



doing things. I am not saying that these forces of change do not exist. They do exist but they are either on the periphery, or they cannot force or influence change through their own action or to the extent required.

ND: One of the most worrying things about Greece is the unwillingness rather than inability to carry out even very obvious reform measures. Where does this inertia emanate from?

KK: Greece is a very individualistic society. The concept of collective good, if and when it exists, stops at smaller entities: the family, the local region, the professional or the political association. The prevailing discussion and the conceptual framework are mostly in terms of rights. Rights and responsibilities, either personal or collective, do not go hand in hand. The concept of the national interest, never mind the rhetoric about 'us Greeks', is distorted or is virtually non-existent. People during the years of the distorted boom, from 1974 until recently, were living in parallel worlds, accommodating or being really

indifferent to each other, but not talking or understanding each other. And now there is a multiple crisis in the country, they all feel it one way or another - the weaker sectors of society pay a heavy price, but they keep on shifting the blame to foreigners or to other Greeks, even though they understand that the time of reckoning has come. When it comes to addressing the various dead-ends, the people don't have a more or less common understanding of their situation, and the ruling elites of the country hide by blaming only the politicians, while at the same time are fighting for a better placement in the new socio-economic, the new political and cultural era that is coming in Greece.

ND: They say that two thirds of an economic recovery is psychological, while a third is actual. With the recent Cyprus fiasco, rising unemployment and an ever-increasing brain drain, do you believe Greece can put itself in a positive mindset in the short term and stabilise the drastic descent of living standards?

KK: It will take longer than needed or planned I am afraid. Greece has intrinsic structural and social problems. The general prevailing European economic and political outlook does not help

either. Most people are resigned. Unemployment keeps rising and it will do so for a while. When recovery comes it will be a 'downsized' recovery. Salaries, wages, opportunities, expectations, rights, institutions are all being 'downsized' at the moment and this, unfortunately, won't change in the near or intermediate future.

ND: The last thing that dies with people is hope. Despite present difficulties, Greeks have a reputation of being both resourceful and enterprising. Where do you see the seeds of Greece's recovery emanating from?

KK: Building on your strengths is always the best way to go about it I believe. The cultural heritage, the physical beauty and the weather in Greece should enable tourism to be strengthened even further now that costs are coming down. An energy oriented recovery (solar, wind, gas, petroleum) offers many opportunities. There is an increasing interest in the agricultural and fishing industries. Real estate used to count for almost 20 per cent of the GDP before the crisis. If the Greek state is forced to get its act together by substantially reducing bureaucracy and improving productivity, a lot can happen.



Ο Κώστας Καραμάρκος ήρθε στην Αυστραλία ως μαθητής Λυκείου το 1981. Σπούδασε Ιστορία και Φιλοσοφία των Επιστημών στο Πανεπιστήμιο της Μελβούρνης και εργάστηκε στον κοινοτικό πολυεθνικό ραδιοφωνικό σταθμό της Μελβούρνης 3ZZZ-92.3FM.

Από το 1998 μέχρι το 2013 έζησε στην Ελλάδα.

Για σειρά ετών εργάστηκε ως Ειδικός Σύμβουλος Γενικών Γραμματέων Απόδημου Ελληνισμού στο Υπουργείο των Εξωτερικών, καθώς επίσης και στο Πολιτικό Γραφείο του πρώην Προέδρου του ΠΑΣΟΚ και Πρωθυπουργού της Ελλάδας Γιώργου Παπανδρέου.

Εργάστηκε επίσης ως δημοσιογράφος-αρθρογράφος στις εφημερίδες της Θεσσαλονίκης Μακεδονία, Θεσσαλονίκη και Αγγελιοφόρος, ως αρχισυντάκτης ειδήσεων στο ραδιοφωνικό σταθμό της Θεσσαλονίκης 103FM και ως αρχισυντάκτης της αγγλικής εβδομαδιαίας έκδοσης της ομογενειακής εφημερίδας της Αυστραλίας ΝΕΟΣ ΚΟΣΜΟΣ.

Άρθρα του έχουν φιλοξενηθεί στο περιοδικό Αντί, στην εφημερίδα Εποχή, στο διαδικτυακό τόπο [www.prol.gr](http://www.prol.gr), αλλά και σε άλλα έντυπα της Ελλάδας και της Αυστραλίας.

Στο παρελθόν συμμετείχε ενεργά στα ομογενειακά, μεταναστευτικά και πολιτικά δρώμενα της Μελβούρνης και είναι ένας από τους συνιδρυτές του Ελληνικού Φεστιβάλ Κινηματογράφου αυτής της πόλης.

Το κείμενο πρωτοδημοσιεύτηκε στο προσωπικό ιστολόγιο του Κώστα Καραμάρκου. Περισσότερα κείμενα του Κώστα Καραμάρκου φιλοξενούνται στην ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση: <http://endeaneos.blogspot.com.au>