government going to hold another round of legalisation this year?

Christopher Isaac
Athens

Editor responds: Sources at the interior ministry tell us the government is not planning to hold another round of legalisation for undocumented migrants this year. This is also what Alexandros Zavos, president of the Hellenic Migration Policy Institute (IMEPO), told this newspaper on July 4. He said: "The EU knows that if there is a legalisation in Greece it would be a sort of passport for migrants to move further into the union."

Of course, even if the government is planning to hold a yet another one of its mini-legalisations (for undocumented migrants who can prove they have been residing in Greece for at least two years), it would never announce it beforehand, fearing a sudden surge in illegal immigration.

Student success rates in proficiency tests probably reveal all that parents need to know to make intelligent choices, other than the fees charged and the location.

When a market is well-informed and competitive, government interference in that market is unjustifiable. Taken at face value, the language teacher-licensing requirement treats parents as being incapable of deciding for themselves whom to allow to teach their children. If the education ministry really cares about the quality of language education in Greece then perhaps it would should spend time reflecting on why Greek households find it necessary to spend 500 million euros per year on private language tuition. Could it be that the quality of language tuition in the Greek state schools, for which the ministry definitely has responsibility, is inadequate? Although Greece prides itself on the provision of free, public education, if the quality of that education is inadequate then that is very costly not only to young people and their parents, but also to the country as a whole.

The remedy for inadequate public education is not the regulation of private market alternatives that spring up to satisfy demand! Isn't it about time that Greece started to replace some of its myriad of complex, private interest-driven regulations by better-functioning, competitive markets free from government interference? This would surely benefit the public interest, a term some politicians seem to regard as a foreign language.

Peter F Pope
Lancaster University, UK

Another blow to dogs and cats

THE FACT that thousands of neglected, abused and unwanted dogs and cats are transported from Greece to homes in other European countries is well known. Anyone living in, or even visiting, Greece will know that "adoption" outside Greece is the only chance for many of these desperate animals to find a decent life.

What may not be so well known is the recent publication of a presidential decree concerning the illegal movement of stray animals. Quite simply, its purpose is to stop the movement of such animals out of Greece.

This decree (protocol number 258864, published June 24) implies that unwanted animals are well provided for and cared for by the Greek authorities. In fact, it claims that Greece has "undertaken many pioneering measures" and that these measures ensure that the animals "have the best possible existence". It is hard to imagine anything further from the truth. It is also implied that the rescue organisations, both Greek and foreign, that are involved in transporting them out of the country have sinister motives. Appropriate authorities are told to disbelieve the claims of the rescuers to be animal lovers and to recognise that they are acting illegally. Offenders are to be prosecuted.

If this decree achieves its objective and stops the movement of animals out of Greece it is hard to see what the rescue organisations can possibly do. They are already overwhelmed and have finite and very limited capacity to take care of more animals. No doubt, pups and kittens dumped alive in rubbish bins, unwanted dogs ditched out of cars on the highways and other neglected, injured and abandoned animals in desperate need of help will continue to arrive at the doors of the rescue organisations. If they cannot move them to new homes abroad what are they to do?

Why do the Greek authorities - who cannot summon the political will to enforce their own animal welfare legislation - feel it necessary to hamper the efforts of those who, with nothing but humanitarian motives, are trying to help?

Richard Johnson
Crete

Bussing around Piraeus

I WAS on the Express 96 bus from the airport to Piraeus twice this month. On one occasion a group of French people bound for the port got off at the wrong place, so I had to run after them to tell them to get back on the bus and get off later. I indicated an intersection as the place to

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Encampments in Pat...

YOUR article (*Hoping for ...*) about hundreds of refugee... and Afghanistan trapped in ... in the heart of Patra was ve...

The Greek governme... problem to fester without ... to do. Greek authorities cl... illegal immigrants rip up t... they cannot deport them to... say it would also cost a lot ... deport them, so the proble...

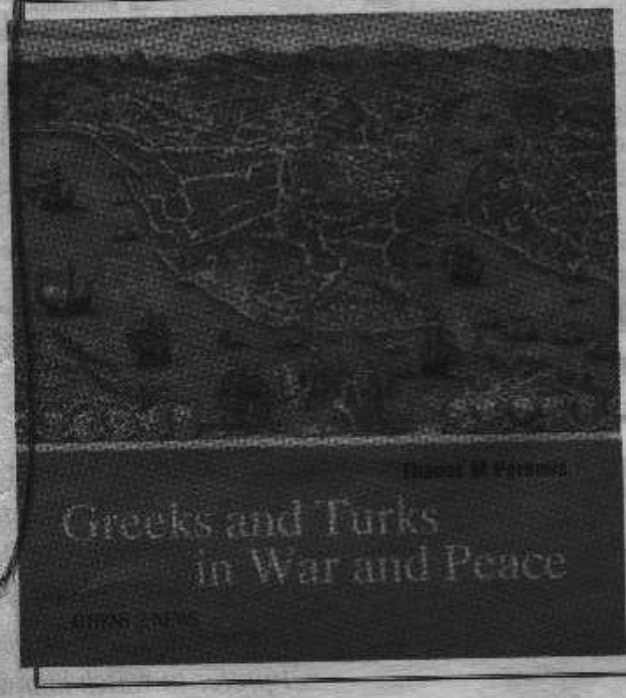
Greece and other E... forefront of tackling ... particularly from Asia and ... should take a tougher st... illegals regardless of wi... documents or not. Turke... accountable for not doing ... of illegals and capturing th...

Brain and guts

IN REFERENCE to ... Psaropoulos' editorial ... *reconstruction, July 18*) ... Hillary Clinton surely h... to gradually rebuild Ame... politically", I would like ... for the basis of his exp... many of us in the USA a...

Dem...

Reminder: The Athens Ne... support or agree with the ... whose letters a...



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