



IN BRIEF

CIVIL SERVANTS

Workers to join 3-hour walkout from noon, hold city protests

Civil servants protesting an ongoing austerity drive are to hold a three-hour work stoppage from noon today and to join protest rallies in Athens and Thessaloniki, due to start at 1 p.m. Civil servants, who have seen their salaries and pensions slashed over the past year-and-a-half, will be taking part in the action as part of their continued protests against the government's austerity drive. The civil servants' union, ADEDY, and the country's main labor union, known by its acronym GSEE, have staged a series of general strikes over the past few months, demanding that the government revoke cutbacks and structural reforms that have been voted through Parliament, including plans to lay off thousands of public workers.

WEATHER WOES

High winds keep ferries docked

Ferries remained moored in port yesterday as gale-force winds made sea travel dangerous. The Aegean, Rafina and Lavrio in Attica were all shut as winds reached 10 on the Beaufort scale. Ports in other parts of the country were also closed and ferries anchored for safety reasons. Those scheduled to travel by ferry are advised to contact their local port authority or travel agency.

■ Drug hauls. A 48-year-old Greek man was detained in Corinth, west of Athens, yesterday after police confiscated nearly 700 kilograms of cannabis from an abandoned refrigerator truck alleged to belong to him. Officers searched the truck after finding it abandoned on the side of the Athens-Patras national highway and found the drugs in three large bags. It appears that the owner of the truck fled after the truck broke down. A subsequent police search located the 48-year-old suspect in a nearby village. Meanwhile in Athens, police detained three Iranian nationals – two men and a woman – and a Bulgarian woman for allegedly trying to smuggle 2 kilograms of opium into the country from neighboring Turkey.

■ Armed raids. Two armed robbers wearing motorcycle helmets netted some 20,000 euros yesterday after holding up a branch of ATEbank in the small town of Metaxades in Evros, northern Greece. The robbers burst into the branch at 8 a.m. when there were no customers on the premises. They remained at large late yesterday. A few hours earlier in Kapandriti, northern Attica, three burglars broke into a house where a 12-year-old boy had been on his own and pilfered cash and jewelry. The intruders, who had been armed with guns and knives, fled without causing any harm to the boy, who telephoned his parents once they had left.

■ Forged bank notes. A 37-year-old Cretan man faced a prosecutor in Iraklio yesterday after police in the northern port found dozens of forged euro bank notes in his home and his car. A search of the suspect's car turned up dozens of fake 500-euro, 50-euro and 20-euro notes and a subsequent search on his home revealed more, as well as printing equipment and a photocopier. Since the onset of the debt crisis, the forgery of euro notes has flourished, as have scams by opportunists touting a varnish that ostensibly transforms pieces of green paper into 100-euro notes.

WEATHER

Athens 7°/13°
Thessaloniki 1°/11°

RADIOTAXI

ATHENS Athens 1210.921.7942 Asteras 210.614.4000
Cosmos (for all areas) 1300, (for the city center) 210.522.2218, (for the suburbs) 210.520.0020 Enotia 210.645.9000 Hellas (for northern suburbs) 210.801.4000/4 (for southern suburbs) 210.996.1420 (for downtown Athens & Piraeus) 210.645.7000 Express 210.993.4812 Glyfada 210.960.5603/5 Icarus 210.515.2800 Kifissia 210.6233.100 Parthenon 210.5223.300 Protosporia 210.222.1623 **PIRAEUS** Hermes 210.411.5200 Piraeus 1 210.418.2335
THESSALONIKI Euro Taxi 2310.866.866 Macedonia 2310.517.417 White Tower 2310.246.104

Police 100
Ambulance 166
Fire dept 199
Coast Guard 108
Road Assist. 10400
SOS Doctors 1016
Directory 11888

EU pact main policy goal, PM says

Speaking in Par't ahead of confidence vote on Wednesday, Papademos seeks commitment to reforms

The prime minister of the country's new interim government, Lucas Papademos, yesterday stressed that the chief aim of his administration is to implement the decisions of an October 26 European Union summit, where the latest debt deal for Greece was agreed, and to secure the next tranche of rescue aid without which the country risks defaulting and being ejected from the eurozone.

Triggering a debate which is to culminate in a confidence vote in the new government tomorrow, the speech set out the administration's policy platform without any surprises. The key goals are to make good on commitments to foreign creditors, secure crucial aid and resume talks negotiations to receive further loans, Papademos said.

He added that he foresaw no new austerity measures before 2013 but that it was important that measures Greece has agreed to – including cutbacks in the state sector and the opening of closed professions – are implemented without delay.

"The task of this government is disproportionately large compared to the time it will have in power, so we must not delay," Papademos said in his first speech in Parliament.

The former vice president of the European Central Bank added that he had accepted the invitation to assume the role of interim premier because "Greece's position in the eurozone is at stake."

The premier also requested the "commitment" of party leaders in the new three-member coalition, apparently referring to a demand by EU officials for Greek political leaders to provide written guarantees accepting the terms of the new rescue program. "This should not be seen as the demand of faceless institutions," Papademos said. "The guarantees are



Premier Lucas Papademos is seen yesterday preparing to give his first speech in Parliament ahead of tomorrow's confidence vote in his interim government. He said the priorities of his administration were to make good on commitments to foreign creditors and keep Greece in the eurozone.

chiefly for our own national interest but are also a duty to the nations which are showing us solidarity."

The premier's comments came just a few hours after EU officials pressed their demands for reassurances as

conservative New Democracy leader Antonis Samaras continued to resist them. A spokesman for European Monetary and Economic Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn, Amadeu Altafaj, suggested that Brussels would not

take no for an answer. "We continue to wait for a clear and unequivocal expression – in writing – about the engagement of the responsible political forces in Greece to the decisions taken on October 26," Altafaj said.

Samaras sticks to his guns on austerity and written pledge for Brussels

New Democracy leader Antonis Samaras insisted yesterday that he would not sign a written commitment so that Greece can receive its next loan tranche, nor would he support the interim government if it introduces new austerity measures.

Samaras made the pledges in a speech to his MPs at lunchtime but later in the day ousted an ND lawmaker who suggested "far-right elements" were trying to take over the party.

In his address, Samaras insisted that ND had only joined the interim administration, which he referred to as a "transitional" government, due to short-term necessity. "This is not a coalition government," said Samaras. "It would only be a coalition

if we had common policy goals."

The ND leader said he would not approve further austerity. "I agree with the goals to cut government spending... to reduce debt, to erase the deficit, to make structural changes. I do not agree with whatever stunts growth." However, he refrained from making his usual call for the terms of Greece's loan deals to be "renegotiated," instead saying, "When we can, we will change whatever needs to be changed."

Samaras also said he would not sign any letter committing to the conditions of a 130 billion euro bailout as demanded by Brussels for disbursement of the next loan tranche of 8 billion euros. "I

don't sign such statements," he said, adding that his word should be sufficient.

Later in the day, Samaras expelled conservative veteran Sotiris Hatzigakis from the parliamentary group for suggesting that "far-right elements" had worked their way into the party. In a statement, Samaras said the former justice minister's comments were insulting to the party and its MPs.

"I want to draw attention to the fact that some far-right elements, operating under the banner of the popular right, are trying to alter the makeup of New Democracy," said Hatzigakis, a member of the party for 38 years. He later accused Samaras of turning ND into a small grouping.

Deadline nears for tax evaders

The country's worst tax offenders have another 10 days – until November 24 – to pay their dues to the state otherwise their names will be published online, the Finance Ministry has said in written warnings sent out to 150,000 individuals and businesses.

The ministry has threatened to publish a list of tax offenders on its website after collecting the names and details of Greece's biggest tax evaders.

According to ministry data, some 900,000 people owe the state an estimated 41.1 billion euros in outstanding taxes. However, most of the debt is owed by a very small number of people with a mere 5 percent of tax dodgers owing

85 percent of the outstanding amount. Just 14,700 individuals, companies or organizations owe 37 billion euros, according to the ministry. Each of these owes more than 150,000 euros but the ministry concedes that some are likely to be public sector organizations while others could be individuals who have died.

The state is also tracking down companies with debts in excess of 30 million euros, according to Grigoris Peponis, the public prosecutor responsible for investigating economic matters.

In Crete, officers of the ministry's financial crimes unit (SDOE) have opened some 200 bank accounts belonging to doctors, lawyers and

other professionals believed to be guilty of large-scale tax evasion, it emerged yesterday. According to sources, officers already have evidence incriminating three well-known lawyers and six established doctors from the island's northern port of Iraklio. One of the implicated medics is the director of local maternity clinic who allegedly used public facilities to offer his patients private treatment. The doctor allegedly made huge profits from this illicit enterprise but did not declare any of his income. According to SDOE officers, some 970 patients paid a total of 3.26 million euros into two bank accounts in the medic's name between 2001 and 2009.

Blast 'linked' to Proton probe

Police officers looking into an explosion at an apartment block in the northeastern Athens suburb of Halandri on Friday have redirected their investigation after discovering that one of the people living in the building was a Bank of Greece employee responsible for compiling the report that led to alleged embezzlement at Proton Bank being probed.

Four cars were damaged but nobody was injured in the blast. The explosive device, which consisted of dynamite and a slow-burning fuse, was placed at the entrance to the apartment block. Sources said that police now believe that it was intended as a warning to the bank official, who is a member of a credit committee whose report led to prosecutor Yiannis Dragatsis launching his own probe.

Last week, a court ordered the freezing of all assets belonging to the main shareholder in Proton Bank, Lavrentis Lavrentiadis, and another six executives who have been implicated in allegedly questionable loans of some 700 million euros made by the lender to Lavrentiadis's group of firms.



COMMENTARY / BY PANTELIS BOUKALAS

Personal interests ahead of national good

No one has the right anymore to claim that PASOK betrayed its founding charter or that it broke its fundamental promises. Sure, it took some time, but the Panhellenic Socialist Movement's foremost pledge made when it first came to power in 1981 has finally materialized. "PASOK in government, the people ['laos,' in Greek] in power," the party's late founder Andreas Papandreu promised at the time. And here we are, 30 years later, thanks to Andreas's son, George Papandreu. Well, almost. You see, the new slogan is "PASOK in government, LAOS in power." Don't underestimate the threat. Strangely, most

media have presented the involvement of the ultranationalist LAOS party in the transition administration not only as natural and painless but also as constructive and productive. It almost feels like LAOS is a group of colorful politicians with a soft spot for smart sound bites who spend most of their time parading through Greece's television studios – instead of what it really is: a political party that accommodates the worst kind of nationalists, apologists of Greece's military junta (as well as late Greek dictator Ioannis Metaxas), immigrant bashers, anti-Semites, former members of the nationalist Chrysi Avgi

(Golden Dawn) organization, and bigoted preachers of the notion that building a mosque in Athens – with or without a minaret – would signal an attack on the Hellenic nation. A lot has been said about the national emergency that led to the formation of the new government – whether one chooses to brand it a "unity" or a "crisis" government. Nevertheless, the parties that make up the government have behaved true to habit, not to the nation's interests. They have acted in accordance with their customs, customs that have been shaped by ruthless partisan interest, a strong penchant for

byzantine bargaining, utter dependence on all sorts of interests and power centers, and the strong conviction that the highest level of patriotism is partisan tactics. If they are acting according to the national good, as they like to claim, why did some of them block the participation of political parties that had in the past expressed their willingness to cooperate? And why is New Democracy trying to be a government in opposition and at the same time an opposition in government – in a tragicomic revival of the communist model where the ruling and opposition parties are one and the same?

EDITORIAL

A sober voice of reason

A sober voice of logic and responsibility was heard in the Greek Parliament yesterday, as newly appointed Prime Minister Lucas Papademos outlined the true dilemmas facing the country that will determine whether Greece will remain in the eurozone or not. The moment of truth has now come for political leaders and anyone who holds a position of responsibility in the public sphere. Based on what Papademos said, in order for the country to avoid a major defeat, it is necessary to reach an understanding, to show unity and to swiftly move ahead with the implementation of the country's pledges. For this to happen, genuine support from the country's politicians – some of whom helped to create the mess Greece is now in due to poor management or because they nurtured false expectations – will be vital. The only way for the country to avoid a terrible tragedy is for them to start behaving more honestly and to stand by the government during these crucial few months. Can they bear to do so, or do their own and their parties' interests come first?

