**Wednesday 28 May 2014**

**Tsipras seeks new 'social deal' with industrialists**

Syriza leader hopes his party can develop working relationship with business world

Syriza would give industry a modern civil service rid of red tape, a stable and transparent tax system, lower energy costs for industry and would take action against corrupt cartels, Alexis Tsipras tells the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises

Greece's industrialists needed to participate in striking "a new social deal for a new Greece", the Syriza leader said on Thursday, in order to put the country back on the path of reconstruction and growth.

Addressing the annual conference of the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV), Alexis Tsipras said it was his hope that his party could "develop a functional institutional relationship with your association".

He said that for his party, growth was more than just a positive number but involved a mix of a complex of policies and interventions that catered for people and their needs.

"We have a difficult road ahead of us and we know full well that we are not going to take over 'scorched earth'. We will take over a country divided and dismantled - politically, economically and socially - and all of us, together, will reunite it. We will lead it to the safe and fertile ground of reconstruction, of growth, of democracy and social justice," he said.

**'Minority government'**

He repeated his warnings that the government should not proceed with significant decisions without first seeking consensus with is party, on the grounds that it now lacked the political and moral legitimacy to do so.

Voters in the European elections had expressed a desire for a change of policy, had shown its disapproval of the current government and had handed Syriza a clear and undisputable victory.

Referring to the prime minister, he said "Samaras asked the Greek people for a vote of confidence and didn't get it." They had not voted for a government reshuffle.

He maintained that the "minority government" clearly lacked the moral and political legitimacy to implement the memorandum at the expense of society.

For these reasons, the present government "did not have a right to ignore the opinion of the main opposition on crucial issues," he stressed, noting the constitution called for procedures involving broader consultation and consensus in appointments to independent authorities and even public utilities.

Earlier this week, Tsipras explicitly called on the government to consult with it on the appointment of a new governor of the central Bank of Greece, following speculation that the current finance minister, Yannis Stournaras, would be given the job.

**Competiveness**

Outlining Syriza's positions on the economy and competitiveness, Tsipras said he rejected the argument that high wages and the "lazy Greeks" were main cause of the country's fiscal problems, blaming these on widespread tax evasion and avoidance, extensive corruption that wasted public funds and led to inflated budgets for public works and procurements, as well as the exorbitant cost of the 2004 Olympic Games and overpriced armaments.

He also blamed the "business profits of a parasitic and unproductive capital, which was never reinvested in the country".

The Syriza leader urged industrialists to reject plans to life of restrictions on mass lay-offs and to further reduce the minimum wage, which were among the memorandum commitments agreed to by the Samaras government.

He said his party's priorities were included restoring the minimum wage to €751 a month and measures for the settlement of non-performing loans to ease businesses and households. It also wanted to give Greek employees a labour relations framework compatible with the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Syriza would give industry a modern civil service rid of red tape, a stable and transparent tax system, lower energy costs for industry and would take action against corrupt cartels. It also has targeted policies for financing enterprises to tackle the lack of liquidity in the real economy, he said.

Referring to his party's plans for a renegotiation of the country's loan agreements, Tsipras said a basic element would be the "external, non-loan financing of businesses", within the framework of demanding a European New Deal or special European funding for Greece.

EnetEnglish, ANA-MPA

The leader of the Democratic Left has tendered his resignation as head of the party in the wake of its disastrous performance in Sunday’s European and local elections.

In a short statement, [Fotis Kouvelis](http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/en/Vouleftes/Viografika-Stoicheia/?MPId=5498cd09-b15a-4311-bb83-61a3f144d8f3), 65, said that the “results of the elections make it my duty to submit my resignation to the central committee and party congress”.

“I have endeavoured, at all times, to uphold and defend the democratic values that underpin our party and to express the collective decisions of Democratic Left,” he said.

Kouvelis' leadership came under open attack after his party came tenth in the European elections, receiving only 68,698 votes or a 1.2% share. The party had hoped that Marilena Koppa, an outgoing MEP elected for Pasok in 2010, would help it gain a seat.

Democratic Left emerged in June 2010, when the then reformist platform within Synaspimos/Syriza resigned en masse and constituted itself as an independent party.

It won 17 MPs in the last election, but three MPs subsequently left the parliamentary group. Originally part of the coalition government formed after the June 2012 elections, it resigned a year later in [protest at the closure of state broadcaster ERT](http://www.enetenglish.gr/1212).

Since Sunday’s elections, there have been calls from within the party for it to contribute to the formation of a new centre-left bloc in Greek politics, alongside Pasok and other groups. However, others believe the party needs to re-align itself with Syriza.

A native of Volos, Kouvelis studied law and political science at the University of Athens. He became a member of the leftwing Lambrakis Youth in the 1960s and was a founding member of the reformist Communist Party of Greece (Interior), on whose central committee he served from 1975 until the party's demise.

In 1997, he was a founding member of the Greek Left party and was elected its general secretary on 25 June 1989, remaining in this position until 1992.

He was justice minister for three months in 1989 in the government of Tzannis Tzannetakis. Kouvelis has been an MP since that November, apart from 1993 to 1996 when Synaspismos failed to make it into parliament.

The two MEPs elected with the Potami party in Sunday’s elections to the European Parliament will sit with same social democratic group as Pasok, the party announced on Tuesday.

Potami, which [sprung to life in earlier this year](http://www.enetenglish.gr/1783), said its two representatives would be collaborating independents within the [Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats (S&D)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Progressive_Alliance_of_Socialists_and_Democrats) group, which is set to be the second largest in the parliament.

It said the decision was reached at a meeting of the 42 candidates its fielded and the party's founder Stavros Theodorakis. The party felt that the S&D group would enhance its opportunities for action at European level and that S&D has pledged to prioritise tackling recession and unemployment in Greece and the European south.

Potami also said that Europe needed a counterweight to conservative forces at this time and that the S&D is in a position to play this role.

The conservative EPP is projected to take 213 seats in the parliament, some 23 more than the S&D.

Before the election, there was speculation that Potami would join the liberal Alde group, led by Guy Verhofstadt.

Although the results are pending official confirmation, George Grammatikakis, professor emeritus of physics of the University of Crete, and Miltos Kyrkos, the son of Leonidas Kyrkos, one of the leading postwar leaders of Greek left, will be Potami’s two MEPs.

EnetEnglish, ANA-MPA

**Tuesday 27 May 2014**

**Potami to sit with Pasok in European parliament**

Newcomer's two MEPs to participate in Socialists & Democrats group

Potami MEPs will be 'collaborating independents' within the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats (S&D) group, which is set to be the second largest in the European parliament

[](http://www.tovima.gr/en/)

**Reuters: “Greece cut pensions by 30% between 2009 and 2013”**

**Greece was the only one of the crisis-plagued countries to carry out drastic reforms in its pension schemes**

Wednesday, May 28, 2014

**Venizelos: “Nobody can take anymore austerity and unemployment”**

**Mr. Venizelos met with President Papoulias to discuss the latest election results and European affairs**

Wednesday, May 28, 2014

According to an [**article**](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/28/us-europe-south-pensions-insight-idUSKBN0E80GM20140528) regarding the pension crisis to hit Southern Europe that was published by Reuters, Greece has slashed pensions by 30% since the introduction of the bailouts.

The authors pointed out how Greece was the only one of the cash-strapped countries to carry out drastic reforms in its insurance and pension systems.

The article explains how in Southern European countries such as Spain, Italy and Greece, the older generations are often expected to help out the younger generations financially, however the financial crisis has disrupted this practice.

The government Vice President **Evangelos Venizelos** met with President **Karolos Papoulias** at 1pm, with the PASOK leader detailing various plans to “reunite the nation”.

Mr. Venizelos explained to the President his proposals and thoughts on restoring national unit and social consensus. The PASOK president explained that the results of the recent elections highlighted the need for maintaining stability in order to exit the crisis.

The two men also discussed recent developments in Europe, with Mr. Venizelos arguing that the European Parliament must be enhanced as the European people demand growth and employment. Mr. Venizelos said that “nobody can stand any more austerity and unemployment”.

Mr. Venizelos concluded that “we are prisoners to neo-liberal politicians because we had to borrow and now the return to normality allows us to enter a pan-European negotiation on different terms”.

Mr. Venizelos announced his meeting with the President on Monday after SYRIZA leader **Alexis Tsipras** [**spoke of early elections**](http://www.tovima.gr/en/article/?aid=599787), following his visit to the Presidential Hall.

According to the PASOK leader, Mr. Tsipras’ call for early election is “unconstitutional” and “distorts the parliamentary regime of Greece and the Constitution, as article 41 clearly stipulates when and how Parliament is dissolved”.

The Prime Minister **Antonis Samaras** is also scheduled to meet with the President on Thursday.

**Government planning free healthcare coverage for the uninsured**

**The Ministries of Labor and Finances are cooperating on the ambitious welfare program**

Wednesday, May 28, 2014

The Ministries of Labor and Finances are working on a plan in order to provide free healthcare to uninsured citizens and protected members of their families up to February 2015.

According to the government’s ambitious welfare scheme, which was revealed in Ta Nea, the free healthcare services will be offered to uninsured citizens based on a set of criteria.

These include self-employed who have officially stopped working, insured farmers and elderly who do not receive any pension and mechanics whose family income did not exceed 12,000 euros in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

**European Elections: Final results and MEP list announced**

**Ministry of Interior announces final results in European elections and list of MEPs**

Wednesday, May 28, 2014

According to the Ministry of Interior SYRIZA came first in the European elections, with New Democracy second and Golden Dawn in third place. The Olive Tree came in a surprising forth place, followed by the River.

The final results are as follows:

•SYRIZA – 26.58%

•New Democracy – 22.71%

•Golden Dawn – 9.40%

•Olive Tree – 8.02%

•The River – 6.60%

•KKE – 6.09%

•ANEL – 3.46%

•LAOS – 2.70%

•Greek European Citizens 1.44%

•DIMAR 1.20%

Based on these results, SYRIZA will have 6 MEPs, New Democracy 5 MEPs, Golden Dawn 3 MEPs, the Olive Tree, The River and KKE will each have two MEPs and ANEL will have 1 MEP in the new European Parliament. The tentative list of Greek MEPs is as follows:

•SYRIZA (6): Manolis Glezos, Sofia Sakorafa, Dimitris Papadimoulis, Konstantina Kouneva, Giorgos Katrougalos, Konstantinos Chrysogonos First Reserve: Nikolaos Chountis

•New Democracy (5): Manolis Kefalogiannis, Maria Spyraki, Thodoris Zagorakis, Eliza Vozemberg, Giorgos Kyrtsos First Reserve: Niki Tzavela

•Golden Dawn (3): Eleftherios Synadinos, Lampros Fountoulis, Giorgos Epitidios First Reserve: Konstantinos Alexandrakis

•Olive Tree (2): Pantelis Kapsis, Nikos Androulakis First Reserve: Eva Kaili

•The River (2): Giorgos Grammatikakis, Miltiades Kyrkos First Reserve: Vasilis Dosoulas

•KKE (2): Konstantinos Papadakis, Sotiris Zarianopoulos First Reserve: Michael Michael

•ANEL (1): Notis Marias First Reserve: Giorgos Romanias

The official results are available via the Ministry of Interior's website: local elections & European elections.

You may also view To Vima's interactive map of the local and European results here

**Cleaners continue fight against suspensions and illegal dismissals**

**Ministry of Finances refuses to comply with court orders as it may put suspension plans at risk**

Tuesday, May 27, 2014

The 397 cleaners who were vindicated by the First Instance Court of Athens after challenging their suspension and subsequent dismissal from the Ministry of Finances are continuing their struggle by staging a protest outside the Ministry.

According to the First Instance Court’s order, the Ministry of Finances must re-hire the cleaners immediately, with the Ministry appealing to the Supreme Court for a suspension of order. The Ministry fears that the court order will set a precedent and jeopardize its controversial suspension and dismissal plans.

Last week, members of the Panhellenic tax office employee federation, which represents the Finance Ministry’s cleaners, filed a complaint over the Minister of Finances’ refusal to implement the court order.