



Coalition split over plans to change law governing strikes

A report that the government is considering making changes to labor regulations that would make it more difficult for unions to call strikes has threatened unity in the coalition government.

Two of the three coalition partners, PASOK and Democratic Left, voiced objections following a report in Sunday's To Vima newspaper that suggested Labor Minister Yiannis Vrotsis of New Democracy wants

to make changes that would require strikes to need the support of the majority of union members, while giving management the right to enforce a lockout if employees do not return to work.

"Mr Vrotsis and other ministers who are New Democracy members need to understand that they are not promoting their party's policies but the program of a coalition government," said PASOK

spokesperson Fofi Gennimata.

"There has been no understanding regarding changes to the law and we are against any such discussion."

Democratic Left's Dimitris Chatzisosokratis also stressed that his party had not consented to any change in the law regarding industrial action. SYRIZA condemned the government for considering changes that it labelled as being against workers' interests.

ECB's Asmussen sees Cyprus bailout by end of March

European Central Bank executive board member Joerg Asmussen believes an aid package for Cyprus will be ready by the end of next month, he told the German business daily Handelsblatt in an interview published on Monday.

"I expect the aid program for Cyprus will be in place by the end of March," he said, adding that politicians in his native Germany should not try to delay a controversial decision on Cyprus until after a German federal election in September.

"There must be no doubt about this: if Cyprus gets no external help, it will slide into default," said Asmussen.

He also warned that failing to help a systemically relevant euro zone country would «put at risk progress made last year on the euro crisis - and that would have high financial and political costs».

Politicians in Germany's governing alliance and the opposition are hesitant about granting Cyprus a 17.5 billion (\$24 billion) bailout because of its status as a tax haven for rich Russians, many of whom use it for money-laundering.

Asmussen said an aid package for Cyprus would be «no one-way street» and the government in Nicosia would have to fulfill «tough conditions» including scaling down its financial sector and introducing more banking transparency.



Hospital director removed after allowing Golden Dawn to check personal nurses

The director of a public hospital in Tripoli, the Peloponnese, has been removed from her position after allowing members of Golden Dawn to enter the premises and check the details of private nurses.

Health Minister Andreas Lykourantzou ordered Eleni Sourouni to leave her post after complaints that members of the far-right party checked whether migrants hired by patients' families to work as personal nurses had residence papers and were issuing receipts for their services.

Sourouni also gave a joint interview to a local TV station with a Golden Dawn representative in which she said she shared the neo-Nazi party's views that personal nurses should not be allowed to work without the necessary papers.

Sourouni also suggested that she would be willing to work with Golden Dawn to ensure to address the issue.



Buying a home is costly affair

Greece ranks ninth among 40 European countries in terms of the total cost of property transactions, according to data released by Global Property Guide.

The acquisition of a used house and its resale after some years would cost the interested investor some 15.47 percent of the house's total value, without even including the capital gains tax imposed by the state at the start of the year, or the property ownership taxes, which include the single property tax.

This constitutes a serious counterincentive for investors from abroad, while contributing to the drop in domestic demand, especially when considering the number of taxes burdening property owners.

Most other countries opt for either charging property buyers through the transaction tax or charging sellers through the capital gains tax. Seldom does one find such high taxation both in buying and in selling a property, the data show.

