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Bid for consensus fails; PM rules out elections



Consensus proved elusive for Greece's political leaders recently despite urgent pressure from the country's European partners. Despite talks lasting well over three hours, they failed to agree on the measures for exiting the dire crisis, following a closely watched council chaired by President of the Republic Karolos Papoulias.

A 20-minute private meeting between Papoulias and Prime Minister George Papandreou followed, after which the prime minister indicated that he would not call snap elections but "proceed alone"

The 3.5-hour meeting between the PM and the opposition leaders ended just after 4 p.m. and the atmosphere was visibly subdued and grim as they emerged.

According to sources within New Democracy party, Samaras declined to offer his party's support of the Memorandum reiterating that it is "incorrect", while again calling for a renegotiation of the bailout package. Moreover, he reportedly also rejected a proposal by Popular Orthodox Rally (LA.O.S) leader George Karatzaferis for the creation of an "ecumenical government". Samaras said the latter would be unconstitutional.

All refused to make public statements after the meeting, except Karatzaferis, who commented bitterly that «unfortunately, some people's 'seat' is above Greece".

"The people did not understand that if Evrybiades hadn't come to an agreement with Themistocles in 480 B.C. that history would have written neither about them nor the date," he added.



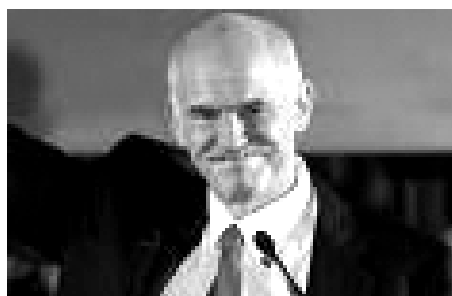
Afghanistan: Suicide blast kills top police commander

General Daud General Daud was attending a meeting with other officials when the bomber struck, reports say. The police commander for northern Afghanistan has been killed in a suicide bomb attack on Takhar province governor's office. Gen Mohammad Daud Daud is one of at least seven people killed in the attack, claimed by the Taliban. Western and Afghan troops are among "a significant number of casualties", a Nato spokesman said.

Gen Daud was former military commander of the Northern Alliance, the Afghan forces who fought the Taliban. Afghanistan has seen a series of attacks in recent months by militants on police and military targets. The latest attack will be seen as significant because it has struck an area of the country's north which has been seen as relatively secure. The BBC's Paul Wood in Kabul says the attack is a propaganda victory for the Taliban and a blow to wider, counter-insurgency efforts.

Differences between main parties marginal, opinion polls show

Greece's two main parties are head to head in voter preferences while their combined share of the vote is less than 50 percent, according to the results of opinion polls appearing in Greek Sunday newspapers.



Main opposition New Democracy was just slightly ahead of PASOK in a Pulse-RC poll published by 'Typos tis Kyriakis', with

each getting 20.5 percent preference, while 56 percent of those asked chose neither.

Roughly three-quarters of those asked (74 percent) believe that Greece should renegotiate the terms of the Memorandum, while 53 percent is against early elections.

A further 76 percent believe that the measures proposed by the government will



not bring the country out of the crisis and 52 percent agreed with Samaras' decision not to back most of the government's measures. Another 53 percent agree with the ND leader's proposals for reducing taxation.

Finally 46 percent believe that the privatisations announced by the government will help the development of the economy.

Based on the ALCO poll, KKE will get 7.9 percent of the vote, LAOS 5.6 percent, SYRIZA 3.2 percent, the Democratic Alliance 2.6 percent, the Democratic Left 2.3 percent, the Ecologists-Greens 2 percent and the Arma Politon 1.1 percent.

At the same time, 43 percent agree with Samaras' refusal to back the PM's proposals and 40 percent disagree.

On the issue of raising taxes to in-



19.5 percent of the overall vote compared with 19 percent for PASOK. Their positions were reversed but the difference even smaller in an ALCO poll published by the Sunday paper 'Proto Thema', with PASOK at 20.7 percent and ND at 20.4 percent.

Following the two leaders in the Pulse-RC poll were the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) with 9 percent, the Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) with 5.5 percent, the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) with 4 percent. The Ecologists-Greens received 2.5 percent and the Democratic Left, Democratic Alliance and Arma Politon, each received 2 percent, which would exclude them from any future Parliament.

A further 3.5 percent of voters expressed a preference for parties other than the above, 23.5 percent said they would cast a blank vote or abstain, while 7.5 percent is undecided.

Current prime minister George Papandreou and main opposition leader Antonis Samaras tied on the question of who was most suitable for prime minister, with



crease public revenues, 82 percent are opposed to paying new taxes and 62 percent fear that the country will default and will be unable to pay wages and pensions.

A further 68 percent wants Finance Minister George Papaconstantinou replaced, while seven in 10 believe that the government's new measures are moving in the wrong direction. More than half, 54 percent, agree with the dismissal of excess public-sector workers and 60 percent agree with the privatisation of public utilities, 61 percent with the abolition of public-sector agencies while 68 percent completely disagrees with the sale of public land and buildings.

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- 1.To applaud the achievements of our ethnic group
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- 3.To promote the preservation of the Greek language
- 4.To encourage all worthy Community causes
- 5 To assist all the Greek-American fraternal, cultural patriotic and religious organizations
- 6.To install Americanism in the Greek-American community
- 7.To advance the just causes of Hellenism.
8. To promote the ideals Greece has given to humanity.

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Cities with the most billionaire residents

When the U.S. economy was riding high for most of the 20th century, it would have been impossible to imagine a foreign city--especially one in a Communist country--with more of the planet's very richest than New York, home of old-money Wall Street. But that indeed is the case. Today Moscow is the city with the most billionaire residents in the world.

The Russian capital boasts 79 billionaires, a stunning increase of 21 in just one year. That more than edges out No. 2 New York, with 59 billionaires, and No. 3 London with 41. Other cities in the top 15 include such rising stars as Mumbai, Taipei, Sao Paolo and Istanbul. Los Angeles manages a tie for No. 8.

The combined fortunes of Moscow's billionaire population top \$375 billion, more privately amassed wealth than in any other city in the world.

Despite New York's relegation to second place, the city remains a favored locale of billionaires, whose collective net worth is \$221 billion. The Big Apple boasts some of the most expensive ZIP codes in the U.S., due in part to the real estate prices paid by billionaires in this city. Indeed, many Moscow residents own secondary homes in New York, including fertilizer and coal magnate Andrey Melnichenko, whose wife recently closed on a \$12.2 million penthouse apartment. Even the world's richest man, Carlos Slim (home: Mexico City), snatched up a \$44 million mansion on Central Park last year.

In the U.S. we stuck strictly to city limits. For example, while a smattering of prominent media barons like Viacom founder Sumner Redstone and T.V. tycoon Haim Saban reside in Beverly Hills, they are not included in the pile of Los Angeles residents since Beverly Hills is its own city (although largely surrounded by Los Angeles).

Here are the world's five top cities for billionaires:



Istanbul, Turkey scores No. 5.

Number of Billionaires: 36

Total combined wealth: \$60.5 billion

Billionaires include: Turkey's richest person, Mehmet Emin Karamahmet, chairman of mobile phone company Turkcell; Turkey's former richest, finance and retail scion, Husnu Ozyegin; and Macedonian-born Sarik Tara, founder of construction giant, ENKA.



Hong Kong scores No. 4.

Number of Billionaires: 40

Total combined wealth: \$176.8 billion

Billionaires include: Greater China's richest person, Hutchison Whampoa chairman Li Ka-shing; the Kwok family, the brothers behind Hong Kong's largest real estate developer, SHKP; and Angela Leong, the controversial heiress of Stanley Ho's casino



empire.



London scores No. 3.

Number of Billionaires: 41

Total combined wealth: \$164.3 billion

Billionaires include: Indian citizen Lakshmi Mittal, the world's sixth-richest man thanks to steel-maker ArcelorMittal; daredevil Virgin founder Richard Branson; and Philip & Christina Green, the married couple behind clothing company Topshop.



New York City scores No. 2.

Number of Billionaires: 59

Total combined wealth: \$220.8 billion

Billionaires include: media mogul and current mayor Michael Bloomberg; fashion designer Ralph Lauren; and real estate developer-turned-reality T.V. celebrity Donald Trump.



Moscow scores No. 1.

Number of Billionaires: 79

Total combined wealth: \$375.3 billion

Billionaires include: Russia's richest man, steel magnate Vladmimir Lisin; commodities investor and Chelsea soccer team owner Roman Abramovich; and venture capitalist and Facebook investor Yuri Milner.

Names You Need To Know: Aurora Algae

The whole concept of creating a company built around the astounding properties of a variety of green algae called nannochloropsis smacks uncomfortably of the 1973 Charlton Heston flick Soylent Green, in which the namesake food product at the heart of the story is supposedly made from plankton but is actually made from—spoiler alert!—people.

But get over the ick factor: Aurora Algae has the potential to produce a wide range of food, pharma and fuel products from giant ponds of algae.

The particular strain on which Aurora focuses grows especially well in hot, dry climates; to help it grow the company infuses saltwater algae ponds with healthy doses of carbon dioxide, which the algae slurp up. If you want to build a -production-scale set of algae ponds, you're going to need a substantial tract of desert land close to the ocean in a place with a ready supply of CO2. Aurora's solution: Set up an outpost in Karratha, a desert town in Western Australia, which happens to be home base for the giant North West Shelf natural gas project. A key by-product of gas production is copious carbon dioxide. Typically simply vented into the at-

(continued p.3)

Names You Need To Know: Aurora Algae

(continud from p.2)
mosphere, Aurora gets it for free.
Okay, what do you do with the stuff? Plenty.
The original target of the trio of UC Berkeley



grads who started the company was to find a cheap biofuel that could be converted to diesel, plastics and other products. But the company has discovered that its algae can be processed into other useful things: feed for fish farms, protein powders for food supplements and omega-3 fatty

acids used in a variety of supplements and pharma products. Turns out nannochloropsis has almost as many uses as duct tape.

And you can grow it in a hurry. Aurora's version of -nannochloropsis matures in two days, twice the rate of the wild type, explains Leslie van der Meulen, the company's vice president for business development. There is also no leftover biomass, as everything is converted into one product or another. He also notes that using land for growing algae produces 40 times as much protein per acre as growing soybeans, while consuming about 1% of the amount of fresh water needed to grow soy.

Aurora, which so far has raised about \$50 million in venture capital, led by Oak Investment Partners, launched a pilot project with six 1-acre ponds in early May; eventually the company expects to expand the facility to 250 acres. Yummy.

2011 now deadliest year for tornadoes since 1950

The numbers look increasingly bleak for families hoping for the best after a monster tornado that devastated the town of Joplin, as the city has raised the death toll to at least 142 and state officials say 100 people are still missing.

Thousands more people far beyond



Joplin had been waiting for good news about a teen believed to have been ejected or sucked from his vehicle on the way home from graduation. Several social-networking efforts specifically focused on finding information about Will Norton. But his family says he, too, is among the dead — found in a pond near where his truck was located.

"At least we know that he wasn't out there suffering," his aunt Tracey Presslor said, holding a framed portrait of her 18-year-old nephew at a news conference. "Knowing that he was gone right away was really a blessing for us."

The tornado — an EF-5 packing 200 mph winds — was the deadliest since 1950. More than 900 people were injured. Tallying and identifying the dead and the missing has proven a complex, delicate and sometimes confusing exercise for both authorities and loved ones. The death toll rose by three to at least 142. That makes this the deadliest year for tornadoes since 1950, based on an assessment of figures from the National Weather Service. The tornado death toll for 2011 is now 523. Until now, the highest recorded death toll in a single year was 519 in 1953. There were deadlier storms before 1950, but those counts were based on estimates and not on precise figures.

The state has been working to pare down the list of people missing and unaccounted for in the wake of the deadliest single U.S. twister in more than six decades.

Missouri officials said recently that the

number of people unaccounted for stands at 100. The Missouri Department of Public Safety said that within that number, nine people have been reported dead by their families, but state officials are working to confirm those. A temporary morgue for tornado victims has 142 human remains, deputy director Andrea Spillars said earlier Saturday, but that includes partial remains.

"Some of those remains may be the same person," she said. Newton County coroner Mark Bridges said most, if not all, of the people brought to the temporary morgue could be identified this weekend. He described officials there as "making real good progress."

Asked about calls to open the morgue to all families of the missing, Bridges said doing so would be impractical. He described the site as a number of dark, refrigerated trailers holding body bags.



"There's no place to let them into," he said.

There have been 1,333 preliminary tornado reports in the U.S. through May 27, officials said, while the average number of confirmed tornadoes in a single year during the past decade has been 1,274.

Family members had previously told The Associated Press that Norton and his father were still on the road when the storm hit. Mark Norton urged his son to pull over, but the teen's Hummer H3 flipped several times, throwing the young man from the vehicle, likely through the sunroof.

Mark Norton remains in the hospital and is "having a really tough time" after being told his son's body was found, Presslor said.

Presslor thanked the thousands of people who posted good wishes for Norton on Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites, and thanked all those who helped look for him.

Greece to start selling domestic assets to ease debts

The Greek government has said it will begin to sell stakes in a number of domestic corporations "immediately" in order to raise cash to help reduce its massive debts.

These include stakes in the telecoms firm OTE, state-owned Postbank and the ports of Athens and Thessaloniki.

Earlier, European stock markets fell, partly due to continuing fears about a possible debt restructuring in Greece.

Weak eurozone economic data also hit investor sentiment.



"The cabinet decided to proceed immediately with the sale of stakes in OTE, the Postbank, the Athens and Thessaloniki ports and the Thessaloniki water company in order to front-load its ambitious privatisation programme," said Greek Finance Minister George Papaconstantinou.

"To accelerate the process, the creation of a sovereign wealth fund composed of privatisation and real-estate assets was also decided."

He added that the government was "determined to continue and accelerate" plans to cut the country's debt.

We've learned that there isn't going to be a 'soft restructuring' of Greek debt any time soon - probably ever. It will be 'hard' or it will not happen at all "

A local election defeat for Spain's government and a negative credit-rating outlook for Italy also contributed to the falls.

Meanwhile, the euro dropped two cents against the dollar, briefly falling below \$1.40, bringing its total fall since Friday to over three cents.

Against the Swiss franc - seen as a haven from the debt crisis - the euro hit a new all-time low of 1.2324 francs in morning trading, before recovering.

Borrowing costs for heavily indebted governments also rose further, with Italy and Spain suffering.

Sentient was not helped by the latest purchasing managers index (PMI) for the eurozone - a survey of business expansion plans - which indicated that growth in France and Germany slowed significantly this month.

"The eurozone PMI continued to show robust expansion, but the rate of increase showed the sharpest slowing since just after the collapse of Lehman's in late-2008," said Chris Williamson, chief economist at Markit, the research firm that produces the index.

He pointed to a concurrent fall in service-sector business confidence to its weakest since July 2009 as a sign that the slowdown may prove more than a temporary blip.

Any such economic slowdown will intensify market concerns about whether some

eurozone governments - chief among them Greece - will ever be able to pay off their debts.

'Enormous problem'

Meanwhile, in an interview for German weekly der Spiegel, the Luxembourg Prime Minister and head of the eurogroup, Jean-Claude Juncker, reiterated his idea that Greece could be granted a "soft restructuring" or debt "reprofiling", but only if its government met demanding policy targets.

Mr Juncker explained that the restructuring would involve a delay in repayments and a cut in interest payments, to be agreed with the country's lenders.

However, he said it would need to be done in a way that would not be deemed a default by the international rating agencies, which would cause an "enormous problem" for Europe's banks, who would then have to recognise billions of losses on their balance sheets.

Mr Juncker also confirmed that any restructuring - and any additional rescue loans - would only be forthcoming if Greece stepped up privatisations and painful austerity measures.

The Greek cabinet met on Monday to discuss a doubling of budget cuts this year to 6bn euros, including public pay cuts, civil-service redundancies and an increase in value-added tax.

The government also intends to meet opposition leaders later in the week to hammer out a four-year cross-party austerity plan demanded by Brussels.

Meanwhile, Greece's cost of borrowing in bond markets has continued to rise steadily, as expectations of an eventual default rise.

However, other countries also saw their borrowing costs rise, as markets remain concerned that a Greek default could trigger a broader meltdown.

Spain's 10-year borrowing cost increased to 5.6% in early trading, its highest level since January, but later relented to 5.5%.

The Spanish minority Socialist government suffered its worst defeat on record at local elections held over the weekend.

Analysts say that with control of some heavily indebted regional governments changing hands, there are fears that hidden financial problems may be unearthed by the incoming administrations.

The result follows a week of protests by tens of thousands of mostly young people, expressing their anger over austerity measures and the country's high unemployment rate, including a youth unemployment rate of 45%.

Meanwhile, rating agency Standard & Poor's lowered its outlook on Italy's debts to negative, indicating future downgrades are more likely. Rival agency Fitch also put Belgium's debt on a negative outlook.

Italy's government is said to be planning to bring forward 35bn-40bn euros (£30bn-£35bn; \$49bn-\$56bn) of austerity measures to this June in response.



Seville: Best for flamenco Seville is the soul of Andalucía, and flamenco is its soundtrack. This beguiling city, southern Spain's largest, is Andalucía at once writ large and in microcosm: grand tapestries in stone - monuments to Spain's Islamic and imperial Christian past - watch over intimate squares, all dressed in white

THE WORLD OF TRAVEL



In the remote countryside of central Vietnam, archaeologists discovered the "longest monument in Southeast Asia", a wall that winds through pristine, rain-forested mountains and hill tribe villages, yet still unspoiled by the imminent arrival of busloads of tourists.

Earlier this year, Vietnam's most important archaeological discovery in a century was announced by Dr Andrew Hardy, head of the Hanoi branch of École française d'Extrême-Orient (French School of Asian Studies) and Dr Nguyen Tien Dong, from the Institute of Archaeology (Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences). The rampart stretches 127.4 km from northern Quang Ngai Province, south into the province of Binh Dinh, and is the greatest engineering feat of the Nguyen Dynasty.

The Long Wall of Quang Ngai, as it is now known, is made of alternating sections of stone and earth, is believed to have been built in 1819 as a cooperative effort between the Vietnamese and H're ethnic minority. Much like Hadrian's Wall in the United Kingdom, Quang Ngai's wall was also built along an ancient, pre-existing road, and not only provided security but also regulated trade along the route. Most of the wall is still in relatively good condition, attaining heights up 4 metres.



In 2014, Vietnam plans to unveil a \$2 billion amusement park just outside Ho Chi Minh City called Happyland. With palatial buildings, roller coasters, themed attractions and a 1,000-room five-star hotel, the massive project -- which has attracted investment from Joe Jackson, father of the late Michael Jackson -- hopes to attract 14 million people annually. As we looked over the video of the theme park's plans and projected images, we noticed major similarities between Happyland and another happy place -- one that some have called "the happiest place on earth" since Walt Disney coined the phrase in 1955. In particular, we think Happyland looks a whole lot like Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom theme park in Orlando, Florida. Here's our slideshow of Happyland renderings alongside what we believe is their Magic Kingdom counterparts. Check it out and leave your thoughts on our Facebook page.



The Olympic torch may have left Vancouver more than a year ago, but the 2010 Winter Olympic Games did not leave the Canadian city untouched. The 729 million Canadian dollars that Vancouver spent preparing for the Olympics will continue to benefit visitors for years to come.

The most buzzed-about Olympic remnant is the Richmond Oval, which opened for public use in August and housed the Olympic speed-skating events just over a year ago. Home to two ice rinks, 18 badminton courts and 10 regulation-size basketball courts, the complex is one of the only legacy buildings - Olympic facilities built specifically to remain after the Games end - that hosted competition. The other, Hillcrest Park, was used as a curling competition facility and has since been converted into a state-of-the-art aquatic centre. Trout Lake Ice Rink, used for Olympic athlete training last year, was also converted into a regulation-size NHL hockey rink. Should visitors want to stop by the Richmond Oval, located 14 km outside Vancouver, they can take advantage of the newly expanded, Olympics-inspired Canada Line light-rail transit route, which connects Richmond to downtown Vancouver and the airport.

Since many of the events took place on Whistler's slopes, Olympic infrastructure improvements also made quick day-trips to Whistler feasible. The Sea-to-Sky Parkway, the stretch of Highway 99 that connects Vancouver to Whistler, got a \$600-million face lift to ease Olympic transportation between the two sites.



At 80, the Empire State Building strikes back. In New York's Empire State Building, see from an observation deck at Rockefeller Plaza. (BBC)

It is so obvious, so cliché and so visible that visiting the Empire State Building gets, ironically, overlooked. Like the single slice meal, blue Yankee cap and yellow cab, the skyscraper is in the city's DNA, so familiar you feel as if you have been there even if you have never stepped foot on the observation deck. Or maybe you have written it off as an over-priced tourist trap, which is not entirely off-base. But as the gray monolith turns 80 years old on May 1, it is worth giving it a second — or first — try.

The Empire State Building inspires the imagination, its views are the highest and best in the city, its history revelatory, and makeovers to the lobby and observatories deserve a fresh look. All you need to do is avoid the headaches and traps of a visit so that nothing detracts from the marvel.



A view of the Palace of Congress, the Parliament building in Buenos Aires, Argentina. (BBC).

The hype about Buenos Aires is well deserved. The steak is out of this world, tango classes are everywhere, football matches are intense and the wine is delicious. But its magnetism extends beyond the cliché. Give Buenos Aires some time and you'll come to understand the collision of old-fashioned sensibility and contemporary revolution that makes the city tick. See San Telmo is one of Buenos Aires' most attractive and historically rich barrios (neighbourhoods), with cobbled streets and colonial houses. The heart of the area is Plaza Dorrego, which hosts an antiques market on Sunday. Also worth a visit is Mercado San Telmo, the old fruit and vegetable market.



High-rise buildings are seen at the Pudong New Development Zone in Shanghai, China. In an ancient land five millennia old, Shanghai feels like it was born yesterday. There are few age-old temples and monuments here, instead you'll discover an extreme blend of art deco architecture, high-speed Maglevs, skyrocketing buildings, European colonial neighbourhoods and charming 19th-century alleys.

The Shanghai Museum resembles an ancient Chinese ding vessel. See fantastic bronze and ceramic treasures as well as beautiful paintings and Chinese calligraphy. The audioguide is well worth the extra £4 (00 86 21 6372 3500; shanghaimuseum.net/en; 201 Renmin Ave; 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-8pm Sat; free).

Symbolic of old Shanghai, the Bund was the city's Wall St, a place of fortunes made and lost. The area remains at the heart of the city. Amble along the waterfront and compare the bones of the past with the fast emerging geometry of Pudong's skyline across the Huangpu river. The French Concession is a residential, retail, restaurant and bar district with tree-lined streets. It spreads from Huangpu District, through Luwan and Xuhui and slices of Changning and Jing'an Districts. It's excellent for random exploration, on foot or by bike.

With carp-filled pools, pavilions and whispering bamboo, the Yuyuan Gardens are popular at weekends. A fine example of Ming landscaping, the gardens come into bloom in spring. The heavy petalled Magnolia grandiflora – Shanghai's flower – is particularly pretty (00 86 21 6326 0830; Yuyuan; 8.30am-5.30pm; £3).



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To Reverse the Loss of Greece's Forests

Someday our descendants will see the rich, lush mountains of Greece, and that will be our living legacy to them. Make the dream a reality... "Plant Your Roots in Greece"

Since ancient times—even more so now—the value of trees to Greece has been immeasurable and their loss has been heartbreaking. "Plant Your Roots in Greece" offers you a unique opportunity to become an integral part of this splendor now and forever.

Today the enemy of Greece's forests is not warfare but forest fires which, with subsequent erosion, create a vicious cycle of forest and loss soil. Where mountains were once lush, they are now barren, the rich soil washed away, the once plentiful flora and fauna gone. The Greek government has recognized the critical problems and is committing major resources to this reforestation effort.

The Plant Your Roots in Greece Foundation

The program will be a magnitude unmatched since the Greek American community came to Greece's assistance after the devastation of World War II and the subsequent Civil War. The program centers around the ability of anyone, of Greek descent or not, or anyone who is concerned and wishes to restore Greece's natural splendor, to plant a tree in Greece in their name or in the name of a loved one or friend.

Be a Part of History

At a minimum donation of \$20 for two trees, including an inscribed certificate, the program is affordable to all. It is expected that millions of trees can be planted through this program and there will be vast forests in the name of individuals, associations and corporations as a manifestation of their love for Greece.

In addition to tree planting, an aggressive program of fire-fighting has been instituted and in 1999, for the first time in millennia, reforestation exceeded destruction from fires.

The first forest was planted in Sounion in 1999 with the help of the Federation of ENOSIS and was named the "Forest of Illinois." Since then, several plantings have taken place in the area of Sounion. Trees have also been planted on the island of Samos, Samothrace, at Ancient Olympia, Vouliagmeni, Kalavryta, Arcadia, Delphi, Maniaki, Thraki, Crete, Messinia, Serres, Arta, Dion Pierias, Penteli and Patras.

Matching Funds from the European Community

It is the single largest environmental program in the European Union for Greece and will be one of the most massive efforts in history involving the planting and cultivation of seedlings.

The government of Greece has also arranged with the European Union for the EU to match on a one-to-one basis the dollars generated through the Plant Your Roots program. Thus, for every tree we plant, the EU will match funds for four additional trees.

ORDER FORM

YES, I will join the "Plant Your Roots in Greece Program" to reforest the Greek mountains and countryside.

- ☐ \$20 - 2 Trees (Minimum donation)
- ☐ \$50 - 5 Trees
- ☐ \$100 - 10 Trees
- ☐ \$1,000 - A "Grove" of 100 Trees
- ☐ \$5,000 - A "Glen" of 500 Trees
- ☐ \$10,000 and more as donation

Enclosed is my check for \$_____ for _____ trees

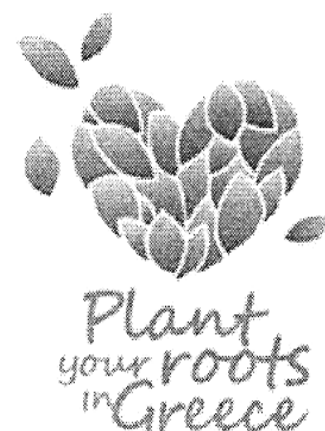
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The trees will be planted in honor of or memory of anyone you designate. All gifts will be acknowledged with a beautifully inscribed certificate of classic green elegance of the Greek mountains. Please indicate in whose honor or memory the gift is being made and the name and address of the person who should receive the certificate.

Plant Your Roots in Greece Foundation is a not-for-profit, tax exempt organization under the auspices of SAE / USA and HANC, offers contribution opportunities both to those who wish to support primarily victims of fire and those who wish to contribute to reforestation.



NEWS FROM GREECE

Patients cut down on costly visits to doctors

State hospitals stand to miss out on 20 million euros from downturn
The number of people visiting doctors at Greek state hospitals during afternoon hours



that are set aside for private practice has dropped by 30 percent this year, compared to 2010, which could leave the hospitals about 20 million euros short by the end of the year.
Since 2001, state hospital doctors have been allowed to see private patients at public hospitals during the afternoons rather than at their own surgeries. In return, the hospitals get a cut of the doctors' extra earnings.
However, the economic crisis appears to be limiting the number of people willing to pay to see doctors in the afternoons. They received some 14,000 fewer visitors during the first four months of this year than in 2010, which has

led to hospitals earning 15.5 million euros, which is 6 million less than during the same period last year.
It is a further blow to the public healthcare sector, which is struggling due to severe cost-cutting.

Thousands of Greeks putting plan B into action

There's an online forum at www.patriotaki.com, where Greeks from around the world chat and network. Over the past few months, however, conversations have been turning increasingly toward plans to leave Greece.
Thousands of Greeks of every age and from every walk of life are logging on to share ideas and plans or to pose questions about their desire to migrate abroad.
The destinations they have in mind are similar to those of the Greeks who migrated in vast waves back in the 1960s. In Europe, Scandinavian and other Northern European countries seem to hold the greatest allure, especially Sweden, Germany and Belgium, the latter because of hopes for jobs in the European Commission. Australia also appears to be gaining popularity, especially among Greeks hoping to join families that moved out there in the tens of thousands in the 1950s onward.
"Other than the great deal of interest that has been expressed daily since March

2010 in Australia, we have also seen a large number of Australian-born Greeks returning," the general secretary of the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria, Costas Markos, told Kathimerini.
Sensing the urgency of the people's demands, the Greek community has approached the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship to make it easier for Greeks to emigrate there. Within the next few days, a delegation of representatives for the Greek community is expected to meet with Immigration Minister Chris Bowen to present him with an appeal to streamline immigration applications from Greeks.
There are those, of course, who have made it to Australia already. Kathimerini spoke via Skype to 35-year-old Giorgos from Amfissa. "I moved here permanently with my wife and daughter in December," he said, "and for the time being I am attending seminars at the Australian Manpower Services as I look for a job."
He explains how for two or three years before he decided to settle in Australia, he had been looking for a plan B as his prospects in Greece diminished by the day. Today, this three-member family is enjoying a pleasant life in the city of Victoria. "Our fortnightly income is more than I got in Greece for a month," he said. "Here, the state is an ally of the citizen."

Giorgos explained how in Australia state assistance is constant, fluctuating depending on income. "When you are unemployed you get full benefits, and once you get a job these are reduced. But this kind of financial assistance is something you can always rely on," he said, adding that he has also been very impressed by the Australian healthcare system.
"My daughter broke her leg and we took her to a provincial public hospital, where the care she received was even better than that at a private Greek hospital," he recounted. "They played cartoons for her so that she wouldn't get scared and when we were in the waiting lounge, a doctor asked us if we'd like a cup of coffee!"
Giorgos's wife is an Australian citizen and this made the process much easier than it is for most. Throughout the process of getting together the paperwork and planning the move, Giorgos posted his experiences and helpful tips on Patriotaki.com. "Within a month I had 6,000-8,000 readers. I was being asked for information even from people who were illiterate," he said.
Panagiotis, a 44-year-old Australian-born Greek who moved to Adelaide, said that he couldn't "stand the uncertainty anymore. I moved here and got a job within two months," he told Kathimerini. He still keeps in touch with his former colleagues at a large private company in Greece, who tell him all about the cutbacks in salaries and staff firings.
"There's no point in moving to another country in the European Union, because the crisis has affected all the member states. The IMF has ranked Australia the seventh-richest country in the world," he said.
For the time being, Panagiotis's children are attending the six-month New Arrivals Program, which helps immigrants learn English and adapt to Australian society.
Interest in European countries has also skyrocketed since 2010, especially from young people, according to data from Europass, an online professional networking service. In 2010, 46,399 residents of Greece and 53,043 Greeks living abroad posted their CVs on the site. In the first four months of 2011, the postings stood at 27,288 and 29,692 respectively, indicating that interest is increasing steadily.
In contrast to previous migration waves, today it is not just doctors and engineers who have good chances of finding work abroad, as there is a good deal of demand in Europe for chefs and patissieres, and especially for professionals in jobs such as marble cutting, carpentry and welding. In fact, knowing how to cook and how a professional kitchen works are among the most sought-after qualities in a job applicant. Cooks the are second most in demand, after mechanics, with 689 businesses posting ads for chefs on Europass.
10 pct of OTE to DT
The Greek government is speeding up procedures to implement an eagerly awaited privatisation programme. Finance Minister George Papaconstantinou on Thursday, in a letter sent to Deutsche Telekom's management, launched procedures to sell an additional stake of Hellenic Telecommunications Organization to the German operator.
Under the existing agreement, the Greek government has the right to ask the German group to proceed with the purchase of an additional 10 pct stake in OTE. Deutsche Telekom currently owns a 30 pct equity stake in OTE, with the Greek government owning a 16 pct while another 4.0 pct is owned by Greek pension funds.
Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper held talks with Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou, paid a visit to the Greek Parliament and attended a roundtable between Greek and Canadian business delegations in Athens on Saturday, during the first day of a two-day official visit to Greece. Papandreou and the Canadian prime minister, who arrived in Greece after attending the G8 summit in Deauville, discussed bilateral relations and global economic developments, including those in the Eurozone and the economic difficulties faced by Greece.



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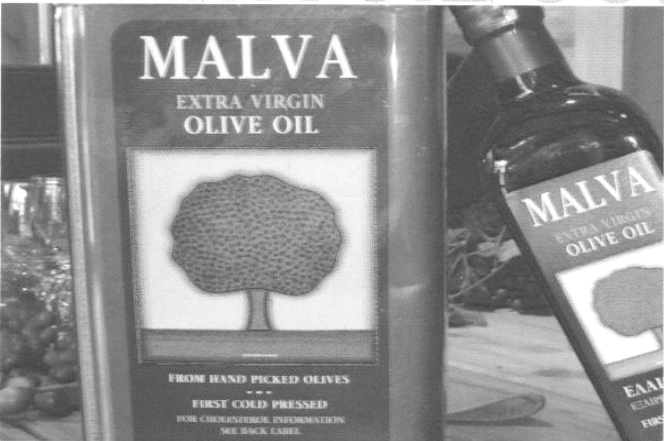
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Greek astrophysicist explains Messenger mission to Mercury



Stamatis Krimizis continues to explore the universe with the excitement of a child gazing at the stars, even though he has already enjoyed a lengthy and distinguished career.

The latest achievement by the Chios-born astrophysicist and his associates is NASA's Messenger mission to Mercury, which has just celebrated two months in orbit around the planet nearest to the sun.

The 55-million-kilometer journey from Earth to Mercury took the Messenger spacecraft about six-and-a-half years, but achieving this journey required some pioneering technology, according to Krimizis.

"Mercury is very close to the sun. Its surface temperature is 426 degrees Celsius, while the magnitude of the solar radiation is 11 times higher than it is on Earth. We designed a special sun shade, under which the spacecraft can be safe at a temperature of 30 degrees Celsius.

The design of the Messenger space probe and of the mission, as well as its overall supervision, is a project being run by the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, of which Professor Krimizis is the director. The temperature was not the only challenge the team faced, as the spacecraft also had to be very light and still be able to carry the fuel needed to make its journey. To this end, the team built a titanium gas tank and when the 1,100-kilogram Messenger took off, 600 kg of that weight was fuel.

So far, Messenger has successfully orbited Mercury 100 times. It can descend to a distance of 500 kilometers from the planet's surface, but it

cannot stay there for too long due to the risk of overheating.

"We activate the instruments when Messenger is near the surface," explained Krimizis. "It takes a lot of skill to navigate it, because if it becomes exposed to the solar radiation it will last just 20 minutes."

What has the exploratory spacecraft discovered so far?

"First of all," said Krimizis, "we discovered the biggest basin [or crater] in our solar system, with a diameter of 1,550 kilometers. We have also recorded signs of older volcanic activity, such as solidified lava. Mercury has a low-pressure atmosphere, which means it is subject to harsh solar wind, as well as a strong magnetic field, though this is something we already knew."

In spite of this great achievement, Krimizis isn't willing to rest on his laurels. "Our next project concerns an approach to the sun and its study from as close as possible," he revealed. "This is a massive technological challenge as the temperatures are huge. But as I've already explored eight planets in our solar system, I have now set my sights on the sun."

What drew this boy from Vrontados on the island of Chios to pursue studies in astrophysics at the universities of Minnesota and Iowa in the USA and to become part of the avant-garde of space exploration? "Exploring the unknown, producing new knowledge and answering some of the most fundamental questions, like how the solar system was formed, where we came from and where we are going," he said.

Krimizis is also a member of the Athens Academy, the Greek National Council of Research and Technology, and president of the International Academy of Astronautics.

Santos brings in new blood as well as Dallas star

Stefanos Athanasiadis and Stefanos Kotsolis were the new call-ups to the national squad for the games against Malta and Ecuador in early June, but the real surprise



came in the announcement of the inclusion of Greek-American George John in the squad for prematch training ahead of the friendly against Ecuador in New York.

The second-generation Greek central defender will take part in the national team's training session in New York but will not join the on-pitch action in the June 7 match against Ecuador.

John, 24, issued a statement through his agent, Ted Philipakos, suggesting that «it is a tremendous honor to be invited to join the Greek national team. I am looking forward to meeting the team in New York. As a new player, I need to use that time to get to know the staff and the players.»

The FC Dallas player is also eligible to represent the United States. He had been invited to a Team USA training camp last January but was unable to attend due to injury.

The injuries to goalkeepers Costas Chalkias and Alexandros Tzorvas as well as the long-term absence of Michalis Sifakis have forced Greece coach Fernando Santos to bring in former Cardiff and Coventry keeper Dimi Konstantopoulos, as well as Panathinaikos substitute goalie Kotsolis.

There are also injury worries in attack for the Greece coach ahead of the Euro 2012 qualifier against Malta at home, as Giorgos Samaras and Nikos Liberopoulos will have to sit the June 4 match out, which led Santos to invite uncapped PAOK striker Athanasiadis.

In defense Sokratis Papastathopoulos and Giorgos Tzavellas have also been sidelined due to their suspension.

The full squad Santos has called up consists of the following players:

Goalkeepers: Dimi Konstantopoulos (Kerkyra), Stefanos Kotsolis (Panathinaikos)

Defenders: Loukas Vintra, Nikos Spyropoulos (both Panathinaikos), Avraam Papadopoulos, Vassilis Torosidis (both Olympiakos), Vangelis Moras (Bologna), Kyriakos Papadopoulos (Schalke)

Midfielders: Costas Katsouranis, Giorgos Karagounis, Sotiris Ninis, Lazaros Christodouloupoulos (all Panathinaikos), Alexandros Tziolis (Santander), Pantelis Kafes (AEK), Giorgos Fotakis (PAOK), Panayiotis Kone (Brescia), Yiannis Fetfatzidis (Olympiakos)

Forwards: Dimitris Salpigidis, Stefanos Athanasiadis (both PAOK), Costas Mitroglou (Olympiakos)

Egypt eases blockade at Gaza's Rafah borde

Gazans will want to see how much change the open crossing will bring.

Egypt has relaxed restrictions at its border with the Gaza Strip, allowing many Palestinians to cross freely for the first time in four years. Women, children and men over 40 are now allowed to pass freely. Men aged between 18 and 40 will still require a permit, and trade is prohibited.

The move - strongly opposed by Israel - comes some three months after Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak lost power. Egypt and Israel closed borders with Gaza when Hamas seized power in 2007.

Israel retains concerns that weapons will be imported into Gaza through the Egyptian frontier, but Egypt insists it will conduct thorough searches of all those crossing. People leaving Gaza will also need to be carrying Palestinian ID cards, which are issued by Israel.

The decision to ease the border controls is symbolically important. It is another sign that the new leadership in Egypt is shifting the dynamics of the Middle East. Israel has criticised the border move, saying it raised security concerns.

But with elections coming up in Egypt, our correspondent says the change in policy is likely to be popular with a public sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.

Egypt says the crossing will now be open from 0900 to 2100 every day except Fridays and holidays. Although the border will still be closed for trade, the opening of the Rafah crossing is expected to provide a major economic boost to Gaza.

In the departure hall of the Rafah crossing on the Gaza side hundreds of Palestinians gathered from early morning. Many carried huge suitcases, as if they might be going for some time.

"This makes us feel a little bit less trapped," one man told me. He was planning to visit his son in Cairo. He has not left the tiny Gaza strip for

four years.

Up until today only 300 Palestinians have been allowed to cross into Egypt each day. Egypt's easing should see that number rise considerably. Palestinians will wait to see how much real change it makes but most here seemed genuinely happy that getting out of Gaza has become at least a little bit easier.

Up to 400 Palestinians were estimated to have gathered at the crossing as it opened on Saturday. By contrast, only about 300 Palestinians were previously allowed out of Gaza every day.

One of the first people to cross was Ward Labaa, a 27-year-old woman leaving Gaza for the first time to seek medical treatment in Cairo, the Associated Press reported. The latest move comes a month after Egypt pushed through a unity deal between the two main Palestinian factions - Fatah and Hamas - something Israel also opposed. Fatah runs the West Bank, while Hamas governs Gaza. Analysts say that with elections looming in Egypt the new policy is likely to be popular with a public largely sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.

Egypt's co-operation in blockading Gaza was one of President Mubarak's most unpopular policies. Last year, Israel eased restrictions on goods entering Gaza, but severe shortages in the territory remain. In 010, the International Committee of the Red Cross said the blockade was a clear violation of international humanitarian law.

Hundreds of smuggling tunnels run under the Egyptian border with Gaza.





Sarah Palin tour creates a buzz. Several fancied Republicans may have ruled themselves out of the 2012 race for the White House but one woman could yet ignite the campaign, says the BBC's Jonny Dymond in Washington DC.

With one announcement, the slow burning - some might say barely-smouldering - Republican campaign for the White House has, if not caught light, then at least caught the attention of those outside the circle of Washington's campaign professionals.

That announcement was from Sarah Palin's Political Action Committee; the former vice-presidential candidate would, the PAC said, begin a tour of north-eastern states, visiting historic sites and patriotic events.

The aim of the "One Nation tour", she said on her website, will be "to connect with our founders....to clearly see our way forward". Until this point, most of the noise in the Republican camp had been made by those saying they aren't going to stand - three former and present state governors have ruled themselves out, as did the extrovert property developer and television star Donald Trump.Seasoned campaign watchers are surprisingly united on why they think so many have ruled themselves out of the 2012 race for the White House. It is, many say, because potential candidates cannot face the sheer grinding ghastliness of the campaign.

"I think in America," says Rich Galen, a former Republican campaigner, "we have successfully dumbed down the process so that good people don't want to put themselves through this anymore." He's not just referring to the long months of cheap hotels, bad food, begging for campaign funds and forensic scrutiny from opponents and the media.




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Greece lets EU funds to fight social exclusion slip away

Some 3.5 billion euros available to Athens at a time when social welfare groups are facing shutdown.

Greece risks missing out on up to 3.5 billion euros of European Union funding mainly aimed at helping the unemployed -- who now number almost 800,000 -- get back to work, Kathimerini English Edition has learned.

European Commission sources said that Greece was entitled to claim 4.2 billion euros between 2007 and 2013 through the European Social Fund (ESF), which is designed to promote employment and enhance social inclusion in the EU. However, Greece, which is notoriously poor at absorbing EU funds, has used just a small percentage of this money.

Sources said that Greece has only claimed 18.5 percent (less than 800 million euros) so far. The average absorption rate for ESF funds across the 27 member states is 24 percent.

EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Laszlo Andor discussed the wider use of ESF funds with Greek Labor Minister Louka Katseli in March. Two months on, the Commission still appears willing to provide Greece with money for a variety of social projects if the government can find ways to use it in time.

There has been a great effort by the Greek government and the Commission's services to ensure that the European Social Fund is being used. The ESF can help start new projects, such as care for the elderly. There is a sufficient level of flexibility within the European Social Fund.

Andor indicated that Athens could be claiming funding for a wide range of projects. Recently, the European Regional Development Fund was adjusted to allow it to be used for social housing and the EU introduced a new microfinance facility, which opens up new opportunities.

As Greece's debt crisis continues to choke the country's economy, unemployment is becoming a growing problem. Figures out this month showed that the jobless rate rose to 15.9 percent in February and was at 20 percent for those aged between 24 and 35. Almost half of Greeks under 24 are unemployed. ESF projects, which mainly focus on improving people's skills and providing them with training or counseling, help roughly 9 million people a year in the EU, half of whom return to work within 12 months of receiving the assistance.

Norbert Kunz, the executive director of IQ Consult in Germany, told a European Journalism Center seminar in Brussels that his company, which receives funding from the EU to train and then loan money to young people, spent an average of 6,000 euros on each startup. He said that 70 percent of the entrepreneurs were still in business a year after receiving microcredit.

No such scheme exists in Greece but Commission sources said that Brussels is currently in negotiations with an unnamed party to set up a program to provide microcredit to unemployed Greeks.

The view of the members of the Greek delegation at the Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty in Brussels was that a scheme to encourage entrepreneurship among those who find it difficult to get access to loans, especially now that the Greek banks are adopting an ultra-conservative approach to lending, would be a positive move but would have to be closely monitored and form part of a wider strategy.

Microfinancing could be one of the solutions -- not the only solution. It could create jobs and help people but it needs to be supported by other policies in order to survive.

Giannoula Magga, president of the Greek Rom Women's Association, based in Dendropotamos near Thessaloniki, said that a microfinancing scheme would also be useful for members of the Gypsy community, who are often excluded from conventional methods of financing.

"There are a lot of programs that help Roma start their own businesses but they require the applicants to put down 50 percent of

the money first. But if they had that kind of cash, they would start the business on their own anyway," she said. "There are people who want to work who would benefit from microfinance projects."

All the women in the Greek delegation stressed that spending just on programs to help people back into employment would not be enough and that money has to be invested in other areas as well.

"You can't single out one area. We are in a crisis and we have people living in poverty and even some people with jobs are below the poverty line," said Poutou. "So we don't just need programs that create jobs but a holistic scheme that includes education and retraining."

"First of all, the money should not go toward lining people's pockets, which is where we hear it went in the past," said Dinopoulou. "This money should go toward creating jobs, supporting single-parent families, disabled people, the homeless and anyone living on the margins of society."

"The first area they should spend it on is education," said Magga. "If we invest in education now, we will reap the rewards in the future. But it must not happen in a spasmodic way. There have to be checks. Greece has spent a lot of money over the years but it has not put it to good use. Another area is social housing. Most Roma live in settlements in very poor conditions."

The European Commission has recognized that the projects it funds have to do more than just help people find jobs and must also combat social exclusion and poverty. Based on the most recent statistics available, Brussels calculates that 116 million people in the EU are at risk of poverty (they live in a household with a disposable income below 60 percent of the national median) or social exclusion. The 2008 figures show that more than 2.1 million Greeks fall within the "at risk of poverty" bracket. The EU aims to lift 20 million Europeans out of this category by 2020.

"The key question today is how do we avoid social deterioration and poverty at a time of fiscal consolidation," Andor said at the Brussels meeting earlier this month. "We know this is a huge target given the current crisis."

For Greece, there are few timelier subjects as the economic crisis is forcing a growing number of people out of employment or to accept lower wages to stay in their jobs or to get new ones. It has also led to the government cutting social funding for a range of projects that helped foster social inclusion.

The heads of 31 social welfare groups held a news conference last Thursday to warn that they are running out of money. The 31 groups, which include the umbrella organization "Mazi gia to Paidi" (Together for the Child) and the Hatzipaterio Social Work Foundation, mainly work with children that have disabilities. They provide services for 15,360 children and employ 1,378 staff but claim that they did not receive state funding in 2010 or this year. Their representatives claimed that their combined costs run to some 40 million euros a year.

"In Greece there is no support for parents of disabled children," Maria Vangela, the mother of a disabled child and a member of the Greek delegation at the recent poverty meeting in Brussels, told Kathimerini English Edition. "The mother of a disabled child has to be a mother, a housewife, a teacher and a nurse. It's a great burden and the state does not help these families."

Vangela, who lives on Crete and is a local representative for the Hatzipaterio Foundation, which has provided her and her child with support for a number of years, says that NGOs in Greece are under severe threat.

"Nonprofit organizations and foundations try to bridge the gap left by the state but many of these are facing closure because public funding has dried up and donations are now being taxed," she said.

George Papandreou says he will go on without consensus

Meeting of party leaders fails to bring any agreement on how to tackle crisis

ND leader Antonis Samaras peers over the shoulder of LAOS chief Giorgos Karatzaferis.

Prime Minister George Papandreou indicated on Friday evening that there was scope

Greece and the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, which last May pledged the country 110 billion euros in loans. Samaras reiterated his calls for an alternative program that would reduce taxes rather than raise them. "We



for consensus on a new raft of austerity measures following a long meeting with his political rivals, most of whom appeared to suggest that little common ground had been found.

"There are many points on which we can agree. But there is a need for political will from all sides," Papandreou said. "Over the next few days we will continue efforts to reach a consensus," he added, noting however that his administration had "assumed the responsibility to extract the country from the crisis and will do this with or without consensus."

Dousing speculation about early elections, Papandreou indicated that certain changes could be made to proposals for more tax increases - a touchy subject with opposition leaders.

Earlier in the day, opposition leaders leaving the official residence of President Karolos Papoulias, who chaired the meeting, gave little indication that they had seen eye-to-eye. The leader of the main conservative opposition New Democracy, Antonis Samaras, called for a renegotiation of the terms of the memorandum - the name given to the agreement between

will not be blackmailed," he said.

The leader of the far-right Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) Giorgos Karatzaferis, indicated that certain political leaders were not focusing on the common good. "Some clearly rank their position over the good of the country," he said.

The leader of the Communist Party (KKE), Aleka Papariga, claimed that Greeks were being subjected to "ideological terrorism" and should not give in to "coercive dilemmas."

The head of the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), Alexis Tsipras, struck a similar tone, saying that "consensus cannot be secured through blackmail" and describing the government's proposed reforms as "unfair and disastrous."

Thousands of people protesting the government's ongoing austerity drive filled squares in Athens and other cities on Friday in the third day of demonstrations modeled on a Spanish campaign organized via social networking websites.

'Time is running out,' Brussels warns Greek leaders

Olli Rehn insists consensus is necessary; Obama expresses support for eurozone efforts on debt crisis.

Olli Rehn has asked Greece's politicians



to agree on the measures needed to rescue the Greek economy.

Following the failure on Friday of Greece's party leaders to agree on a common strategy to overcome the country's economic crisis, the European Commission warned that "time is running out" for Athens to adopt a program to overcome its mounting debt problems.

Brussels "regrets the failure of Greek party leaders to reach consensus on economic adjustment to overcome the current debt crisis," said EU Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn.

"We expect that the efforts towards a cross party agreement to support the EU-IMF program will continue," added the Finn. "An agreement has to be found soon. Time is running out."

Rehn created a stir on the Greek political scene a few days ago when he put pressure on the government and opposition parties to reach an agreement. The extra pressure came amid speculation that the European Union and the International Monetary Fund might withhold the fifth installment of Greece's bailout package because of its failure to take measures quickly enough. However, Finance Minister Giorgos Papaconstantinou yesterday denied that this was the case.

Greece received some indirect words of encouragement from US President Barack Obama, who discussed the eurozone debt crisis at the G8 summit in France.

"The president made clear that we have a strong interest in the eurozone successfully managing their way through the situation," an unnamed senior US official told Reuters. "It is not our place to tell them how to resolve it. But through the IMF and otherwise we are supportive of what they are doing and we are confident that they will be able to do it."