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Hellenic News, Culture & Lifestyle



Court orders citizenship law to be scrapped

The Council of State on Tuesday deemed unconstitutional a law passed almost three years ago which allows second-generation migrants to apply for Greek citizenship and to stand in local elections.

Greece's highest administrative court ruled that only Greeks could stand for office. It also decided that the criteria for offering Greek citizenship were not sufficient and that each case should be examined individually to ensure the applicant has a genuine bond with Greece.

Known as the Ragousis law after former Interior Minister Yiannis Ragousis, the citizenship law was ratified by Parliament in early 2010, allowing those who had been born to immigrant parents legally living in Greece for at least five years to be granted

Greek citizenship provided they had studied at a Greek school for a minimum of six years.

The Council of State's decision could mean that some of those who were granted Greek citizenship in the last three years will lose their rights. It is not clear if the ruling will affect the outcome of local elections in 2010. Greece had stopped granting citizenship under Ragousis criteria law in December, in anticipation of the court ruling being made public. The decision irked coalition partners PASOK and Democratic Left.

Deputy Interior Minister Haralambos Athanassiou said last month that the law would be replaced with legislation that would require migrants to show a "genuine bond" with Greece and prove they had assimilated into Greek culture.

Parliament's Lagarde list inquiry to ask for prosecutor's help

The lawmakers on the committee investigating former Finance Minister Giorgos Papaconstantinou in connection to claims he doctored the Lagarde list of Greeks with deposits at a bank in Switzerland are to enlist the help of a prosecutor to question witnesses. The MPs are to turn to a first instance prosecutor after it emerged that 43 people would have to be questioned so that the committee can establish which of the civil servants who worked with Papaconstantinou at the Finance Ministry had access to the CD containing the names of more than 2,000 Greeks with savings at the Geneva branch of HSBC. Committee members on Tuesday discussed the possibility of their sessions being televised but this appears unlikely as it would require a change in parliamentary regulations.

MPs' panel votes to lift immunity of far-right deputy

Parliament's ethics committee on Tuesday voted in favor of lifting Golden Dawn MP Ilias Kasidiaris's immunity for prosecution in connection to an incident last year when he attacked two lawmakers on live television. During the next plenary session the House will vote on whether Kasidiaris should be tried for throwing water at SYRIZA deputy Rena Dourou and slapping Communist Party lawmaker Liana Kanelli during a morning talk show on ANT1. The incident occurred on June 7 in the buildup to national elections and catapulted the far-right politician to international notoriety. Kasidiaris, also the party spokesman, disappeared after the incident to avoid arrest.



Fewer glasses being raised

A Hellastat study has shown that while the decline in turnover amounted to 20 percent year-on-year in 2010, the drop is estimated to have been even bigger in 2011.

Data from the Hellenic Association of Drinks Distributors (ENEAP) indicate that consumption of alcoholic drinks dropped from 107,600 hectoliters in the first half of 2009 to about 56,000 hectoliters in the same period in 2012, meaning it shrank by almost half within just three years. From 2009 to date the special consumption tax on drinks containing alcohol has soared by 125 percent, amounting now to 25.50 euros per liter, while the industry is also due to an increase in smuggling from neighboring countries.

