

## 1. MARINAS PROTEST MOORING TAX PLANS (16 12 16)

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# Marinas protest mooring tax plans

## FOCUS

BY STATHIS KOUSOUNIS

Kathimerini

**The imposition** of a mooring tax on yachts that dock in the country's marinas would have a devastating impact on maritime tourism in Greece, according to Stavros Katsikadis, president of the Greek Marinas Association (GMA).

Katsikadis has been in contact with officials from the ministries of Tourism and Shipping, informing them of the seriousness of the matter. He stressed that if the government does impose such a tax, foreign-owned vessels will be less likely to come to Greece and owners of yachts already here will probably start looking at marinas elsewhere.

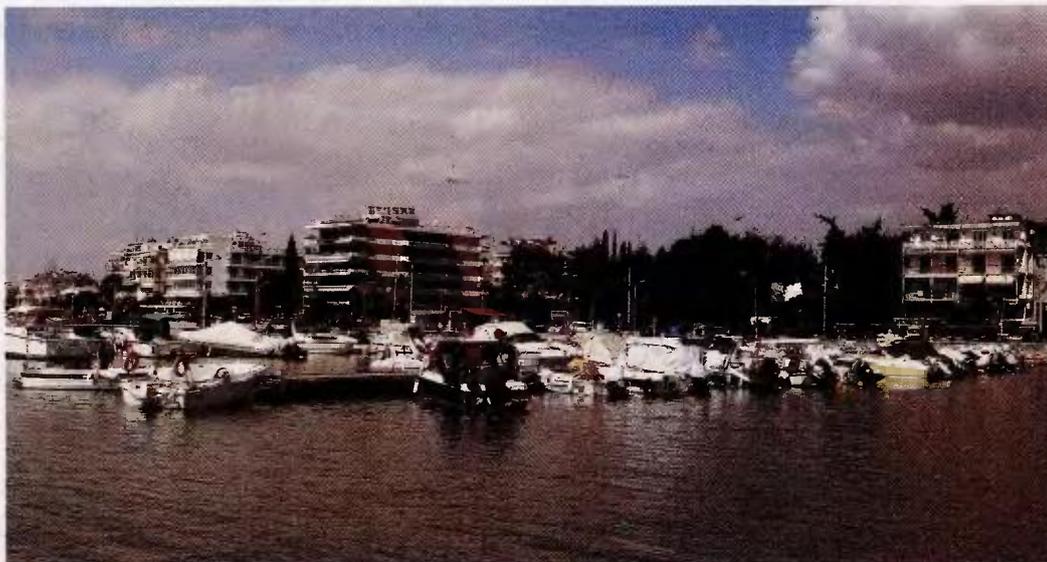
The GMA chief tells Kathimerini that foreign yacht owners in particular, who tend to use their vessels only for a few days each summer, will not accept additional charges for the entire year while their boats are moored in a Greek marina. In some marinas, he adds, the amount of the levy the government is considering would come to about 60 percent of the annual cost of the berth.

According to Katsikadis, many Greek as well as foreign vessels will relocate permanently to marinas outside Greece, so the financial damage from the tax will be far greater than the benefit of its imposition. It will also be irreversible due to the immediate departure of yachts.

In the long term, it would lead

to the loss of direct and indirect taxes and of jobs. Similar measures introduced in Italy in 2010 resulted in the departure of more than 40,000 boats from the neighboring country.

The GMA head also says that most marina owners in Greece are worried about the sustainability of their enterprises, as the country's long economic crisis, the excessive taxation and the refugee crisis have already reduced their competitiveness. Additional charges for the sector of maritime tourism have stemmed from the increase of the value-added tax rates this year and from the hikes in marina service charges, as well as the restoration of the luxury tax on yachts to 13 percent.



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**Additional charges** for maritime tourism have stemmed from the increase of the VAT rates this year and from the hikes in marina service charges, and the restoration of the luxury tax on yachts to 13 percent.