

The Dark Underbelly of the Islands of Sunshine - Mass tourism in Greece

Die Schattenseite der Sonneninseln - Massentourismus in Griechenland

09.09.2025 · SWR STORY · SWR

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A pearl in the Aegean. Santorini is one of the most beautiful islands in the world. And one of the most crowded. Over three million tourists to Greece push their way through its alleys each year.

The legendary sunset is a must-see. Nowhere is it as beautiful as here. If you're lucky enough to grab a free spot. The island's beauty attracts many.

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But there are dark sides. Mass tourism has left deep marks. Construction sins and environmental destruction are impossible to miss.

[SANTORINI INHABITANT]: There are no free spaces left, they've been destroyed by the thieves. Today I am ashamed to be from Santorini.

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On the neighboring island of Mykonos the battle for land to build luxury hotels is fought even with blood. Greek investigative journalist Tasos Telloglou takes us to the scene of a murder. A landowner from Mykonos was shot in Athens. A surveillance camera recorded it.

[TASOS TELLOGLOU]: Tourism is an industry, and every industry has a dark side. And this murder is the dark side of hypertourism.

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We go searching for clues on Greek islands. Is mass tourism destroying its dream destinations?

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Just a normal day on Santorini. Three cruise ships anchor off the volcanic island. Shuttle boats bring tourists ashore for a few hours. Today there are 8,000.

Last year, on some days, it was twice as many. But for the first time, the mayor has set an upper limit for the giant cruise ships. This way he hopes to prevent his island's collapse.

We're surprised how crowded it still is. Even the series of earthquakes in spring hardly scared anyone away. Most take the cable car from the old port up to the crater rim. Today's wait: one hour. The only alternative is the donkey. Marketed as a tradition. A few climb the 588 steps on foot.

[REPORTER]: You came with the cruise ship?

[VISITOR]: Yes. It's my third or fourth time here now. Always with a cruise ship. A dream island, you have to see it once.

[REPORTER]: So, I think, overall, they said, about 8,000 people are arriving today by cruise ship. And of course, that leads to discussions, because people ask: Is that too much for an island like Santorini?

[VISITOR]: You know, I was in Mykonos four days ago. And there were four ships, well over 10,000.

[REPORTER]: So it can always get worse, you think?

[VISITOR]: What I mean is, yes, they demand it too, right? Money rules, right?

[REPORTER]: Now we need to watch out for the little donkeys.

[VISITOR]: There comes the first one somewhere, that's my wife.

[VISITORS WIFE]: Hello.

[VISITOR]: You're doing so well. – Of course.

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Whoever finally makes it up must see the world-famous blue dome. It only became world-famous after it was hyped on Instagram. So, line up for the photo spot.

[REPORTER]: Why is it so important to take this photo?

[VISITOR]: It's so beautiful here, an iconic photo spot, you want to be part of it.

[REPORTER]: What does "iconic" mean? That everyone takes the same photo?

[VISITOR]: I don't know.

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[REPORTER]: We're from German television.

[VISITOR]: Oh, then you're from Germany.

[REPORTER]: Yes, and we're interested in why so many people come to Santorini. What makes it special.

[VISITOR]: Santorini is very famous in China, with the blue dome and the white walls.

[REPORTER]: And is it too crowded for you? When the ships come, there are already so many people here.

[VISITOR]: Yes, so many people, but the landscape is so beautiful. You know, for us Chinese, that's not a problem. We are so many, we're used to it.

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Santorini has completely surrendered to mass tourism.

And what most tourists find magical, is a catastrophe for environmentalists.

The volcanic rock has been riddled with luxury hotels. One of the driest islands in Greece boasts more than 1,000 swimming pools. And this extremely earthquake- and landslide-prone cliff coast is completely built over.

Since nothing works in the main town anymore, investors are now discovering Santorini's more remote corners. A large corporation is trying to build another luxury hotel in this still untouched cliff landscape.

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We have an appointment with environmentalist Karolina Rikaki. She is one of the few who publicly oppose mass tourism.

You don't make many friends on an island that lives off the travel industry by doing that. But Karolina says: "If we don't hit the brakes now, we'll leave our children a destroyed island."

[KAROLINA RIKAKI]: Stop. No more building permits. The pressure on the island is already unbearable with all the waste and the water shortage. We have more than enough pools. Stop building.

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A small success for the environmentalists: They have at least obtained a provisional construction stop in court.

[REPORTER]: At the moment, there's no building going on here. Are you sure you've won this fight? Or is there a risk that the excavators will start rolling in again soon?

[KAROLINA RIKAKI]: We're not sure at all. It would be so important for us to win this fight, because it's one of the few being fought to protect the environment. Unfortunately, in Greece many court cases are not decided by who has the better arguments, but by how powerful the opponent is.

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Just over 100 kilometers away, the neighboring island of Mykonos. We're on the road with journalist Tasos Telloglou. He is one of Greece's best-known reporters. Tasos worked for a long time in Germany as a correspondent for the major Greek broadcasters.

In 2016, he co-founded the investigative platform Inside Story. For years he has been investigating the numerous real estate scandals here. Tasos says the building boom is destroying not only the environment but also the social fabric of the islands. Because normal life practically no longer exists on Mykonos. The murder of a landowner was the tragic climax of a series of acts of violence. We park with Tasos on one of the plots that belonged to the murder victim. A prime piece with potential for the next luxury hotel, worth millions. Apparently, the later victim got into a dispute over it with prospective buyers. A dispute that escalated bloodily.

Surveillance cameras recorded the crime. Twenty shots were fired. A mafia-style murder. The alleged perpetrator was identified and arrested. He has been awaiting trial for a year. The police do not believe in a private dispute gone out of control. Much points to a contract killing in a fight over luxury real estate. But finding the masterminds is difficult. Greek media suspect the construction mafia as the instigators.

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[REPORTER]: When we talk about the construction mafia on Mykonos, what is that? Who is the construction mafia on Mykonos, and who makes the big money?

[TASOS TELLOGLOU]: Investigators are looking for the masterminds outside of Mykonos. That means there are major interests behind the murder. Because the big money comes from foreign investors. They pay locals to push their interests on Mykonos. They work with local construction contractors who don't care whether something is legal or illegal. And they exploit the fact that local institutions are very weak. There are corrupt police officers. Several have been arrested in recent years. These are not isolated cases. There is a chronic problem with the authorities. Everyone knows they are corrupt.

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What do those responsible say to such accusations? Tasos has an appointment at the Mykonos town hall with the mayor. He doesn't deny that there is corruption and criminal structures on his island, not at all. But he says that after the murder and further violence, the police have been increased in number. And that is having an effect.

[MAYOR]: Mykonos has changed. Now there are no more black limousines with goon squads driving around the island. I'm also doing my best to make sure there are no more mishaps on major projects. For example, that no sewage is discharged into the sea or the drinking water supply collapses. That doesn't happen anymore now.

[TASOS TELLOGLOU]: But the National Transparency Authority has just presented a report. It says that 40 percent of the built-up area of Mykonos has been built illegally. Why don't you have these buildings demolished?

[MAYOR]: Please ask the government in Athens. They can't just shift such serious decisions onto the local authorities. To tear something down, I have to be a faceless, anonymous state. As a small-town mayor, I can't do that. It's complicated. The government could do it, but it doesn't. My daughter did her master's in the Netherlands and also spent a lot of time in Germany. There you can see how an organized people with stable legislation functions. We finally need stability in Greece, too. But since I've been mayor, the building laws have changed ten times. Where is that supposed to lead? There's nothing like it anywhere else in Europe.

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The mayor places the responsibility on the central government in Athens.

[MAYOR]: That's it.

The experienced investigative journalist Tasos has asked the ministries several times. Why don't they take care of demolishing illegal buildings on Mykonos? The same answer from Athens every time: It's not the central government but the island authority that is responsible for removing unauthorized construction. Tasos has experienced this passing the buck over responsibilities again and again.

That could explain some oddities. On Mykonos, for example, there are hardly any permits for beach clubs. But there's partying at every beach around the clock. Luxury tourism and hotel real estate are a multibillion business. No one dares to crack down hard here.

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There was a time when things were a bit more tranquil here. In the 1950s and '60s, Mykonos was still a fishing village. Petros the pelican was the island's star. There were a few hippies and backpackers.

And then the first super-rich arrived. The shipowner Onassis, opera diva Callas, and later Jackie O. The island still feeds off that celebrity image today.

The super-rich still love to come. Elon Musk vacations here now and then. Ronaldo too. Any celebrity who wants to be seen shows up on Mykonos from time to time.

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The exclusive beach clubs are among the most expensive in the world. Minimum spend per table: up to 10,000 euros a night. Of course it's not only the super-rich who come.

There's also mainstream, middle-class Mykonos tourism. 768 cruise ships docked here last year. The colorful little houses are marketed as "Little Venice."

[REPORTER]: What are your plans today?

[VISITOR]: We're about to have a beer. Then a bit of sightseeing, check out Little Venice, meet some locals, and enjoy the sun. We come for the sun, as you can see.

[REPORTER]: But I don't see any locals.

[VISITOR]: Sure, some are working here in the bars.

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[REPORTER]: What's it like working as a waitress in high season?

[WAITRESS]: Honestly, I feel like a soldier. The job is tough and not fairly paid. We work from morning till night in the heat, under pressure and stress. And when the cruise tourists come off the ships, they're tired, thirsty, and annoyed. They treat us pretty strangely. And on top of all that, we still have to smile. This summer, for the first time, cruise tourists have to pay 20 euros to come ashore in Mykonos. But that doesn't deter anyone. Nearly one and a half million cruise passengers are expected on the island this year.

But first, take a deep breath—there's another Greece as well.

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Just 130 kilometers away, a completely different world. The island of Astypalea has a reputation for doing many things differently—and many things right—in tourism. They try to preserve traditions and focus on sustainable development.

[REPORTER]: So what exactly makes Astypalea special?

[ASTYPALEA INHABITANT]: In Astypalea you can have a quiet holiday. There's crystal-clear water, great beaches, and good food. Honestly, what more do you need? We've got octopus and goat meat, all straight from the island. It's really very beautiful here. We lead a simple and peaceful life.

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A romantic old town, a medieval castle, and lots of open space. There's no international airport, cruise ships are off-limits, only ferries may dock. The fact that Astypalea isn't that easy to reach prevents mass tourism.

And locals are proud that their island has made a name for itself as a counter-model to the rowdy party hotspots. Most recently, Astypalea has embraced e-mobility. There's even an electric bus system for locals and visitors.

70,000 tourists come to Astypalea each year. For comparison, the famous neighboring islands ... Tourist numbers are rising on Astypalea too.

And many people here also live from tourism. But it still largely takes place in small family-run hotels.

Koba Krause from Saarland has been vacationing on Astypalea for years — as a guest at "Lilo's Apartment."

[KOBA KRAUSE]: Yes, so, it's really very family-like here. It's like coming home. I mean, Greece is big. Astypalea is just, especially when you now... I've been coming here for twelve years. You arrive and the taxi driver basically hugs you — that first welcome. And then you're brought here, and it really is like coming home.

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Mother and daughter run the small hotel together.

[DAUGHTER]: People say Astypalea is the island of positive energy. And everyone who comes here is in love. And most keep coming back.

[DAUGHTER]: Go hiking. — Hiking too. That kind of tourist. I don't want tourists who come here to party and drink until morning and so on. Like on other islands, you know.

[REPORTER]: Does it worry you sometimes, when you look at those islands — Mykonos and Santorini — and see how things are developing here? Does that worry you?

[DAUGHTER]: I don't want us to become like Santorini and Mykonos, because a souvláki on Mykonos costs 17 euros and here it costs 3.50 euros. And the sun umbrellas and everything are so expensive. No, I'd like us to stay the way we are.

[MOTHER]: It has to remain a jewel, you know, for relaxation for a certain kind of guest. Those who don't cause all that commotion, who can feel comfortable and relax here on the island.

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Relaxation is guaranteed for Koba. Now, in the shoulder season, she sometimes has the island almost to herself.

[KOBA KRAUSE]: You have to like this, too, at this spot. It's quite barren, but I like this... well, this vastness, this sometimes rugged feel. It's simply a beautiful landscape; it's exactly why you're on the island — let your eyes wander. It's... yes, it really is... the great nothingness.

The great nothingness is a vacation concept. The beaches aren't crowded either. Pure relaxation instead of holiday hustle. There are still places like this in Greece.

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But unfortunately not very many. The better-known islands are going for volume.

We're on Naxos, because people here are now resisting hypertourism. Eleni Andrianopoulou is one of the founders of the Association to Save the Beaches of Naxos.

Last year, the activists took to the streets for the first time.

She lived in Germany for many years. On Naxos she works as a language teacher.

[REPORTER]: Eleni, how does it feel for you that your island is so full of tourists?

[ELENI ANDRIANOPOULOU]: In everyday life during the high season it's definitely stressful, because there are so many of them. And also because the quality of visitors is indeed changing, shifting. There are more and more photo-tourists who

come because they want to photograph certain things. They're not so interested in the people who live here, in our... way of life, but are here to consume.

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Eleni shows us Naxos's tourist hotspot, the sandy beach of Plaka. She's out with Lou Stevenson, an American friend who supports the protests.

Plaka used to be a natural paradise; today it's a bathing paradise with kilometers of sunbed zones.

[ELENI ANDRIANOPOULOU]: In the '80s there were very large dunes here, very high dunes, up to eight meters. You can't see any of that. Everything was built over, leveled, and it's still being flattened. There are various issues. For example, that a businessman here hoisted rocks out of the water because they bothered him. That's already environmental destruction — environmental crimes. Or paving the road flat. And they do it at night with big trucks and no license plates.

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The road through the dunes, Eleni says, was built illegally, so tourists can drive right up to their sunbeds.

[REPORTER]: This is an area where even sea turtles live and nest. Are they still here?

[ELENI ANDRIANOPOULOU]: Well, the last ones we saw on this beach were in 2023. Where the last nest we saw was, there's a kiosk now.

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In fact, in Greece slightly stricter rules for beaches have been in force for a good year. The government had announced it would enforce them. But it doesn't do so here on Naxos, they tell us.

That's why Eleni and Lou are collecting evidence to document the extent of illegal tourist activities. To document it. According to the new rules, only 30 percent of the beach may actually be used commercially by umbrella renters. But no one sticks to it.

[REPORTER]: What exactly do you do with the drone footage? Do you analyze the videos to collect evidence?

[LOU STEVENSON]: Well, we can't collect real evidence. We're not the police. But at least we can show the authorities where things are going wrong, so they'll take a closer look. We can't do more than that.

[REPORTER]: Prime Minister Mitsotakis likes to speak of heavy industry, that tourism is Greece's heavy industry. Of course, that generates huge turnover and tax revenues.

[ELENI ANDRIANOPOULOU]: At first, when that phrase—or that comparison—was made, I think it sounded a bit ridiculous.

But in fact, if we take it seriously, then it really is a heavy industry. Why? Because all the other industry is gone due to deindustrialization. Then it definitely needs strict rules, because we know very well that wherever there's a factory, the environment is destroyed. And this here is a factory. It is a factory, and the work is done on a production line.

Of the once untouched sand dunes and cedar forests, only remnants remain on Naxos. Eleni and her fellow campaigners meet for a small action. They don't want to scare off tourists, but at least inform them that they are in a protected natural area here, and that the dunes must be protected. This apparently doesn't arouse much interest among tourists.

[ELENI ANDRIANOPOULOU]: May I briefly tell you about the beaches? You'll soon see lots of restaurants, but they don't have permits for tables on the beach. The terrace is outdoors too and very nice, but please don't take a table directly on the sand dune. You can have this too.

[VISITORS]: Thank you.

[ELENI ANDRIANOPOULOU]: Okay, have a nice evening. Bye.

[VISITORS]: Thank you, bye. Good luck.

[ELENI ANDRIANOPOULOU]: Yeah, thank you.

It's an almost hopeless fight. The unlicensed outdoor dining on the former turtle beach is simply too beautiful and inviting for tourists. And thanks to off-road rental cars you can park right on the dune.

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We're back on Mykonos, on the road with our Greek reporter colleague Tasos Telloglou. His main topic is the numerous illegal hotel constructions on the island.

[TASOS TELLOGLOU]: Too much has been built. There are some buildings that get stopped, but they're stopped too late.

[REPORTER]: What does "stopped" mean? The authorities order that construction may not continue, but then the building stands there as a ruin.

[TASOS TELLOGLOU]: Yes. The white elephant, that's what we call it.

In a miraculous way, many white elephants later become hotels after all. How does that work? Telloglou wants to show us an example of illegal dealings in tourism.

We drive to Panormos Beach. He tells us that large parts of the beach area were concreted over without permission. Running the illegal facility paid off: 38 million euros in turnover in three years. And not a cent of tax in Greece. Because the operator hid his money in the Marshall Islands.

According to Telloglou's research, part of the facility was demolished and fines were imposed. But the operation continues.

[REPORTER]: Strictly speaking, this beach facility shouldn't exist at all, right? Because there was no building permit here.

[TASOS TELLOGLOU]: The beach is supposed to remain untouched by decision of the city council.

[REPORTER]: It even says so on this sign.

[TASOS TELLOGLOU]: Yes.

[REPORTER]: But it doesn't look very untouched here.

[TASOS TELLOGLOU]: It's completely worthless.

[REPORTER]: And the tourists lying here on the sunbeds probably have no idea that this was once built illegally. They're just having a nice holiday, right?

[TASOS TELLOGLOU]: They couldn't give a damn. And the state has partly legitimized this practice by taking a share of the revenue. That means tourists pay a few hundred euros for these loungers that sit on public land—which actually belongs to the people.

[REPORTER]: Which is actually occupied.

[TASOS TELLOGLOU]: So the state has basically given the green light for all beaches—since a year ago—for all beaches to be occupied. As long as it gets its money.

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Cashing in on building violations. Penalties for the retroactive legalization of illegal constructions have for decades been a lucrative extra source of income for the state.

Besides the state, construction contractors and owners of valuable plots also benefit from such typically Greek solutions. Only the environment is left behind.

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Some beaches on the island are firmly in the hands of the rich and beautiful. No one knows the celebrity scene as well as Petros Nazos, the paparazzo of Mykonos. He is constantly on the lookout for stars and starlets.

[PETROS NAZOS]: I heard Novak Djokovic is here, the tennis star. But I almost think he's at another beach today. I always wear a cap and glasses and only carry the mini camera, so I don't stand out as a paparazzo with a big lens.

The day before yesterday he filmed Eros Ramazzotti here, but today it's only the usual influencers and nameless nouveau riche on the beach.

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Not so exciting for Nazos, who invites us to his home. In his studio he wants to show us the highlights of his work.

[PETROS NAZOS]: Hugh Jackman, DiCaprio with a cap.

[REPORTER]: There are so many beautiful islands in Greece.

Let me put it this way: Mykonos may not be the most beautiful island, but why do the rich and beautiful come here of all places?

[PETROS NAZOS]: They come for the life—the lifestyle. Here you have the stars up close, and suddenly you're in a photo with them, with Shakira, Lady Gaga, Monica Bellucci. The biggest names come to Mykonos. It's a party.

[REPORTER]: Party life, yes—but how is that? Does all this hullabaloo sometimes get on your nerves, or do you still really enjoy the bustle?

[PETROS NAZOS]: I love my work. Only if you love something can you do it well. But unfortunately the island has changed a lot. And that worries me. It's not like it used to be. There are constant traffic jams, and far too many hotels have been built.

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The fact that the paparazzo of Mykonos also views his island critically surprises us. Petros wants to show us what makes him angry. Right next to his house a luxury hotel is to be planted into the landscape, in the last untouched part of the island.

A previous owner of the property could no longer service his loans. German investors took over the bad loans along with the plot.

[PETROS NAZOS]: We know that this entire side here is to be built up and flooded with concrete. That's a catastrophe for our area. Here in Agrari many things still recall the old Mykonos of 50 years ago. And the locals love the place for that. With this tourist construction project, that natural beauty would simply be destroyed.

[REPORTER]: You yourself earn your money from tourism. Isn't it a contradiction when you say we don't want so much tourism?

[PETROS NAZOS]: That's true, but it's not just about making money for me, it's also about our nature. Even now there are very serious problems on the island. Everywhere large tank trucks deliver water, because one project after another is approved without the water supply being guaranteed.

[REPORTER]: And how is it that such projects are approved, even though the problems are known?

[PETROS NAZOS]: You see, we're on an island that very rich people come to. They have their own interests. And that's why practically no laws apply anymore. Here everyone does what they want. And that's our downfall.

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The paparazzo of Mykonos is seriously thinking about leaving his island. But the building permit for the luxury resort has not yet been issued. There is still unbuilt landscape here, there is still no mega-hotel. And even on the beach there's still room. And of all places, a luxury hotel could arise here with money from Germany. Two subsidiaries of the Otto Group from Hamburg want to build it. The Greek Otto subsidiary Southrock presents the project on its homepage. Forty chic apartments are to be carved into the rock, plus twelve luxury villas, swimming pools, and cocktail bars. The company enthuses about how paradisiacally untouched the rockscape of Agrari still is and calls it an ultra-luxury eco-project.

We ask the Otto Group in Hamburg. What do they say to the accusation that this supposed eco-project is in fact destroying nature? The Otto subsidiary EOS informs us: Environmentally sound construction in previously untouched nature. A case of greenwashing?

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Investigative reporter Tassos Telloglou takes us to the construction site of the Four Seasons Hotel on Mykonos. This project too was approved as a so-called strategic investment. And that means the Greek government suspends local building regulations and fast-tracks the approval of such large hotels. [REPORTER]: The government says: strategic investments — we approve them because they are built in an especially ecological way. But is that true? [TASSOS TELLOGLOU]: At the moment Mykonos is selling every rock. The value of the land has increased about eightfold over the past 20 years. That has made many people rich. And that dictates their behavior today. Here you can see that right next to the Four Seasons the next strategic investment is already being built. A bit further down is the Radisson Blu, another big name. Then a dozen more new hotels. And three kilometers further over there the next mega-hotel is already being built. As for the supposed environmental friendliness, I don't need to say much. You can see what's happening here. Everything is being concreted over.

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To understand why the Greek government is rolling out the red carpet for tourism, it helps to look at the state budget. For comparison: the share of tourism revenue in gross domestic product. Almost nowhere else in Europe is a state so dependent on mass tourism.

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We're once again on Astypalea, the island that is trying gentle tourism. Village schoolteacher Tasos Kontaratos is out today with Koba from Saarland and a few other hiking friends. He loves, in his free time, to bring tourists closer to the island's beauty.

[TASOS KONTARATOS]: Ah, oregano.

[KOBA]: Oregano.

Not everything here is just romantic. Even the somewhat more remote islands are now feeling the growing pressure from rising tourist numbers. Koba takes the opportunity to ask Tasos something that keeps coming up on her vacations: the island's water scarcity.

[KOBA]: How about cisterns? My hotel still has its own cistern. But why don't all hotels have water storage?

[TASOS KONTARATOS]: In the past all old-town houses had cisterns, but they were sealed up to make room for new guest rooms.

[KOBA]: I know that on many sports fields there are tankers with drinking water. But we tourists buy bottled water, two or three every day.

[TASOS KONTARATOS]: Yes, and that causes big problems with waste disposal. And the drinking water comes, as you know, from our reservoir, but the level is constantly dropping. It simply rains less and less. We used to worry about water quality; today the problem is there's hardly any water left. Especially in the tourist season in summer, when consumption rises sharply. And the many swimming pools make the problem worse.

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Like almost all Greek islands, Astypalea is also considering building new desalination plants. And the waste problem is pressing too. Astypalea's landfill is hopelessly overcrowded. Fires keep breaking out here in summer. Safeguard measures are expensive and would have to be organized by the regional administration, which, however, is based on Rhodes, far from Astypalea. There are massive structural problems. These are some of the problems that Mayor Nikolaos Komineas grapples with daily. The next one is the housing shortage. Because many apartments are rented to tourists at high prices

via Airbnb, rents have risen sharply. With support projects for young families, he wants to try to keep locals on the island. The mayor wants to show us that the small islands are not powerless in the fight against mass tourism.

The residents have just successfully resisted the construction of a huge hotel complex. A wealthy shipowner from Athens wanted to turn Astypalea into a second Mykonos. The mayor shows us the site.

[NIKOLAOS KOMINEAS]: Just look at these colorful blossoms. When you see this, you understand—this is life. Do you see the bees? They're gathering nectar from the thyme. That becomes our wonderful honey. This is our real island life. It has to stay as it is. Forever. So that we remember where we come from and how the earth should really be.

The mayor takes us to the place where the shipowner from Athens wanted to build his holiday settlement.

[NIKOLAOS KOMINEAS]: Just imagine — they wanted to build 200 small houses here, each 100 square meters. Plus one or two large hotels in classic style. And roads running through the complex. And a pool for every house—so 200 in total. 2,000 hectares of building area. It starts at that mountain back there and reaches over to here. That is a violation of nature. What are we supposed to say to that? "Good job?"

The entire island said no to building over the landscape. The municipal council lodged an objection in Athens. In the end, the hotel project was at least temporarily halted by the Greek Environment Ministry — a major success for the mayor.

[NIKOLAOS KOMINEAS]: If you turn the camera around, you'll see how the fields are ploughed and sown, just like in the old days. We're trying to preserve farming and livestock rearing, our old traditions. We do want tourism, but not the kind that upsets the island's balance and destroys everything.

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For investigative reporter Tasos Telloglou, the digging continues on Mykonos. He meets a lawyer who has new information. He has just won a case against an exclusive beach club. The owner had applied for a permit for just two camping tents, but what was built was an illegal luxury club with nine-figure turnover. Local police officers are allegedly on the club boss's payroll. That will be Tasos's next Mykonos story.

[TASOS TELLOGLOU]: Finito.