



Anti-Austerity Syriza Wins Big, But Is it on Collision Course With EU?

By Daniel Politi_ It was a historic day in Greece on Election Day. After years of extreme EU- and IMF-imposed austerity, Greeks gave a clear vote against that economic prescription for their ailing country. And while a victory for the leftist Syriza party was expected, the huge margin has come as a surprise. The two parties that have ruled the country since the fall of the military junta in 1974 were reduced to mere spectators as the big question Sunday night was whether Syriza would obtain enough votes to secure 151 of the 300 seats in parliament, which would allow it to rule without a coalition. So far, it seems it will fall slightly short. With around 75 percent of the votes counted, Syriza was set to win 149 seats, according to the BBC.

For the European Union, the result will undoubtedly be a challenge, and seemingly everyone talks about how Greece will be on a collision course with the EU leadership, because voters have staunchly rejected the austerity mandated from Brussels and Berlin to deal with the Eurozone crisis. The Guardian explains:



Supporters of the leftist Syriza party cheer at exit poll results which indicate that Syriza have a clear lead on Jan. 25, 2015 in Athens, Greece.

The damning popular verdict on Europe's response to financial meltdown is a haunting outcome for the EU's political elite. For the first time, power has been handed to populist outsiders deeply opposed to Brussels and Berlin, albeit not anti-European, unlike their counterparts on the far right across the EU. For the first time a child of the European crisis, an explicitly anti-austerity party will take office in the EU.

"Greece leaves behind catastrophic austerity, it leaves behind fear and authoritarianism, it leaves behind five years of humiliation and anguish," Alexis Tsipras, the charismatic leader of Syriza, said on Sunday night. Tsipras has vowed to renegotiate with creditors who put up \$284 billion to bail out Greece and said he would demand that some of the country's debt be canceled. Considering the creditors are likely to push back, many think it's likely that Greece could end up exiting the euro, "imperiling the rest of the currency union along the way," points out the Washington Post.

Greece-Made Seaplanes off the Assembly Line this Year

The first seaplanes will start to operate in 2015 if things go as planned and Greeks will be able to use them "to fly almost anywhere," Hellenic Seaplanes President and CEO Nicolas Charalambous said on Tuesday, in statements to the ANA-MPA.

Charalambous underlined that over 40 water aerodromes throughout Greece were now in the licensing and construction phase, adding that a nationwide network will greatly boost tourism-sector jobs and also assist in the air-lift of patients from remote and otherwise inaccessible areas of Greece. In terms of attracting investments, Charalambous noted that Greece could become the "Maldives of Europe".

"It is the destination that tourists all around the world want to visit, provided that they have a sense that no Greek government, whichever that might be, will cause them hardship during their holidays. Investments in tourism will not stop, whether we are in the euro or the drachma. What is needed is to give the right image abroad, that the effort being made to attract foreign investments cannot be interrupted every time by political developments," he said.

He added that the transport costs using seaplanes will not be especially expensive, with a half-hour trip (for example, from Athens to the island of Serifos, or between the islands of Kos and Naxos) estimated at around 75-80 euros. He said the prices might be further reduced if economies of scale are achieved, with Hellenic Seaplanes planning to begin with four planes with 19 seats in 2015 and increase them to 20 by 2017. The company's business plan also aims to link Greece to neighbouring countries, such as Turkey, Bulgaria, Italy and Croatia, as soon as Greece's national network is developed.

Israel Favors Gas Pipeline To EU Via Greece & Italy

According to Euractiv, Israel has proposed that EU countries invest in a multi-billion euro pipeline to carry its natural gas from its Mediterranean coast, to Greece and Italy. The report claims that the supply from Israel would reduce Europe's current dependence on natural gas from Russia. The Israeli press reported that the proposal for the "massive" project was introduced by Israel's Energy Minister Silvan Shalom to energy ministers from Euro-Mediterranean countries who met in Rome last week. The project would require a multi-billion euro investment from Europe to build a pipeline from Israel's Mediterranean coast to Cyprus, from where the gas would be carried on to Greece and Italy. Reports say Cyprus, Greece and Italy were all supportive of the idea, and that Israel would make a formal presentation of the project to European representatives in Brussels in three weeks' time. Israel began pumping natural gas in March 2013 from the offshore Tamar deposit — discovered in 2009 and located some 90 kilometers west of Haifa — which holds an estimated 8.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas._Source: Euractiv

Tourist Arrivals Break 20M 'Barrier' Helping Boost Revenues by 10.6 %

Tourist arrivals jumped 21.9 pct to top the 20 million "barrier" in January-October 2014, boosting travel industry revenues by 10.6 pct in comparison with the same period in 2013, the Bank of Greece reported on Tuesday. Total travel revenues for the period amounted to 13,013 million euros, according to BoG figures.

The increase in revenues was largely due to a rise in arrivals, since average spending per trip was down 9.0 pct. Net revenues from travel services contributed by 61.4 pct to net revenues from services and offset a 73.1 pct trade deficit.

Tourism revenues from Eurozone residents reached 5,229 million euros, up 10.4 pct over the previous year, while revenues from EU28 countries not in the Eurozone were up 23.7 pct. Revenues from Germany were down 3.1 pct, falling to 1,807 million euros, while revenues from France were up by 27.7 pct at 1,140 million euros. Revenues from the United Kingdom reached 1,567 million euros, up 18.4 pct. Among non-EU countries, revenues from Russia were down 13.2 pct at 1,154 million euros, while revenues from the United States increased by 11 pct to 604 million euros. The largest increase in arrivals was from Germany (8.8 pct) and France (27.4 pct), followed by the UK (12.9 pct). Arrivals from Russia fell by 8.1 pct and arrivals from the U.S. increased by 29.2 pct to 562,000.

Editorial Viewpoint

A bold Move in the Right Direction

New Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has shown a bold initiative right from the getgo/ same day of his swearing in by doing so without the presence of a cleric. This is bound to have a tremendous impact nationwide-maybe worldwide too-limiting the Church's role and influence in the Governmental affairs. Moreover, the morbid influence of

Chicago's Nick Kokonas Taps T. Keller to Help Launch the Long-Awaited System.



Nick Kokonas

After months of anticipation and speculation, Nick Kokonas — the Chicago restaurateur behind Alinea, Next, and the Aviary — has finally unleashed information about his commercially available ticketing system platform. Christened Tock (a play on the idea of tickets, time, and the "tick-tock" sound of a clock), the system will launch in early 2015 with a team of heavy-hitters in Kokonas's corner: Among his investors are legendary chef Thomas Keller (The French Laundry, Per Se) and others. "We wouldn't have gotten all the people that we've got on there if we weren't doing something right," Kokonas excitedly tells Eater. "I'm enthusiastic about our ability to really change the industry."

"I'm enthusiastic about our ability to really change the industry," Kokonas has been hinting at the possibilities of Tock — formerly and colloquially known as "Tickets" — for months. As promised back in May, Tock will give restaurant owners the option of how many tables to set aside for pre-purchased tickets or table-holding "deposit tickets." Tickets, like at a movie or sporting event, simply pay for the experience in advance, while the deposit tickets apply the full ticket "fee" to the diner's final bill. For fine-dining restaurants like Kokonas's Alinea, the pre-purchased ticket guarantees up-front payment for a multi-course tasting menu. Today's announcement adds more options to the mix, and Tock's \$695/month fee for restaurants will offer every feature at the same flat rate, with no additional fees. "We are trying to build a whole toolbox of every aspect of what a customer needs, from a booking and table management and CRM," Kokonas says. The Tock system will offer five types of tickets, including one that's essentially a regular, no-cost reservation.

And those restaurants might have a point: Early forays into ticketed dining have proved it doesn't work for everyone. At his Philadelphia fine-dining restaurant Volter, chef Jose Garces abandoned his restaurant's ticketing platform just five months in: Its Thundertext system, powered by an Austin-based company, was often criticized for being too complicated. (Eater critic Ryan Sutton called the booking process "Sisyphean," a frustrating journey through "various pitfalls.") A representative from the restaurant, the first outside Kokonas's own portfolio to offer tickets in Chicago, was diplomatic in her critique, calling the addition of reservations an effort to "make the experience for our guests as simple or best as it can be." But Kokonas cites investor Ming Tsai's Boston restaurant Blue Dragon as an example of how Tock could work for those customers. According to Kokonas, Tsai's main dining room is walk-in only, but the chef could use the Tock platform to sell tickets for Blue Dragon's chef's table. For a farewell set of dinners, wd~50 chef/owner Wylie Dufresne used Tock's "event ticket" feature to rack up \$41,000 in ticket sales in the first two minutes; Kokonas says any restaurant on the Tock platform would be able to sell tickets for special, one-off dinners.

To Celebrate New Year with Wine, Conversation, Friends

We are pleased to invite you to an Evening with Wine and Conversation with Friends at the home/studio of artist Lydia Venieri on Green Street in SoHo, on Thursday February 10th, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Traditional New Year's Greek Vasilopita pie, Valentine's chocolate, Greek wines and hors d'oeuvres and great company! An archival framed photograph by Greek Iranian American artist Aphrodite Désirée Navab valued at \$2,500 will be auctioned to benefit AGAPW.Sotia Alimonos, handcrafted one of a kind haute couture scarves and Niki Lagiou, one of a kind handcrafted haute couture necklaces will be raffled to benefit AGAPW! Chance to win other fun raffles as well, including a fashionable Elie Tahari Savannah clutch!

Please RSVP here (you will be redirected to the Eventbrite secure connection). Preregistration is required by February 2nd, 2015. The address of the event will be given with RSVP in the Eventbrite order confirmation. Suggested donation \$75. For further information, please contact Dr. Olga Alexakos at oalexakos@nyc.rr.com / 917-405-6833. The organization is accepting applications for AGAPW's 2015 Excellence Tuition Scholarship awarded to a female student of Greek descent enrolled in a four year accredited Bachelor's program. Selection criteria are based on academic excellence, contribution to the community and financial need. Applications must be submitted by March 1st. The applicant must submit a personal statement, a financial statement, and university documents indicating status of enrollment and grades.

Tourist Arrivals from the US Expected to Increase in '15

The number of tourist arrivals from the United States will increase in 2015 as a result of the stronger dollar and the decline in fuel prices that affect transport cost, the Tourism Ministry announced. At the same time, it was noted that the political instability and the early elections had "frozen" bookings, despite promising signs in previous months that 2015 would be a good year for tourism in Greece. The Ministry representative referred to the decline in arrivals from

the Phanar's Emissary in the US maybe reduced too as a result, perhaps through the good offices of the new Prime minister as a breath of clean-and non-corrupt- air! There is hope for your soul's rest, O Archbishop Christodoulos of Greece! O Patriarch Petros of Alexandria! The time for the Evil's retribution may have finally arrived!

Dimon Gripes Amid JPMorgan's Decline



Jamie Dimon

Aaron Elstein_ You can always count on two things when JPMorgan Chase reports earnings: There will be a blind array of figures that even professionals struggle to analyze. And there will be some choice remarks from Chief Executive Jamie Dimon, who on a conference call with analysts said the bank would "try to avoid stepping in dog shit," a reference to its habit of creating legal problems for itself.

In a separate call with reporters, he grumbled that banks are "under assault" because they must grapple with multiple regulatory bodies examining the same wrongdoing. "You all should ask

the question about how American that is. And how fair that is," Mr. Dimon said, according to Bloomberg News. It helps to put that kvetching in context by understanding that JPMorgan is a steadily shrinking company. Revenue fell for the fourth consecutive year in 2014, dropping by 2% to \$94 billion. Sales declined in consumer and community banking, corporate and investment banking, and commercial banking. Asset management showed a gain, thanks to last year's accommodating stock market. In all, sales at this company are 8%, or \$8.5 billion, lower than in 2010. Ouch.

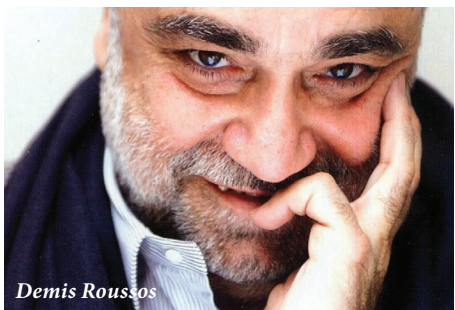
JPMorgan shares fell by 3.5% on Wednesday January 14. Mr. Dimon is managing the decline as well as he can. The bank produced a record \$21.8 billion in net earnings last year, mainly because it didn't have to fork over billions to settle lawsuits over past misdeeds. Mr. Dimon lowered costs by showing 10,000 employees the door last year, resulting in a 4% reduction in head count.

The revenue pressures, along with tougher capital requirements, recently led analysts at Goldman Sachs to suggest it would make sense to split JPMorgan into smaller companies. As he has in the past, Mr. Dimon forcefully dismissed talk of a breakup, saying that "unscrambling" the bank would be complicated.

World is Mourning the Loss Of an International Crooner

By Mara Beka_ Demi (Artemios) Roussos, an international crooner whose career had peaked in the Sixties, lost his battle against cancer in the early hours of January 25 2015, just as his landsmen were preparing to go to the voting machines to choose a new Prime Minister for a better tomorrow. Roussos, was one of these lucky people who bore the title of Greek Egyptian, having had the privilege of being born in the land of the Nile.

Born in 1946 in Alexandria, he was the son of George Roussos and Olga Piliadou. At the age of seventeen, Demi returned to Greece where sang with different groups such as the as the Idols and We Five. He gained wide popularity in 1968 as part of the group Aphrodite's Child, first in vocals and later as a bassist. After the demise of this group, his career as a soloist was catapulted into fame by touring southern Europe. Parallel to this career, Roussos did many recordings, many with his friend and equally great artist Vangelis, with whom he cooperated on the recording Sex Power in 1970 and Magic in 1977. They also worked together on a vocal of The Race to the End, the Oscar winning Chariot of Fire. His career peaked during the decade of the Seventies with a number of new records, among them "Forever and ever", "Goodbye my love, goodbye", "My reason", "Lost in love", and others. His songs are circulating in many languages and in many countries of Europe and Latin America, while his single, Demi earned gold in the United States. A highlight of his career was being decorated by the French Republic with the title of Chevalier of the Legion of Honor during a special reception at the French Embassy in Athens.



Demis Roussos

Asclepius' Sanctuary Up For NSRF Funding

A project to upgrade services and design the landscape around the ancient sanctuary of the healer god Asclepius in Epidaurus, southern Greece, will be included in National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) funds for 2014-2020, officials said.

Former Environment, Energy and Climate Change Minister Yiannis Maniatis said the budget for the project amounts to 5,650,000 euros and will be provided under the business program "Infrastructure of Transport, Environment and Sustainable Development."

The work will highlight the landscape of the great sanctuary complex of ancient Greece's legendary doctor god and include a garden with healing and native plants. It will also include pathways for tourists, improvements in the parking area, an information kiosk promoting local Greek agricultural products, bathrooms, and digital tours. A separate building will also be put up to show the history of medicine that will be able to host congresses.

The area of ancient Epidaurus' sanctuary to Asclepius includes - besides the ancient theatre (dedicated to Asclepius and used for ancient Greek plays every summer) - a temple to Asclepius, a stadium and baths, as well as several large buildings.