

# New FYROM name proposal dissatisfies Greece

The Greek government appeared dissatisfied on Wednesday following the presentation of a new proposal regarding the name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in New York on Tuesday. United Nations special envoy Matthew Nimetz met with negotiators from Athens and Skopje following an invitation he had extended to both sides aiming at finding a mutually acceptable solution to the countries' ongoing name dispute.

According to UN sources, the new proposal is based on a combination of names and includes a geographical qualifier, in accordance with Greek demands. However, the geographical qualifier appeared to precede the term «Republic», as opposed to that of «Macedonia.»

In New York Nimetz invited both countries to study the new proposal carefully and respond to it after the upcoming Greek Orthodox Easter holiday.



## Troika talks stall on civil service demands

Another round of marathon talks between government and troika officials ran late into the night on Wednesday as the two sides struggled to reach a compromise on a contentious plan for layoffs in the civil service.

Before entering a second round of talks on Wednesday, Finance Minister Yannis Stourmaras told reporters that negotiations were unlikely to be resolved by Friday's informal Eurogroup summit in Dublin and would continue next week. "There are lots of issues still open," Stourmaras said, dousing speculation that agreement had been reached in other areas including the possible reduction of a controversial property tax. The minister, who is to travel to Dublin on Thursday, insisted that there was no "blockage" in talks and that there would be "no problem" with the release of further rescue funding, though he gave no indication about when Greece can hope to receive two loan tranches worth 2.8 billion euros and 6 billion euros respectively. Although it is Stourmaras who has been spearheading the government's talks with the troika, the real pressure is on Administrative Reform Minister Antonis Maniatakis, who is overseeing the civil service overhaul. According to a leaked document forming the basis of talks on the civil service, troika

officials have a set of demands. These reportedly include the completion of staffing plans for 275,000 employees, the immediate placing of 8,500 state workers into a mobility scheme, the dismissal of 2,000 civil servants accused of disciplinary offenses, and the approval of a plan for the gradual dismissal of a total of 20,000 state workers by the end of 2014 (of these, 7,500 should leave by the end of this year).

The troika wants the first phase of dismissals to involve 2,000 "oath-breaking" civil servants and has accepted a Greek request for these workers to be replaced by new recruits, Kathimerini understands. Maniatakis claims this is not so straightforward as disciplinary cases must be resolved before staff can be dismissed. Sources said the government was drafting a bill to accelerate the process of the disciplinary hearings though Stourmaras denied this on Wednesday.

The issue appeared to be driving a wedge between conservative New Democracy, which leads the coalition, and the Democratic Left party, to which Maniatakis belongs. Democratic Left MPs claimed that four conservative ministers – holding the Health, Labor, Education and Interior portfolios – were to blame for the delay in civil service reform, not Maniatakis.



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