

Greek Young People Would Opt to Emigrate for Jobs, Poll Shows

Seven in 10 younger Greeks would abandon the country if they could, as austerity measures crimp incomes and reduce career prospects, an opinion poll shows.

Almost 74 percent of 5,442 college-educated Greeks said they would emigrate if given the chance, according to the survey by Kapa Research and published in *To Vima* newspaper. Kapa surveyed people aged 22 to 35 from June 4 to June 30. The margin of error was 1.3 percentage points.

Of those seeking to leave, 66 percent said it would be to seek a better overall quality of life, while 45 percent were motivated by finding a good job. About 13 percent said they would undertake or continue studies abroad.

Greece agreed in May to cut wages and pensions

and raise taxes in return for 110 billion euros (\$136 billion) in emergency loans from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund. Prime Minister George Papandreou argued that the measures, to tame a budget deficit of almost 14 percent of economic output, are needed to prevent the country from defaulting on its debts after borrowing costs soared.

Unemployment in the country of 11 million rose to 12 percent in May as the economy contracted for a seventh straight quarter. In the 25-to-34 age group, the jobless rate is 15.8 percent.

Emergency Measures

The EU-IMF program won't bring the country out of the crisis, according to 78 percent of those ques-

tioned. More than 86 percent said the measures didn't take into account the opinions and prospects of young Greeks. Thirty-eight percent said they would leave Greece if offered a job abroad with a monthly wage of 1,500 euros to 3,000 euros.

Almost 72 percent said no political party was close to young voters, with just 8.9 percent believing Papandreou's Pasok party struck a chord with the young. When asked who they trusted, 56 percent, the largest number, said they trusted only themselves. Companies were trusted by 8 percent, unions by 4.4 percent, political parties and politicians by 1.3 percent and the media by 0.8 percent. Some 39 percent said they didn't trust anyone.

By Maria Petrakis

Article from *BusinessWeek*

The last Orthodox patriarch in Turkey?

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is the living embodiment of an ancient tradition. From his historic base in Istanbul, Turkey, the 270th Patriarch of Constantinople claims to be the direct successor of the Apostle Andrew.

Today he's considered "first among equals" in the leadership of the Greek Orthodox church, and is the spiritual leader of 250 million Orthodox Christians around the world. But few of them are in his own home country.

"We are a small Christian minority," Bartholomew laments.

"We have suffered because of Greek-Turkish confrontation, struggle, and a lack of mutual trust and confidence. And that is why we lost most of our faithful."

Turkey's once-flourishing Greek community is fading away. The country is predominantly Muslim and led by a secular government that's had a complicated relationship with the patriarchate.

If Turkish laws, demographics and attitudes aren't changed, Bartholomew could ultimately be the last Patriarch of Constantinople.

"We are not all in despair for the future of our church," Bartholomew said. "It is not easy, but it is not impossible."

The Turkish government can veto any candidate put forward for the position of patriarch. And it requires the patriarch be a Turkish citizen. Bartholomew is, but most of those best qualified to succeed him are not.

So the government has proposed offering Turkish citizenship to Orthodox archbishops overseas. Several have applied; so far, none has been approved.

The Turkish government also refuses to recognize the title Ecumenical Patriarch, or Bartholomew's role as an international religious leader.

Officially, he is viewed as a local bishop who leads a shrinking community of a few thousand Greek Orthodox citizens. Yorgo Stefanopoulos is one of them. "I am a curiosity now in Turkey," he said. "We used to be a minority; now we are a curiosity."

Stefanopoulos is an outspoken leader of Istanbul's Greek community. About 50 years ago, that community numbered



more than 100,000. Today, it's probably less than 3,000.

He insists that decline was not accidental. Instead, he blames the Turkish government. Decades ago, he said, they targeted ethnic Greeks with nationalist policies, like wealth taxes, property seizures, and campaigns to speak only Turkish in the streets.

Then there was the pogrom in 1955: riots directed against Greeks and Greek-owned property. The violence was later found to have been orchestrated by Turkish authorities.

As a result, Greeks left Istanbul in droves. "The Turkish government somehow managed to do a bloodless ethnic cleansing," Stefanopoulos said. Today's Turkish government says those events are from the distant past, and they're now looking ahead to reconciliation.

"Turkey is going through a period of transition," said Egemen Bagis, the country's Minister for European Union Affairs. "Turkey's becoming a much more democratic, much more prosperous, much more transparent society."

Yet, the government has resisted calls to reopen the patriarchate's main school of theology.

For more than a century, the Halki seminary educated future Greek Orthodox bishops, theologians and patriarchs, until Turkey's highest court ordered it closed in 1971. Since then, it's remained empty, worrying former students like theologian Satirios Varnalidis.

"We want to reopen this school so that we can provide new priests to the Ecumenical Patriarchate," Varnalidis said. "Otherwise, in a little while our community just won't have any more priests."

For years, Turkish Prime Minister Recep

Tayyip Erdogan has talked of reopening the school. Bagis insists the government is still working on it.

Despite these difficulties, Patriarch Bartholomew is heartened by new signs of hope that his community and his church will survive.

"We have many young people from Greece who want to come and be established in Turkey," he says. "This is an opposite current than before."

Haris Rigas is part of that trickle of fresh immigration, which offers perhaps the best hope of reviving Istanbul's Greek community. "The minute I came I was in love with the city and felt that I had to live here," he said.

Rigas has been studying the city's indigenous Greek community. He's also a musician in a band that plays Rembetiko, a genre of old, mostly Greek, folk songs. His studies and his music are

focused on the preservation and promotion of Greek culture.

"The only way for the community to survive is to attain a degree of visibility," he said. "They've played an important historical role in this city throughout the centuries, and I think they should still do it."

Earlier this month, the Turkish state and the Ecumenical Patriarchate made a historic step towards reconciliation.

Thousands of Orthodox Christians gathered for a prayer service at the ancient cliffside monastery of Sumela, near Turkey's Black Sea Coast, on August 15. Patriarch Bartholomew conducted a divine liturgy, the first Christian service of its kind at Sumela, in more than 80 years. Even if Istanbul's Greek community makes a comeback, some fear that the patriarchate itself may not last much longer, due to demographics and lingering suspicion from the Turkish government.

And the patriarch remains hopeful and resolute. He rejects conjecture that he could be the last Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

"Absolutely not," Bartholomew insists. "We trust a divine providence, and the guarantee given to us by our Lord himself, that the church can survive."

"This is our faith, this is our conviction, this is our hope, this is our prayer. And all the rest we leave at the hands of God."

By Bill Wunner, CNN

CNN's Ivan Watson and Yesim Comert contributed to this report

"Tracing Istanbul"

The art exhibition "Tracing Istanbul" that will be hosted at the Holy Theological School of Halki will be opened today by the Ecumenical Patriarch. The Minister of Culture, Mr. Pavlos Geroulanos, will be also present. This is a historic moment since the Holy Theological School of Halki remains closed since 1971 and opens for the first time hosting 101 works of art of notable Greek artists for 20 days. The 101 works will be attempts of "narration" through painting, sculpture, construction, photography, video and hagiography, says Anastasia Manou who inspired and organized the exhibition.

Hundreds of visitors from Athens will be present in this exhibition. In the opening ceremony, Greek and Turkish artists and collectors will be present.

"The works which have been created specifically for the exhibition, "trace" and highlight mythological, historical and every-day life moments, focusing on images, colors, smells, sounds, traces and symbols of Istanbul."

The exhibition will also be hosted later in Athens, at the 'Technopolis' of the City of Athens from 4 to 31 October 2010.