



## Anarchist robbers vow to continue until their 'last bullet'

The four anarchists arrested following a bank robbery earlier this month in Velvento, northern Greece, said in a five-page statement on the Indymedia website that they did not fire the weapons they had as they did not want to use their hostage, a local dentist, as a human shield. The four said that they would not have had a problem exchanging fire with the police if their hostage was a bank manager.

The four, aged 20 to 25, repeated allegations that

they were beaten by police upon their arrest and then during custody.

The four said they were determined to fight the establishment "until the last bullet" and "until the last word" and saluted those who "are preparing their attacks now."

The anarchists rejected "sympathy and understanding" from outsiders and rejected "friendly statements from journalists, SYRIZA and other systemic parties."

## No threat to minimum wage, say ministries

The Finance and Labor ministries insisted on Tuesday that Greece has no intention of lowering its minimum wage any further after a government official suggested that at 586 euros gross per month, the lowest salaries in Greece might still be too high.

Speaking at an insurance conference in Athens, Finance Ministry general secretary Giorgos Mergos suggested that Greece should examine its minimum wage, which was reduced by 22 percent

last year under pressure from the troika, in its bid to drive growth.

Labor Minister Yiannis Vrotsis reacted by saying that the minimum wage would remain at its current levels until Greece completes its fiscal adjustment program, which is due to conclude in 2016.

The Finance Ministry also said there was no question of the government tampering with the minimum wage.

The government's swift denials regarding basic pay were not enough to

stop the criticism from opposition parties.

"He has admitted the coalition government's real intentions, which is to reduce wages to the same level as Romania and Bulgaria," said SYRIZA MP Dimitris Stratoulis, who added that a change in legislation last year allows the government to set the minimum wage from April 1, rather than for it to be the product of negotiations between unions and employers.

## Brigadier suspended following violence at basketball final

The security chief at Sunday's Greek basketball cup final after extensive fan violence which led to the game being interrupted for almost half hour has been suspended. After a meeting on Monday presided over by Public Order Minister Nikos Dendias it was decided that Brigadier General Nikos Hasomeris would be suspended and a probe launched into 24 police officers for failure to carry out their duty.

## EU milk program for state schools on the cards



State primary and secondary schools will soon have the opportunity to join a European Union-subsidized program to provide milk to pupils on a daily basis, Kathimerini understands. Schools will be able to lodge their applications to join the program at the beginning of each academic year, according to the Agricultural Development and Food Ministry.

The institutions whose participation is approved will have to keep an account of the quantity and price of the milk procured to ensure there is no profiteering, according to sources. The initiative comes amid reports of undernourished children at schools across the country.

## Greece takes up fiscal multipliers case, eyes concessions from troika

European finance ministers agreed on Tuesday to examine Greece's case regarding a possible adjustment to its fiscal consolidation program after the International Monetary Fund admitted that it had underestimated the impact that austerity would have on the country's economy.

Sources said that Greek Finance Minister Yannis Stourmaras raised the issue regarding the IMF's reassessment of the so-called fiscal multipliers at yesterday's ECOFIN meeting in Brussels and received support from his Portuguese and Irish counterparts. European Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn, however, expressed doubts about the IMF's calculations and stressed the impact that political instability

had on Greece's economy last year.

The finance ministers decided to study the issue in more detail and discuss it again when they meet next. Stourmaras referred to the issue of the IMF underestimating by as much as three times the Greek program's fiscal multiplier following Monday's meeting of eurozone finance ministers. «I will ask the IMF to inform us about the conclusions it draws with regard to Greece from its report about fiscal multipliers,» he said.

IMF managing director Christine Lagarde was at the Eurogroup meeting but did not comment on the subject.

Speaking to Skai TV's New Files program, Klaus Regling, the managing director of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM)

played down the importance of the IMF's miscalculation.

«I do not totally agree with the IMF's analysis on fiscal multipliers,» he said. «We believe there is a problem with the date they present. There were serious reasons for the multipliers being bigger but this is not the main issue.»

Regling said that when the program was drawn up, Greece's situation was so dire that the size of the fiscal multipliers were of secondary importance.

It is thought Greek government officials will take up the issue with troika representatives who are due to visit Athens at the end of this month. Sources said the coalition is hoping to convince Greece's lenders to allow the easing

of value added tax at restaurants and cafes to be reduced from 23 percent to 19. This is seen by Athens as an initial concession following the revelations about fiscal multipliers.

In the meantime, the government faces a pressing task in keeping the National Organization for Healthcare Provision (EOPYY) afloat.

Prime Minister Antonis Samaras held meetings with Health Ministry officials on Tuesday amid fears that a lack of liquidity could prevent EOPYY from functioning. It was agreed that about 750 million euros of the 2 billion the government has at its disposal would be used to settle some of EOPYY's debts, including those to pharmacies and suppliers, by the end of March.