



Hellenic Republic
South Aegean Region
Municipality of Amorgos
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Ref. Num. 6077

Amorgos, 16 November 2024

TO: **The readers' editor**
The Guardian
guardian.readers@theguardian.com

CC: - **Embassy of Greece in the UK**
gremb.lon@mfa.gr

- **Greek National Tourism
Organization, UK and Ireland**
director@gnto.co.uk

Dear Sir or Madam,

We were surprised to read in Guardian on 7 November 2024, an article by John Dunning regarding Amorgos entitled "***Why encouraging cruise ships to dock at Amorgos would be a Greek tragedy***". In this article the author, who has recently bought a holiday home in Amorgos, attempts to create a false image of a disastrous threat for the residents and visitors of our island by mispresenting the development plan we are implementing about the port of Katapola.

He is doing so without having been officially informed by our municipal authority, which was recently re-elected for a second term in the local governance, although he refers to us or at least having cross-checked the information he received mostly from the local opposition.

Regarding the ongoing planning for the expansion of the port, it is not intended to serve the cruise line, as is deliberately wrongly stated in the article. Cruise tourism, which the island has been hosting since many years ago, consists of visits by small cruise ships, which carry an average of 200 people at a time, and their approach to the port is done by tenders at a point that complies with ISPS. The same facility is being planned in the new port. The total number of cruise visitors does not exceed 5,000 people per year, representing less than 5% of the annual number of tourists visiting our island. These visitors, according to the professionals of the community of Katapola, significantly strengthen the local economy, without creating the problems mentioned in your article.

The expansion of the port of Katapola is aiming in achieving a safe and functional approach and movement of coastal and merchant ships (conventional and fast)

and the safe traffic of passengers and vehicles. It is remarkable that the article does not mention at all the current situation of the port, for example the complete lack of infrastructure, such as passenger waiting areas and sanitary facilities, the lack of safety in unloading people, goods and vehicles, the lack of a safe distance of the port activity from the local residences and catering businesses, the long awaiting times for the coastal boats to reach the dock due to traffic because only one ship can reach at a time. This situation is perfectly reasonable, if one considers that the current port was built 50 years ago, when only one ship per week approached the port, while there were only two cars on the island.

The false and misleading image presented in the article is complemented by the baseless rumors about the alleged privatization of the port, when the port belongs to the property of the Municipal Port Fund of Amorgos and the financing of the project comes from the NSRF and not from the resources of the Fund that it manages the state properties.

We require the publication of our letter in the Guardian for the restoration of the truth and we officially invite you to visit our island, to present our plans in detail and to admire the unique beauty of Amorgos.

Yours sincerely

Eleftherios Karaiskos

Mayor of Amorgos