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July 29, 2010

Greece Ready to accept EU-IMF Plan

Two recent opinion polls showed that most Greeks agree that the country's government has to adopt the austerity measures imposed by the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in exchange for bailout funds to avoid national bankruptcy.

The Greek government coffers have no money to meet its obligations largely due to endemic corruption, cumbersome bureaucracy and government largesse. The country is only one week away from defaulting on bonds worth €8.5 billion maturing May 19 for which it does not have the money to pay. Despite widespread violent protests last Wednesday, a majority of the people have begun to realize that they have to bite the bullet if their country is to survive.

In a poll conducted by the Proto Thema newspaper, 54.2% of respondents say they are willing to go along with the austerity measures imposed by the EU-IMF plan rather than see their country go bankrupt. On the other hand, 33.2% of those who responded to the poll feel the government should not accede to getting outside help but should rather go it alone. The poll also shows that 51.4% of the public are reasonable enough to accept that more personal sacrifices have to be made to overcome the economic crisis while only 28% believe that having strikes will solve the problem.

Another poll was conducted by the Sunday edition of the To Vima newspaper. This poll showed similar results in more than half of Greeks (55.2%) feeling that the EU-IMF austerity measures are necessary and they will 'accept' or 'probably accept' them. 44.6% of respondents in this poll do not accept the EU-IMF conditions. However in contrast to the other poll by Proto Thema, this poll discovered 53.2% of Greeks feel that strikes and protests should continue. However, 63.5% of these respondents do not think that the protests would stop the government from adopting the austerity measures.

In the Proto Thema poll, 1,000 people were asked if they thought the Greek workers unions keep their protests at a 'rational' level. A whopping 74% said yes while only 21% replied in the negative. This poll was conducted on behalf of the newspaper by Alco polling agency on May 5 to 7 through telephone calls after violence in Athens by protestors resulted in the deaths of 4 bank employees whose building was set on fire.

On what they thought of their political leaders, the poll showed that 49.4% of the people felt that Prime Minister George Papandreaou has been 'responsible' in his job while 39.9% said he was not. In a related result from the other poll by the To Vima newspaper, 71.3% of Greeks think the country's major political parties should cooperate more to tackle the crisis.

The To Vima survey was conducted by the Kapa Research polling agency interviewing 1,030 respondents on May 6.