



TSIPRAS: Greece must focus on ending austerity, not just staying in euro

In an appearance likely to have pleased the left wing of his party, SYRIZA leader Alexis Tsipras said on Wednesday that Greece must focus on how to end austerity rather than whether it can stay in the euro.

Returning to ground he had covered before the two general elections last summer, Tsipras repeated his mantra that his preference is for Greece to remain in the eurozone but that it should not aim to do so at all costs.

"The euro is not the focal point," he said. "The dilemma we are facing is not whether we will be in the euro or not but whether we will be in austerity. Our main concern is to avoid austerity.

"Our aim is to save Greece in the euro and not to save the euro no matter what."

Tsipras also called for all the banks being recapitalized by the Hellenic

Financial Stability Facility (HFSF) to be nationalized.

Holding his press conference a day before the arrival of the troika in Athens, the SYRIZA leader accused Prime Minister Antonis Samaras of waiting for the visiting officials with "a bouquet of yeses."

Tsipras insisted that as premier, he would take a tougher negotiating line with the troika, who he referred to as a "white-collar gang," and not succumb to the "blackmail" Cyprus suffered.

"We are working on scenarios around which we will construct our negotiating tactics and examine chances for maneuver," he said, adding that SYRIZA would soon be taking "significant steps" to create alliances to ensure "the balance of power is not totally negative."

Greek track and field federation voices support for wrestling in Olympics

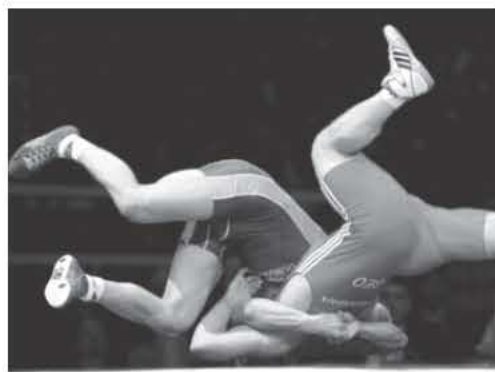
The Greek track and field federation (SEGAS) joined on Tuesday the chorus of opposition to an International Olympic Committee (IOC) executive board recommendation to drop wrestling from the Olympic Games.

SEGAS said it fully supported an official petition from the Greek Wrestling Federation and the University of Thessaly urging the IOC to keep wrestling in the summer Games.

Greek Wrestling Federation president Costas Thanos has condemned the decision as a «sacrilege» of a sport which was practised in the ancient Olympics. The vote prompted an instant wave of protest and anger from the sport's global community with the international federation calling it an aberration.

Wrestling featured in the first modern Games in Athens in 1896 and in every Games since apart from Paris in 1900

However, a few weeks ago the IOC's executive board voted to drop wrestling from



the list of core sports for the 2020 Games, forcing it to join seven other candidate sports seeking one spot in a revamped program.

The executive board will decide in St Petersburg in May which one of the eight candidate sports will be put forward to win the spot left vacant for the 2020 Games.

It will then put its recommendation to a vote of the full IOC session in Buenos Aires in September.



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