



**January 16<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011**

**Prime Minister George Papandreou, Athens, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

*"We saved the country from the immediate danger, and it is in our hands to build the Greece of tomorrow with a plan". (...) "Yes, Greece is changing, will change, and will always be changing".*

**Prime Minister George Papandreou, Davos, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

*"A restructuring of the existing debt is out of the question. It is not part of our plans".*

**Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics Christopher Pissarides, Nicosia, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

*"As I can see there is determination on the part of the Greek government, which is advancing on the right path. I do not think that the country will go through a new crisis, unless something unexpected happens which we can not see now".*

Two event – laden January weeks reveal political leadership's vision for the creation of a different and better country, which will be based on the principles of progress, creativity, social justice, development, transparency and cooperation.

Greece aspires to play a new constructive role in regional level, and to create mutually beneficial synergies in the fields of Energy, Economy, Culture and Tourism.

## **Politics**

**Prime Minister George Papandreou: "Big stake is to create different, better Greece"**



"The country's big stake is to create a different and better Greece", Prime Minister George Papandreou stressed, in a greeting to an Information and Communication General Secretariat event for heads of the Greek Embassies Press Offices and directors of the Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO) offices abroad.

Recalling that Greece had found itself at a "turning point" at which it had to decide whether to change or not, PM Papandreou underlined that the government's response to this wager is "yes, Greece is changing, will change, and will always be changing", and added that the dilemma concerned not only putting the country's fiscal finances in order, which, he noted, was absolutely self-evident and was being achieved with sacrifices and efforts by all the Greeks, but also concerned combating the symptom.

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[www.investingreece.gov.gr](http://www.investingreece.gov.gr)

Assessing the present crisis an opportunity and a necessary remedy for the ailment, the epidemic and the disaster-mongering that the effort is in vain, and that the Greeks are unable to shape their own fate, PM Papandreou explained that in 2010 Greece succeeded in not only drastically reducing the deficits of the past, but also, in the space of just a few months, it dared to make and is making big and historical changes, surprising those who had mistakenly believed in the negative image of the country.

Speaking of Greece's long-standing problems, PM Papandreou further stressed that nothing will be achieved if the attitude and operation of the state does not change, and called the civil servants the "key" to changing the attitude in the state, and their abilities the "wealth" that must be utilized.

Further, PM Papandreou stressed that what is sought is "the creation of a radically new model in the direction of social freedom, lawfulness, creativity and progress, with a productive and viable Economy, green growth, and a new people-oriented model of collective organization and operation."

*(Photo Source: [www.papandreou.gr](http://www.papandreou.gr))*

### **Prime Minister George Papandreou announces project for major photovoltaic park**

Noting that the investment will serve as a model for "green and clean development" and for renewable sources of energy, Prime Minister George Papandreou announced that one of the largest photovoltaic parks in the world, with a projected power production capacity of 200 MW, will be constructed in the northwest prefecture of Kozani by the Public Power Corporation (PPC) in cooperation with a strategic investor.

Stressing that the park is a "leading project, and Kozani shows us the way to the new era", PM Papandreou added that pollution heavy lignite-fired power plants will be replaced by new "cleaner tech" plants, while at the same time renewable energy sources will better support growth and boost employment.



Environment Minister, Tina Birbili, underlined that western Macedonia will remain the "energy heartland" of Greece, and said that the replacement of two lignite-fired power plants with state-of-the-art plans is on track.

PPC President, Arthuros Zervos, said the construction of the project is expected to begin this summer and will be completed in 18 months.

The 600-million-euro project will cover an area of 530 hectares at the site of an old lignite pit, and will employ some 550 workers. Carbon dioxide emission reductions are expected to be cut by 300,000 tons annually.

## **Economy**

### **Prime Minister George Papandreou: "A restructuring of the debt is out of the question"**



In an interview with the CNN on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Prime Minister George Papandreou ruled out a possible restructuring of the country's debt and expressed his conviction that Greece would exit successfully from the current economic crisis and would become more competitive through structural reforms that are being implemented in the country.

Regarding the Euro-zone, PM Papandreou said that member-states should demonstrate fiscal responsibility and handle debts and deficits.

Besides, in his opening address during a discussion on economic reforms in the European Union, the Prime Minister said that a year ago people asked if Greece would default, and stressed: "We took all measures with responsibility, we did our duty. We emphasised full transparency and already we are one of the most transparent countries in the world. We cut the deficit by 6%, resolved the pension problem and are opening up closed professions. But markets have not reacted yet".

He noted that financial system should be more transparent and added that the necessary tools are needed to calm markets. *(Photo Source: [www.papandreou.gr](http://www.papandreou.gr))*

Commenting on the European Financial Support Fund (EFSF), PM Papandreou said it should be robust and flexible, and added that Europe was a large and peaceful project, that can be "a model of governance and green growth".

### [Finance Minister George Papaconstantinou optimistic over extension of loan repayment, euro-bond issue](#)



Speaking to reporters, after an ECOFIN meeting in Brussels, Finance Minister, George Papaconstantinou, said that both the European Commission and the European Central Bank expressed positive opinions over the way the Greek government is implementing a fiscal consolidation program, acknowledging that reducing the fiscal deficit by 6% in 2010 was the result of an extremely serious effort.

The Minister noted that a Eurogroup meeting reaffirmed the political will to extend the repayment period of Greece's bailout loans from the EU Commission and ECB, and added that the issue would be part of a package to be agreed for a support mechanisms aid.

Finally, he noted that the issue of a Eurobond would be also included in a larger package, currently under negotiation, and underlined his confidence that domestic banks would successfully pass the next series of stress tests.



Reiterating that the Greek government was discussing an extension only of the EU-ECB-IMF 110-bln-euro loan, Government Spokesman, George Petalotis, categorically denied Greece was seeking an extension of the repayment period of the country's entire debt.

Besides, Mr. Petalotis categorically rejected speculation that the country was discussing a restructuring of its debt and noted that the government was strictly adhering to its goals.

Recent scenarios over a restructuring of Greek debt were "nonsense", Amadeu Altafaj, the spokesman for EU Commissioner for Economic Affairs, Olli Rehn, commented on German press reports about a restructuring of the Greek debt, and expressed the certainty of the European Commission that Greece would be able to make it on its own after 2013.



The International Monetary Fund is in favor of a decision to extending the repayment period of a loan to Greece, but opposes a restructuring of the Greek debt, David Halley, an adviser at IMF's external relations department said.



Economist Christopher Pissarides, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2010, said that Greece will succeed in overcoming its present economic crisis and enter a new path of growth.

"As I can see there is determination on the part of the Greek government, which is advancing on the right path. I do not think that the country will go through a new crisis, unless something unexpected happens which we can not see now".

"A great deal of work is needed and mostly long-term reforms are necessary for an exit from the current crisis", Professor Pissarides added.

### Minister of State Harris Pamboukis: Chinese and Qatari investments sought



Minister of State, Harris Pamboukis, who has been appointed Greece's coordinator for seeking strategic investments from China, Qatar and France and for relations with the Jewish state as well, said that China, which last year offered to buy Greek bonds, was considering creating a regional fund for investment in southeast Europe, under the China Development Bank, and added that Chinese companies were eyeing investments in the Aegean port of Thessaloniki, and in Greek railways, both slated for privatization.

Besides, Mr. Pamboukis stated that he was talking to Qatar about possible investment in a project estimated to be worth between 5 billion and 7 billion euros to develop Hellenikon, a prime site on the city's coastal southern fringe, which used to be the former Athens international airport.

The development was likely to include a technology park, a university campus and possibly a financial centre in addition to hotels, a marina and a large green space.

Additionally, Mr. Pamboukis said that Greece has begun exploratory talks with Israel about cooperation on transporting recently discovered offshore Israeli natural gas to markets in Europe.

### Deputy Foreign Minister Spyros Kouvelis unveils economic diplomacy initiatives for 2011



Emphasizing that "the Foreign Ministry is focusing on the best possible coordination between public and private sectors to boost the Greek Economy's extroversion", Deputy Foreign Minister, Spyros Kouvelis, unveiled the Greek government's economic diplomacy initiatives for 2011, and stressed that the goal is for government Ministries, export organizations and economic chambers to work together in order to better promote specific Greek products and services in specific markets.

Mr. Kouvelis stated that the six geographic target-regions of the initiative are: EU - N. America - Australia; Middle East - N. Africa; Black Sea - Caucasus; Asia - Far East; Latin America; Sub-Saharan Africa.

Top Greek exports are foods, energy (including RES), construction materials, construction, tourism, health and equipment (mechanical and industrial).

## Foreign Policy

### Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas on Greek foreign policy



"The dynamic foreign policy we are implementing creates opportunities", Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas stressed, addressing an Information and Communication General Secretariat event for the heads of Greek Embassies Press Offices and National Tourism Organization Offices' directors abroad, and added that "the government has put an end to inaction, conservatism, the 'known phobias' and the myths plaguing the Greek foreign policy in the past".

Referring to the issue of Greek-Turkish relations, Mr. Droutsas underlined that "the government has tried to create conditions for their improvement" and pointed out that there is "no question of a joint exploitation of the Aegean", stressing that "the status in the Aegean is not changing".

He also pointed out that Turkey's European course presupposes that certain necessary preconditions will have to be met first, adding that holding a conference on Turkey's EU accession course is being considered.

Besides, Mr. Droutsas pointed out that the government has given Greece a voice and a role in the Balkans, the Black Sea and Caucasus, adding that the 2014 Agenda has given a boost to the EU accession course of the western Balkan states, and that a Thessaloniki summit meeting with the Balkan countries is in the plans.



Referring to the fYRoM "name issue", he reiterated that Greece wants a name with a geographic qualifier for every use, adding that fYRoM's accession into NATO is impossible if the name issue is not resolved first. He also called on the neighbouring country's leadership to adopt a constructive stance.

Finally, Mr. Droutsas referred to Greece's relations with Israel and the Arab world, while as regards the Cyprus issue, he repeated that a solution should be based on the UN Security Council decisions and the European acquis.

## Culture and Tourism

### Tourism promotion policy detailed



The hope that the tourism sector will spearhead a reversal of the crisis in Greece was expressed by Culture and Tourism Minister, Pavlos Geroulanos, who requested that each Greek National Tourism Office abroad collect statistical data and views from the tourism markets targeted by Greece for a well-organized tourism campaign, and stressed that the internet should be the main tool in the tourism promotion campaign.

Outlining the tourism Ministry actions for the next three years, Mr. Geroulanos focused on the year-round tourism across Greece and stressed that traditional markets for Greece such as UK and Germany should continue to be targeted, also referring to other markets like the

US and China, and the potential created through the lifting of cabotage and the adoption of a new development law.

### Greek film nominated for Oscar

Yorgos Lanthimos' film "Dogtooth" was nominated for an Academy Award in the category of best foreign language film.

"Dogtooth" will compete along with Mexican director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's film "Biutiful"; "Outside the Law" by Algeria's Rachid Bouchareb; "Incendies" by Canada's Denis Villeneuve and "In a Better World" from Denmark's Susanne Bier.

The Academy Award ceremony will take place on February 27 in Los Angeles.

Culture Minister, Pavlos Geroulanos, in a statement, said the nomination "goes beyond the sphere of cinema, arts and culture. It concerns an entire country, its people, a new generation of creators who personify the 'Yes, it can be done' in a difficult period."

### Rare coins of antiquity on display at Hellenic Cosmos



A total of 160 rare coins dating many centuries back in time (from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD) and representative of many parts of the ancient Hellenic world, with the focus on the Black Sea and Asia Minor regions, are on display at the Foundation of the Hellenic World.

"The FWH numismatics collection is the fourth largest Asia Minor collection in the world, and reached Greece in 2007, from a German collector who wanted to sell it", Foundation managing director, Dimitris Efraimoglou told, noting that only a part of the collection is currently on exhibit, but gradually the entire collection will be on display.

The exhibition presents coins depicting gods and deities of antiquity, nymphs and heroes worshipped in the city or kingdom that minted the coin, depictions of temples and public buildings, statues that were found in sacred or public places, the region's flora and fauna, and even themes from Homer's Iliad.

The Foundation of the Hellenic World decided to purchase this collection not only to repatriate an important part of the country's cultural heritage but also because of the particular geographical focus of the objects, which coincides with the areas of Hellenism in which the Foundation aims to specialise.

The exhibition will run through February 28.

### [Ancient Olympia to acquire Botanical Garden](#)



The Ancient Olympia archaeological site will soon acquire a Botanical Garden, the "Olympic Botanical Garden", which will be planted in a 25 acre expanse between the northern and northwestern slopes of Cronius Hill (Kronion), between the ancient site's Archaeological Museum and the Hill just above the site.

The Botanical Garden will contain plants native to the area, including wild olive trees, almond trees, pomegranate trees, pines, arbutus, plane trees, cypress trees and walnut trees, as well as 6,000 bushes of aromatic and medicinal herbs and shrubs such as rosemary, lavender, myrtle, mint and rosemary.

The estimated 150,000 euros required have been pledged by the Municipality of Munich in Germany.

The Garden will be used mainly for educational purposes, where visitors may learn about the plants that grow naturally on Cronius Hill and on the surrounding region, but also their history.

Every plant will have a sign containing its scientific and everyday name in Greek, Latin and English, and historical information on the plant, as well as its mythological connotations.

## The Chinese Media on Greece

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[www.culture.gr](http://www.culture.gr) (Greek Ministry of Culture)

[www.mnec.gr](http://www.mnec.gr) (Ministry of Finance)

[www.gnto.gr](http://www.gnto.gr) (Greek National Tourism Office)

[www.investgreece.gov.gr](http://www.investgreece.gov.gr) (Invest in Greece)

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