. The Persian Gulf supplies the global market with urea, ammonia, and phosphates—components without which modern agriculture cannot function. With one-third of the world's fertilizer supply trapped behind the Strait, farmers across Asia—from India's Punjab to the plains of Bangladesh—are facing a nightmare. Countries such as Zambia and Sri Lanka, which are entirely dependent on these imports, are on the brink of a humanitarian disaster as prices for staple foods skyrocket. Beyond the threat of famine in the world's most vulnerable countries, cutting-edge technologies are facing shortages of an invisible yet irreplaceable material: helium, a byproduct of natural gas production. Qatar, responsible for one-third of the global supply, no longer exports the gas needed to cool the magnets in MRI scanners and manufacture the semiconductors that power artificial intelligence.

The EU plans to build thousands of new data centers.

Brussels aims to close the gap with the US and China in new technologies, and to achieve this, it plans to build thousands more data centers, expanding cloud computing capacity in the EU. Europe's dream of becoming a superpower in the field of artificial intelligence, tripling the capacity of data centers in the coming years,

It "stumbles" against the harsh reality of energy supply as well as strong public backlash. The EU aims to usher in a new era with the Cloud and AI Development Act (CAIDA), which will be announced in May with the goal of tripling the capacity of EU data centers over the next five to seven years, accelerating, among other things, licensing, access to energy, and financing for sustainable data hubs. In Europe, about half of existing data centers do not meet a basic energy efficiency benchmark, meaning that a significant portion of their electricity is wasted on cooling and infrastructure rather than computing power.



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Spike in airfare prices

The era of affordable long-haul air travel appears to be coming to an end, as travelers planning their summer getaways are faced with a grim reality. The escalating tensions in the Persian Gulf have turned the world's busiest air transit hub into a high-risk, high-cost zone. According to data from Alton Aviation Consultancy, ticket prices on key routes connecting Europe with Asia have skyrocketed, reaching 560% in some cases during March, and are likely to remain high throughout the summer and fall.