

A balancing act for Tsipras

SYRIZA must convince Greeks the socialist dream still burns

By **Panos N. Polyzoidis**

A job well done in Brussels - now the battle moves to Athens. Alexis Tsipras, Greece's left-wing Prime Minister, was forced into a compromise with the country's creditors, agreeing to some major departures from his election pledges, and now he has to persuade his own party that the deal is not throwing the government off its declared anti-austerity course. But at the same time he is coming up against the pragmatic challenges of running an ailing state's finances.

The Greek government is coming to terms with some dire fiscal realities

Under the threat of capital controls by the European Central Bank, Tsipras accepted an extension of the country's European bailout programme, including a reviewing procedure by the creditors' representatives, pretty much the same as under previous agreements.

The government has been trying hard to spin the deal as the end of all pre-existing arrangements and as a national victory that would end austerity policies Europe-wide. It seems the



GREEK PM Tsipras needs to hard sell the compromise deal

hardest people to persuade are inside SYRIZA, Tsipras's own radical left-wing party, which is the governing coalition's major partner.

In what turned into a tempestuous meeting, one out of three members of the SYRIZA parliamentary party are reported to have voiced their objection to the deal - among them a senior cabinet minister and the Speaker of the parliament;

hence, it comes as no surprise that Tsipras appears to be considering dodging parliament and imposing the deal without having to secure the approval of his own MPs; but there is discord within the cabinet even concerning this politically loaded legality.

The main task for the 40-year-old PM is to persuade some of the radicals that the Brussels deal is a mere tactical move

that will not derail the party from its ideological course, namely an overthrow of capitalist socio-economic structures in the quest for a socialist future. This critique was officially recorded by no less than SYRIZA's economic policy chief, and that serves as a poignant indication that Tsipras is indeed facing a tall order.

Meanwhile, the Greek government is coming to terms with some dire fiscal realities.

Yanis Varoufakis will soon have to prove that, besides being a good communicator; he can also deliver as a Finance Minister and tackle the lack of cash that appears to be an immediate threat. He is reported to be depending on ECB help to repay an IMF loan next month and avoid a credit event that would shake Greece's credibility for good, while analysts say the extra funds that the government will need to secure until June are in excess of €20 billion.

So, Tsipras has an explosive mix in his hands: he has to provide for the state's cashflow needs by persuading Greece's creditors that he is leading the country to fiscal virtue and structural reforms; while convincing his own party that this course is a shortcut to socialism. He may be missing his time as opposition leader.



Leave your home, at home!

New Home Burglary insurance for only €50 a year

Now you can insure your valuables for only €50 a year, with the innovative Home Burglary insurance cover from General Insurance of Cyprus.

Leave your home, at home, without having to worry about a thing!

Annual cover up to €5,000, with a maximum claim per item of €500.

For more information:
 • General Insurance of Cyprus branches
 • General Insurance of Cyprus agents
 • Bank of Cyprus branches
 • 8000.87.87
 • www.gic.com.cy

General Insurance of Cyprus

Consistently reliable