

Accelerate Procedures for Markets-Closed Professions

Following Brussels positive comments on the course of Greece's economy, the government is accelerating procedures regarding the markets and the opening of closed professions.

A delegation comprised of EU, European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund inspectors will arrive in Greece next week. Their report will determine whether there will be allocation of the rescue package second installment for 2010. Finance Minister George Papakonstantinou this afternoon will brief the Parliament Economic Committee on the state budget.

The Finance Ministry staff is highly satisfied at the debt auction of the 6-month treasury bills which was oversubscribed 3.64 times.

The sum raised is 1.625 billion at 4.65% interest, just 1/10 higher compared to April's auction.

Interest yield of 4.65% is lower

than interest provided by the rescue mechanism said Finance Minister after a meeting of the Ecofin in Brussels.

Mr. Papakonstantinou expressed satisfaction at the EU recognition of the government's efforts to purge Greece's economy.

However, he expressed reservations regarding the EU Commission proposal about freezing European investments to states with huge deficit or debt as well as the German proposal about controlled bankruptcy.

On the grounds of latest develop-

ments, government spokesman George Petalotis spoke of clear indications about something changing in Greece's economy as the sacrifices of people are bearing fruit.

Mr. Petalotis even left open possibility for social policies in 2011 to support weak groups of people, making clear though that in no occasion there would not be social measures endangering economic growth.

He also said revenues would further increase with the payment of ETAK, the second VAT installment and businesses contributions.



Vasso Papandreou

Disharmony growing within PASOK

Former Minister Vasso Papandreou continued to stir the waters within PASOK yesterday, accusing the governor of the Bank of Greece, Giorgos Provopoulos, of misleading Parliament and demanding that Finance Minister Giorgos Papaconstantinou explain certain decisions linked to the sale of government bonds.

Papandreou, who held three different ministerial positions in PASOK governments in the 1990s and during the previous decade, has already publicly attacked Papaconstantinou, his deputy Filippos Sachinidis and Health Minister Mariliza Xenogiannakopoulou over a range of issues.

She continued to cause unease within government ranks yesterday by submitting a question to Parliament, signed by another 14 PASOK deputies, in which Provopoulos is accused of "misinforming" Parliament about details relating to the issuance of Greek bonds between November 2009 and April 2010. The MPs also demanded that Papaconstantinou explain the thinking behind how these sales were conducted. The Papandreou-led intervention did not prompt any response from Papaconstantinou or other members of the government. It came at a time when there are already concerns about the apparent lack of unity within the ruling party.

"PASOK is paying for its doublespeak before last year's general election," said Socialist deputy Nassos Alevras, one of the co-signatories of yesterday's parliamentary question. "PASOK promised things that clearly could not be done and the price for such mistakes is a loss of trust."

Deputy Defense Minister Panos Beglitis admitted that PASOK was having trouble getting to grips with its task. "It is very hard for a party that governed the country during easy times to immediately adapt to a different period of political life," he said.



Methoni quake

A moderate undersea quake, measuring 4.7 on the Richter scale, occurred off the southern tip of the Peloponnese shortly after 6 a.m. yesterday. The tremor was felt across the entire prefecture of Messinia but there were no reports of injuries or damage.

Wrangling over Social Security D/B for Civil Sector

Parliament debate on social security draft-bill for the civil sector is being held in high pitched tone. There was strong dispute between ND party leader A. Samaras and Finance Minister G. Papakonstantinou. "Socially we went bankrupt" said Mr. Samaras in his intervention and blamed the government for "having taken unfair measures that lead the country to deadlock and long recession". Furthermore he spoke of "complete reversal of the social security system" and maintained that "there is another

road the ND proposes and specific measures that will exit the country from the memorandum terms in two years". In response, Mr. Papakonstantinou blamed the ND leader for vague talks and called him to say "which specific magic measures would take the country out of the memorandum terms in two years". He added "we do not tell stories to gain political time". ADEDY has announced a work stoppage from 11:00 till the end of the shift on Thursday, when the Parliament will pass the draft-bill.

Measures to Accelerate Judicial System

Minister for Justice Transparency and Human Rights Haris Kastanidis announced the submission of 2 draft-bills till the end of summer providing for three new institutions which will accelerate the judicial system. In the meantime, General Inspector of Public Administration Leandros Raktintzis spoke of special judicial treatment of prominent persons raising several questions. Prime-minister G. Papandreou said Justice is an independent branch but it can not do whatever it wants, adding "the state has its mechanisms but justice must play its role". Mr. Papandreou portrayed public administration as "sick man" accustomed to clientelism. Mr.

Kastanidis met with the President of the Republic Karolos Papoulias at noon, on Wednesday.

New Institutions

Justice Minister Haris Kastanidis in the presence of undersecretary Apostolos Katsifaras and general secretary George Dimitrainas announced measures for the acceleration of judicial procedures.

The first measure is the introduction of mediation in civil and commercial matters in the private sector which will significantly reduce courts' work load.

Mediation is an alternative option

of resolving disputes as both interested parties seek a compromise solutions through a mediator, who is a lawyer. Faster and cheaper resolution of disputes and reduction of courts' work load are some of the advantages of the new m

The second measure is introduction of "criminal conciliation" regarding offences against property or assets treated as misdemeanor or felony but committed without use of violence (embezzlement, usury etc). In case of criminal prosecution, the prosecutor starts procedures for the compensation of victims. The case will not be referred to court provided the defendant fully compensates the plaintiff.

The third measure is acceleration of cases concerning administrative justice with the introduction of "filter selection" at the State Council. A group of judges will examine priority of cases referred to the State Council.

Furthermore the "standard procedure" is established in administrative courts. Major importance pending cases will be heard within two months following requests by directors of courts, bar associations or the Finance Minister.

Mr. Kastanidis described the measures as radical and underlined that there would follow a second package of measures for the acceleration of judicial procedures.