

# FactCheck: HELLAS

Solidarity with the population in Greece

July 2015

Nikos Chilas: Debates in and around SYRIZA (p.3) ++ Antje Vollmer: Democratic departures and democratic abortions in Athens (p.3) +++ The Bonn government and Nazi criminals in Greece (p.4) +++ refugees in northern Greece (p.6/7)+++

## Hope dwindles – but solidarity remains

**G**reece travelled an extreme distance in just three steps taken during the days between July 5th and July 13th. These steps can be summed up like this: July 5th, democratic victory after the referendum result was proclaimed on Sunday; gesture of submission and a last compromise offer made by the Greek parliament on Friday July 10th; unconditional surrender of minister-president Alexis Tsipras on Monday July 13th. The departure and end points of these three stages are historic events where the most recent Greek tragedy is concerned.

On July 5<sup>th</sup> 61.3 per cent of Greek voters participating in the referendum voted against the new austerity programme demanded by the EU, ECB and especially the Berlin government. People in Greece did so although 80 per cent of Greek media outlets were banging the drum for “yes” with Brussels and Berlin also strongly demanding a “yes”. They voted decisively even though the ECB stopped all financial aid for Greek banks immediately after the referendum was called, which is why Greek banks had to close on the Monday before the referendum took place. The referendum pitted the harsh and immoral argument of “closed banks” against the “soft” demand of a “vote of dignity”. But morality and dignity won. The day after, Tsipras seemed to be able to reap what he had sown: All democratic parties except the communist KKE signed a declaration strengthening Tsipras’ negotiating position in Brussels. Opposition leader Samaras resigned, leaving it leaderless.

But the EU and the Berlin government consider democracy to be a laughing stock. This they made immediately clear. Only the powerful can call the

shots. Put differently: In 2014 the largest Greek companies had an added turnover of 57 billion Euro, which is the equivalent of German car manufacturer VW’s quarterly turnover. Does this clarify things?! For three days the creditors refused to even start serious negotiations. They repeatedly stated: “The ball is in the Greek corner”. But why? There was an EU-proposal. There was a Greek “no”. This meant the creditors would have to reconsider their position. After one and a half weeks with closed banks the Greek government and the Athens parliament gave up. In the early morning of July 11<sup>th</sup>, with the assistance of French “advisers”, they agreed on a “programme of reforms” mostly identical with the one put forward by the creditors at the end of June. From now on it was like in a Mafia film. “Enough is not enough!” the creditors shouted. Every hour they demanded more. Schaeuble, Merkel and Gabriel now even demanded a “temporary Grexit” to increase the atmosphere of threat deemed necessary to achieve total victory. In the end Tsipras signed a Euro summit declaration on July 13th stating that “Greek credibility has to be

restored”. This is pure colonial language.

This declaration is a document of unconditional surrender. The full creditors programme is to be implemented. In the three days following the summit the Athens parliament has to agree to the first decisive steps implementing this capitulation. The content of this declaration shows how creditors will govern into even details of Greek everyday life. It states that shops should open on Sundays and that ferries should “be opened up to competition” which means privatisation. Crucially, a so called “independent fund” will be set up to which “Greek assets” worth 50 billion Euro have to be transferred. These assets are companies and real estate currently owned by the Greek state which will soon be privatised by the new “independent fund”. Something similar happened in Germany at the beginning of the 1990s. Objectively the assets transferred into the “independent fund” may well be worth 50 billion Euro or more. But the planned sell off will raise only a fraction of this money. This is purely about selling off public goods for ridiculously low amounts of money.

This way Greece will be reduced to a half-colonial status. What happens next? Alexis Tsipras could degenerate into becoming the administrator of this half-colony as happened to Alexander Dubcek after the Soviet Union invaded Prague in 1968.

Or an all party coalition could take over this job. Or the banks could still collapse, creating complete chaos ending with an EU-attempt to install a direct protectorate. All this could happen unless something extraordinary happens at very short notice. Like an uprising of the SYRIZA left, a general strike, a broad popular movement following on from the referendum “no”. If not we will be witnessing a real coup d’etat. But in this case power is taken over from the outside, by the EU, ECB and IMF. These “institutions” will carry out their job under orders from big business and big finance who will exploit the country’s resources and an increasingly impoverished population.

And what about us? We carry our share of guilt in this tragedy. The European left was unable to develop the necessary broad solidarity with the Greek population and the SYRIZA led government. There were no mass mobilisations for Greece in Madrid, Lisbon, Rome and Berlin – although millions of people followed the struggle of the Greek population with sympathy. It is therefore even more important to show solidarity in these days of bitterness and anger, and to take every opportunity to oppose and resist the arrogance of capital and colonial rule.

### A coup

On July 12th the #Thisiscoup hashtag became one of the largest trends on twitter worldwide. It spoke to millions of people across all continents. It proves the point the guardians of the Euro can’t hide from the world community anymore: To be a Eurozone member means that creditors can destroy the economies of countries with democratically elected governments in order to whip them into line. “Tanks in the past // banks today” Someone commented on twitter. This was characteristic for the tone of the discussion. By the way: One insight coming out of the second world war was this: “Immediately after the first German tank // there comes a German bank”. Uncountable tweets argued that the Greek government is being forced to capitulate by ECB and bank closures. In tweeting his blog entry “killing the European project” Paul Krugman joined in with those social media users increasingly disillusioned with Europe.

Especially Germany faced criticism: “The German government’s conduct simply is shameful” one user said. The economist Branko Milanovic tweeted: “Madness! Schaeuble wants to destroy 55 years of European integration to punish Tsipras.” During the night before Monday #Thisiscoup was replaced by a new slogan in Greece: #TsiprasleaveEUsummit became the new trend calling on Tsipras to reject a deal. “Alexis take the next plane and come home! We trust you!” was how one user summed up the mood. Tweets started to express anger and disappointment as it became clear on Monday morning that Tsipras had backed down. “Tsipras take a plane but don’t come back to Greece” someone joked cynically. “Forget the power stations, water works, ports and airports” someone else said in sorrow. The “coup” pointed out by the global social media swarm was successful. But at least the “democratic and humanistic” rhetorical masks of European policy have fallen.

Margarita Tsomou, Athens.

### A message from us

This is the fourth issue of FactCheck:Hellas founded in Germany in April 2015. In June we published our third issue in three languages. This current issue appears in six languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish and Greek. The Greek issue appeared as a supplement of the big daily EFSYN – the journalists newspaper. Details of publishers and supporters on page 2.

We ask you to please support FactCheck:Hellas and to help us spreading this publication.

Your FCH-editors.

# Fact versus fiction

**A**fter Alexis Tsipras' capitulation to the Eurogroup has created ample amounts of fertile ground, demagogic slogans. FactCheck:Hellas takes up a few of those to provide some sober counter-arguments.

**Claim:** The government failed to produce credible policies since it got elected on January 25th. It never provided the "lists of reforms" demanded from it.

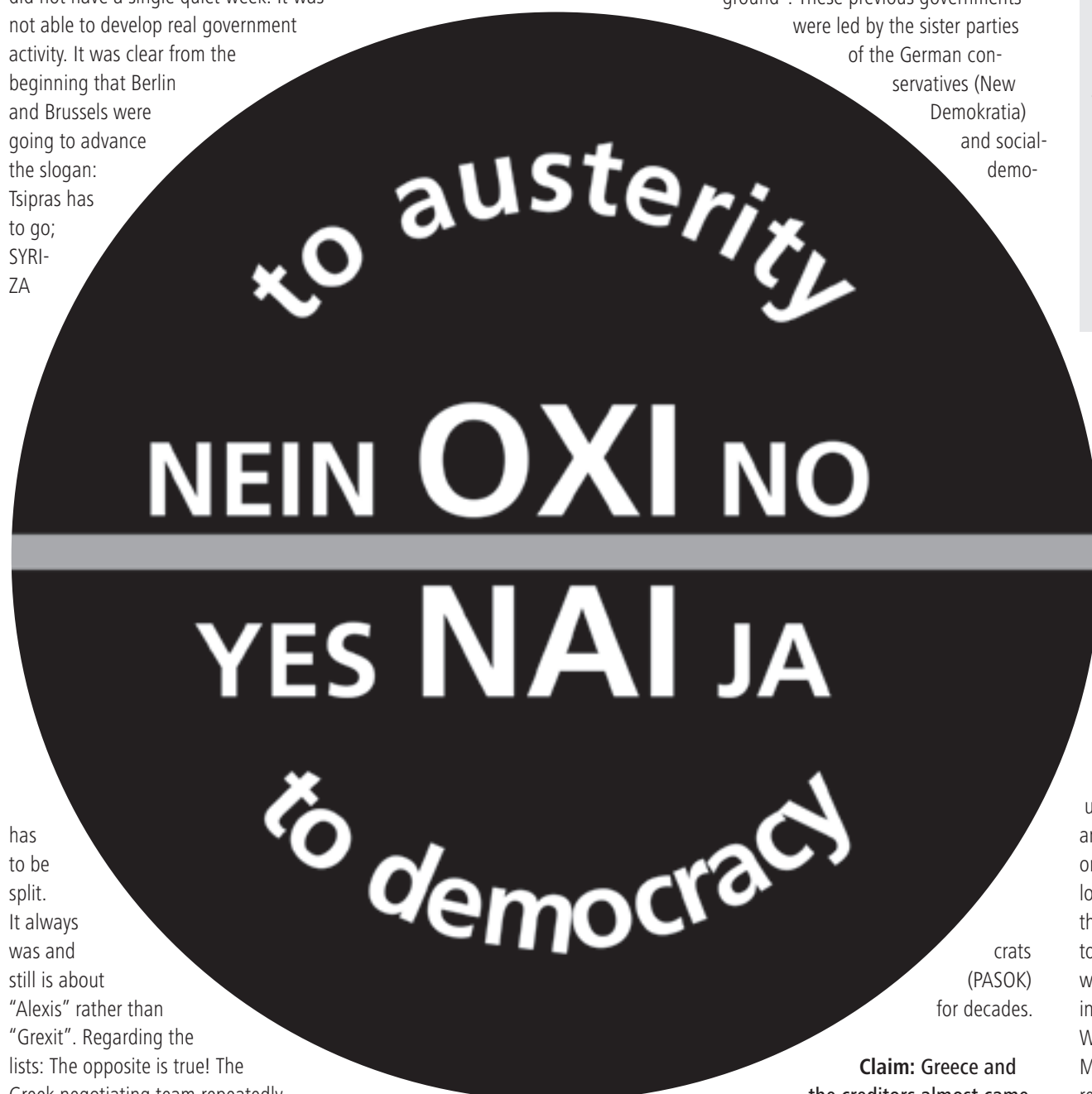
**Answer:** The truth is that ever since being elected the Greek government did not have a single quiet week. It was not able to develop real government activity. It was clear from the beginning that Berlin and Brussels were going to advance the slogan: Tsipras has to go; SYRIZA

carefully accounted for lists of proposals. The Greek approach was diametrically different to the one adopted by the creditors though. The three key differences were: Firstly, rather than being primarily about saving money the proposals were concerned with generating economic growth in order to strengthen public finances. Secondly tax revenue was to be increased by taxing the rich and closing tax loopholes. Thirdly, and this is an absolute necessity: A debt haircut was to be implemented in order to generate breathing space for country and population. Finally the accepted remaining debt

was to be paid back. But the creditors wanted austerity by continuously cutting public spending and mass incomes. These measures played a key role in creating the deep crisis the country has been experiencing since 2011.

**Claim:** Greece is a run down country.

**Answer:** It is. SYRIZA said so before the elections and the Greek government has been saying so since the end of January. And on July 2nd the German capitalist newspaper "Boersenzeitung" explained whose fault it is: "Previous governments in Athens have run the country to the ground". These previous governments were led by the sister parties of the German conservatives (New Demokratia) and social-democrats (PASOK) for decades.



has to be split. It always was and still is about "Alexis" rather than "Grexit". Regarding the lists: The opposite is true! The Greek negotiating team repeatedly published and provided Brussels with

## The aims of FCH and FCH publishing information

*FactCheck:HELLAS* is being produced in German since April 2015. Issue 4 appears in the following six languages: German, Greek, English, French, Italian and Spanish. As of issue 3 FCH is also being published as a supplement for the Greek daily EFSYN ("the journalists newspaper").

*FactCheck:HELLAS* aims to develop and strengthen a European and world wide solidarity movement supporting the population in Greece.

This is an international movement against austerity, a medicine dished out by big corporations and banks leading to the impoverishment of populations, suffocating public debt and, at the same time, soaring profits for big business and banks. A movement making the case for a world prioritising human dignity, democracy and solidarity instead of profits and financial interest.

In Germany FCH is supported by around 50 prominent individuals and a dozen democratic and socialist organisations. Details are on our website:

[www.faktencheckhellas.org](http://www.faktencheckhellas.org)

FCH-editors: Sebastian Gerhardt (Berlin) · Werner Rügemer (Köln) · Mag Wompe (Bochum) · Winfried Wolf (Michendorf/Berlin). Executive editor: Winfried Wolf. English translation: Christian Bunke.

The German edition of FCH is published by: Büro für Frieden und Soziales – BFS e.V., postal address: An den Bergen 112 · 14552 Michendorf · Deutschland/Germany. The FCH-team would like to see this publication to be distributed in the widest possible way. Therefore no copyright is reserved in any way.

German and Greek print editions can be ordered here:

bestellen@faktencheckhellas.org · Website: [www.faktencheckhellas.org](http://www.faktencheckhellas.org)

**Claim:** Greece and the creditors almost came to an agreement by the end of June. Tsipras and Varoufakis acted in a wrong and absurd fashion when they suddenly left negotiations to call a referendum.

**Answer:** On one hand this is largely true. But on the other hand it really means this: During these so called negotiations or rather, blackmail, that went on for several months, SYRIZA ditched many points from the programme it got elected on. Greek negotiators led by Yanis Varoufakis did so partly because neither did they find any support for their position in other Eurozone countries nor was there a mass movement of solidarity anywhere in Europe. Greece was isolated and still is to a large degree. This has nothing to do with SYRIZA being in the wrong. On the contrary: Government leaders in Madrid, Rome, Lisbon and Dublin feared that SYRIZA success would strengthen anti-austerity forces in their own countries, leading to an eventual toppling of their own governments.

**Claim:** It was wrong to declare a referendum. Firstly they were close

**Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras' summary comments at the European Parliament, July 8<sup>th</sup>**

"For five months, the negotiation has taken place behind closed doors. [...] I'd like to say that I'm in agreement with the views voiced that the European Parliament should play a more active role. The Parliament could indeed have empowered the three institutions—the Troika—certainly the Commission and the European Central Bank, that handles funding; instead, Troika decisions have been driven by the IMF rather than the pre-eminent European institution of democracy, the European Parliament."

**Anonymous – from within the gang:**

So, through these discussions it was the government that was coming, coming – coming close to the Troika, without them making any move towards us, and never discussing the debt: debt restructuring, debt sustainability, and also, you know, financing. [...] So, from March, April onwards, we started economizing from the state, pulling together all the cash reserves from different branches, agencies, local authorities, things like that, in order to manage to pay the IMF. We paid once, we paid twice, and [we had] to pay wages as well. We paid wages from earnings, from tax receipts. But it's not enough to pay the IMF.

*On July 8th an interview with an unnamed member of Greece's negotiating team appeared online at [mediapart.fr](http://mediapart.fr). From this interview we took the comment above as well as those on page 4 and 5. <http://www.analyzegreece.gr/interviews/item/279-a-member-of-greece-s-negotiating-team-we-underestimated-the-power-of-the-creditors>*

to a deal, as mentioned above. Secondly the issues at stake during the negotiations between Greece and the creditors are so complex, they cannot possibly be understood by common people.

**Answer:** This is wrong in two ways. Firstly Tsipras and the Greek government, having declared the referendum, "only" returned to the original position they got elected on. Secondly the "programme of reforms" presented by the creditors to Greece until the end of June was quite clear and precise: Increase taxes, cut pensions, sell off state owned property to the lowest bidder. The last point implies that the Greek population would soon have to pay even more money for energy, water, transport and health. Everyone in the country understood this. It was Wolfgang Schäuble, by the way, who in May declared that he considered a referendum to be "a sensible idea". However he and the other mighty leaders in the EU headquarters wanted a referendum that would rubber-stamp the sell-out of the country – with the support of Tsipras. They never wanted a real democratic decision.

**Claim:** The referendum split the Greek population.

**Answer:** The opposite is true. The referendum united country and population like never before since the downfall of the military dictatorship in 1974. 61.3 per cent voted "no". There was no constituency where there was no "OXI". Even more right-wing and conservative regions like the Peloponnes or northern Greece returned – at times close – majorities for "no". Often the no-vote was 70 per cent as was the case on Crete. Considering that the Greek Communist Party (KKE) called on its supporters to put their own KKE "no" voting papers into the ballot boxes (which were then counted as spoiled ballots) the real estimate for "no" can be put at a two-third majority. Such a broad base of support

for a decisive question concerning a country and its people is quite unique for modern civil society. This corresponded with representative surveys conducted after the referendum. These put support for SYRIZA at 45, in some cases 50 and more per cent. These were about 10 percentage points more than during the election at the end of January.

**Claim:** The austerity programmes demanded by creditors from Greece make sense and are acceptable. They correspond with standards in other Eurozone countries.

**Answer:** The ongoing crash of the Greek economy since 2010 when precisely these kind of irrational austerity programmes were first introduced is well documented. It is true that this neo-liberal medicine is dished out in many countries and that it is considered to be a holy cow. But this does not mean it does any good. Eurozone debt ratio went up despite and especially because of austerity policies introduced since 2010. Unemployment went up. Youth unemployment exploded almost everywhere. Mass incomes shrunk at the same time. Under the new "memorandum" Greece will have record level VAT. And pensions, already cut by 40 per cent, will shrink even further. The crisis will deepen. This will lead to more suicides and more people leaving the country. This is good? No: It is bad for country, people and democracy.

**Claim:** It is absurd for Tsipras and the SYRIZA majority to now say "yes" to a reform package they opposed during the referendum.

**Answer:** We wouldn't call it "absurd". But the contradiction exists and cannot be overlooked. It can only be explained in the way we did on page 1: This contradiction is the result of blackmail. The deal now signed off in Brussels and the measures ordered by Brussels and Berlin from the Athens parliament are immoral and illegal. Or rather: criminal.



# In the shark tank

## Alexis Tsipras' contradictory battle for survival

Nikos Chilas

**T**he capitulation of Athens is now officially complete. On Monday morning Alexis Tsipras signed off his personal surrender. He did not believe to have a different choice. He also put his signature to a sheer endless list of social brutality that will open the path to never-ending recession.

attempt to regain lost territory should the opportunity arise.

However, everything points to this opportunity being a long way off. Tsipras stands alone. The conservative governments in the so called programme countries (Spain, Portugal, etc.) are suffering in a similar way to Greece, making

editors through parliament and his party with the least amount of trouble and in a very short period of time. He senses the danger that a number of Syriza MP's could refuse to follow and that the left wing of his party could start agitating publicly against his policies.

In the past Tsipras could proudly state that the left opposition was absolutely loyal to him. This could soon change. The situation in Greece has changed fundamentally since Monday. A country previously in the process of liberating itself from the memoranda of understanding (forced on Greece as precondition for being able to receive loans) is now now being subjected to even more draconian austerity. This poses the need to announce the beginning of a new era involving new government personnel, a new political direction as well as a party supporting these policies. Those in the left opposition resisting these uncomfortable new measures will naturally not take part in his future government and parliamentary fraction. Tsipras obviously wants to pre-empt his adversaries by quickly clearing the table. He now aims to remove the two ministers who opposed his intent to agree a new memorandum with the creditors. The same goes for those 15 MP's who said "yes" to the agreement but distanced themselves



It is a paradox that surprisingly few voices in Greece elevate this surrender to the level of treachery. These mainly come from the radical left, among them ANTARSYA which has got trotskyst leanings. In the pages of its organ, *Iskra*, the left opposition within the governing SYRIZA party calls it what it is: a catastrophe. But it holds back with demeaning verbal attacks.

And with good reason. Firstly, the opposition can see that this was not an unconditional retreat. Tsipras was able to obtain a few vital concessions from the negotiations, such as an investment package worth 12 billion Euro, or the (admittedly vague) promise to restructure the Greek debt. Secondly, the opposition does not want to engineer a split with the "pragmatic" core of the leadership around Tsipras on this issue. A split is imminent but it will have the settlement with the creditors as its cause. And thirdly, the opposition is able to differentiate between capitulation and treachery. The latter is only in evidence if the "traitor" uses deceit and finally deserts to the enemy camp – which Tsipras is obviously not doing.

Be that as it may: The leader of the Greek left has not yet crossed a point of no return. He remains where he has always been: On the left. Athens might

them potential allies. But they continue to show him the cold shoulder. The socialist and social democratic government leaders, first among them Francois Hollande in France and Matteo Renzi in Greece, are cowed by the German chancellor. Their rearing up during the last few days was not enough to prevent the Berlin government from humiliating Athens. And the – at this point – weak solidarity movements with Greece are far away from becoming an effective political factor.

Tsipras' original assumption that his election and the July 5th referendum would kick off a dynamic of change in Europe benefiting him as well has largely not materialised. This does not mean that there has been no effect at all. The sole existence of a left-wing government in a member state of the European Union helps to transform the whole political landscape in the long term. There have even been some short term repercussions as is shown by the conflicts within the Eurozone (France versus Germany) and within Germany (social democrats versus christian democrats within the government coalition and the uprising against Sigmar Gabriel within the SPD).

But Tsipras' current concerns are of a different nature. He has to think about how to push the agreement with the cre-

from the memorandum. Then there are 13 MP's considered to be unreliable. On July 12th 2015 the main article in the party newspaper "Avgi" read accordingly: "Clearly the question of reshuffling the government and the majority of the government fraction is posed. This will lead to new elections in the near future."

This grave change of course will demand sacrifices. Whether these sacrifices will lead to a mutation of the SYRIZA party and the government remains to be seen. Tsipras seems to believe that he can pass this test without substantial losses. He assumes that he can win time to reorganise his troops by avoiding a Grexit whilst countering the new impoverishment and recession caused by the memorandum with investment moneys promised to him and through relentless struggle against the oligarchs.

At the same time he has gained a new insight he wants to use. One cannot act like a goldfish in a shark tank full of creditors. He obviously has to become a shark himself. Political matters are too serious to be left to the political sharks. Especially those matters who are about escaping the teeth of the sharks. These are the most serious of all.

Nikos Chilas is correspondent in Berlin of the daily Greek paper *To Vima*

## The Greek referendum – a rebirth of democracy

Antje Vollmer

During this heated summer democracy was born for a second time in Athens. The rest of Europe simply has not noticed yet that the referendum in Greece has also been a vote for reclaiming democratic decision rights about the fundamental direction of European policies even, and especially during times of crisis. There is no future for a Europe being purely a project of finance and power in the hands of experts who in most cases do not even have democratic legitimacy. This was the forward looking aspect of the Greek government sentiment that politics should no longer be subject to decisions made by the Troika and elevated elites.

Especially Wolfgang Schaeuble and Angela Merkel do not seem to realise how their paternalistic disciplinarian attitude is splitting the people of Europe

into north and south as well as winners and losers. Sometimes these methods remind me of the Prague spring in 1968. No one needs a Europe of black pedagogy, blackmail and self-righteousness. The background of German history makes this behaviour especially unbearable. The young generations will build a different Europe orientated towards building peace within and without, as well as social justice. If this does not succeed Europe will collapse. But I believe that 25 years of one-sided neo-liberal aegis will lead to a fundamental change of political ideas in many countries. It was Germany's great misfortune these days that there was only a grand coalition with the SPD being unable to lead strong opposition against this direction. But I also know that at the base of German society there is great solidarity with the Greeks showing such courage in such hard times

Antje Vollmer,  
retired vice-president of  
the Deutsche Bundestag



Picture Iakovos Hatzistavrou

## In Athens, a new chapter in European history began.

Mohssen Massarraf

The hard neo-liberal core of European finance ministers around Wolfgang Schaeuble are obviously staying on their ideologically fixated course. They will carry on trying to engineer the failure of the Greek government. A financial-political coup is being organised against the government comparable with the CIA coup carried out against the Iranian Mossadegh government in 1953, after all other attempts to bring about the failure of this democratically elected government came to nothing. What is to be done now?

Even more than before we are in full solidarity with the Greek government, offering all the support that can be given.

The Greek government should start to immediately circulate an interest free solidarity bond on a European scale in order to prevent an immediate collapse of liquidity whilst securing internal exchange business. The Mossadegh government was able to finance its budget deficit with people's shares for almost a year after the USA and UK had

started boycotting Iranian oil exports.

In the knowledge that Brussels still wants to crash the Greek government into the wall the government should prepare for leaving the Euro. It should develop a parallel currency pegged to the Euro which would provide a perspective for an eventual return to the single currency. In this case the repayment of debts should be stopped until further notice.

Using its new and popular legitimacy the government should force the rich including the Greek church to pay their tax debts. These creative measures could finance a programme of investment, employment, growth and ecological sustainability.

For the first time European neo-liberalism has manoeuvred itself into a cul de sac. It is now essential for the socially disadvantaged people in Europe to start working together in transforming the Europe of the greedy rich into a social Europe. This is not just about Greece but about a better Europe as a whole.

The author is professor emeritus for politics and economy. The comment was written on July 7th before the new memorandum was ratified. A longer version of this piece can be found at [www.faktencheckhellas.org](http://www.faktencheckhellas.org)



# How both sides served the desire to forget

The example of General Alexander Andrae, the first commander of "fortress Crete".

Dorothee Vakalis

The issues of "Nazi crimes in Greece", "reparations" and "financial compensation for the victims of Nazi crimes" have vanished from the media pages. The Greek government seems to have stopped talking about them just when the German media started discussing them. Has there been an internal arrangement? In its first issue in April 2015 FactCheck:HELLAS published internal German foreign office documents supplementing an article by Karl Heinz Roth. These proved how German governments had been systematically kicking the issue into the long grass for decades. In issue three we published a map documenting all places destroyed by the Nazi occupation regime, including those places where the biggest massacres took place. In this issue Dorothee Vakalis, basing herself on the scientific work of Stratos Dordanas, reports how west German circles worked flat out to free a German Nazi general convicted of mass murder in Greece during the early 1950s. The result being that he was able to work as a neo-Nazi in the Federal Republic of Germany. FCH-editors.

Over time, attempts by Greek governments and courts to deal with German war criminals were subordinated to the desire to build an economic partnership with Germany as well as the formation of the anti-communist block during the period of the cold war. The field of play wasn't

and Treblinka. Merten was arrested in Greece. The German government pressed him free.

The case of the first commander of "fortress Crete" is another example. Andrae was the commanding officer of the air force general staff during the

## Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras' summary comments at the European Parliament, July 8<sup>th</sup>

"I truly believe that it is the sovereign right of a government to choose to raise taxes on profitable business instead of cutting the allowance of the lowest-tier pensions, the EKAS, to achieve budgetary targets. If a sovereign government does not have the right to choose equivalent measures to achieve the required targets, then we are adopting an extreme and undemocratic approach, where countries subject to a program should not hold elections, and governments should instead be appointed, technocrats should be appointed and they should be responsible for all decisions."

### Anonymous – from within the gang:

"The institutions have simply rejected all reforms without scrutiny. Schaeuble and Berlin are clever. They create crisis situations during the negotiations and then they say: 'Oh, the Greeks do not cooperate, they do not understand what they are causing, they do not provide any numbers.' And instead of falling the Euro rises. The same goes for the stock exchanges."

Taken from an interview with an unnamed member of the Greek negotiation team published on July 8th. Source see box on page two.

dominated by questions of justice and law any more. Rather it was dominated by the diplomatic, political and economic objectives of both countries. The victims of those crimes increasingly fell from view. Meanwhile perpetrators were stylised as victims of the Greek justice system in Germany, enabling them to live respectable lives.

FactCheck:Hellas documented this using the example of Max Merten, the leader of the German army administration in Thessaloniki. He had been one of the organisers responsible for the deportation of 48.000 Jews into the extermination camps of Auschwitz

airborne assault on Crete. Andrae became commander of fortress Crete after its occupation was completed on June 9th 1941. Under his command revenge mass-executions were carried out among the local civilian island population.

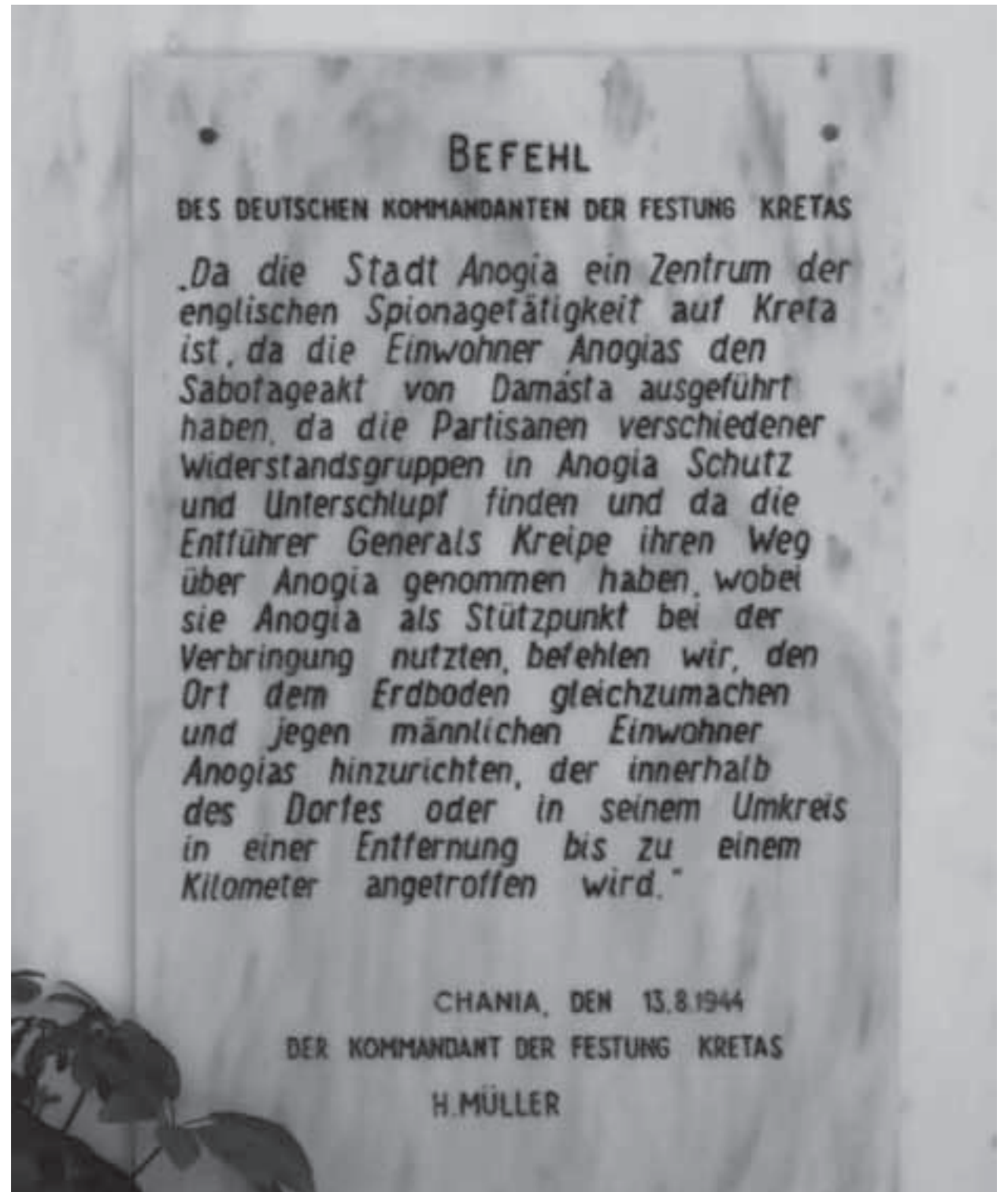
He was replaced in August 1942. At the end of the war he was arrested by the British. Shortly after the UK charged him with crimes committed against British prisoners of war. However, the British government preferred to extradite him to Greece. Four charge sheets waited for him there - one of them for the execution of 2000 civilians as a punishment after the island had been conquere-

## Business and Crime

German-Greek relations were dominated by the economy. Greece wanted to do business whilst Germany looked for political gains as compensation. Those guilty of committing Nazi crimes in Greece did not – apart from few cases – have to face justice. After a visit of then Greek minister president Karamanlis to the Federal Republic of Germany and the granting of government bonds worth 200 million Deutsche Mark (DM) the Greek government decided to abandon

any attempt to persecute German war criminals. German government departments did not show any desire to persecute these war criminals either (See the comment written by Norman Paech in FCH01, p.3). At the beginning of 1959, two months after the German-Greek economic negotiations, Karamanlis pushed a law through Greek parliament waiving any persecution of war criminals.

2500 war crimes took place on Greek territory according to the "National Greek Bureau for War Crimes". Amongst



Order of the German commander of fortress Crete.

"Because the town of Anogia is a centre of English spying activity on Crete, because the inhabitants of Anogia carried out sabotage in Damasta, because partisans of various resistance groups find shelter and safety in Anogia and because the kidnapers of General Kreipe went via Anogia using Anogia as a staging post for transporting him we order to wipe the place from the face of the earth and to execute every male inhabitant of Anogia found within the village or within a one kilometre radius."

Chania, 13.8.1944 · The commander of fortress Crete · H. Mueller

red. Andrae was extradited to Greece early 1947. On December 3rd 1947 he was sentenced for life in prison.

In Germany there was strong resistance against the conviction of the former general. "Der Spiegel" implied that Andrae was the victim of a miscarriage of justice. In issue 9 in 1951 the magazine commiserated regretfully that he had not received any donations towards the 6000 Dollar needed to file his appeal. Andrae also doubted the validity of the emergency laws and the

other things these were about murder, arbitrary executions of prisoners of war, the burning of villages, destruction of property, slave labour...

Quoted from an interview by FCH with Dimitros K. Apostopoulos. Apostopoulos is a historian, political scientist, research fellow at the Centre for Modern Greek History at the Athens Academy and lecturer at the Greek Open University. His dissertation ("Die griechisch-deutschen Nachkriegsbeziehungen. Historische Hypothek und moralischer 'Kredit'") was published in German by 'Peter Lang Verlag' in 2004.

special court that had convicted him.

Two years after he was sentenced a plea for clemency was handed in, supported by the German government. Important sections of the German churches supported this plea in a letter to King Paul, dated March 8th, 1950. The German embassy in Athens also piled up pressure, as Hagen Fleischer found out. On December 15th 1951 the Greek foreign ministry finally went to the Greek ministry of justice asking for procedures to be sped up "bearing in mind the great economic interest of our country and the direction of our foreign policy". King Paul signed Andrae's plea for clemency. On 17.1.1952 Andrae left Greece after five years in prison.

This was a major change of Greek attitudes concerning German war criminals. Andrae's successor commanders on Crete – generals Mueller and Braeuer – both had received death sentences carried out in Athens in 1947.

Andrae's return to West Germany was widely commented on in the German press. Former military colleagues gave him a warm welcome. One newspaper wrote that Andrae "had been sentenced by a Greek special court for alleged war

crimes."

In an extensive interview for the Weserkurier Andrae criticised the Greek justice system and lauded the "achievements" of Mueller and Braeuer who were his successors in Crete. Supported by leading media organisations he portrayed himself as a victim. Wikipedia: "He now began a political career and soon became one of the most high profile right wing extremists in the new Federal Republic. At first he was involved in the "Deutscher Block", later becoming a co-founder of the "Reichsblock" in 1953. Between 1953 and 1955 he was one of three chairmen of the "Deutsche Reichspartei" as part of its party directorate."

He primarily dedicated himself to sullying the image of Greece in the German public eye

By Dorothee Vakalis, using information taken from the book: "Crete in the tumultuous decade of 1940-50", Chania 2012 (so far only available in Greek), there: "Stratos Dordanas, war crimes – the legal proceedings against the commanders of "fortress Crete". Pages 83-110.



# Onwards and upwards?

## Perspectives for the Greek economy within the Eurozone

Sebastian Gerhardt



Picture Iakovos Hatzistavrou

**A**fter the Euro summit negotiations concluded on the morning of July 12th Greek minister president Alexis Tsipras declared that Greece “can now stand again on its own feet”. Despite negative consequences following from the agreement with the creditors, financial stability would now open up new economic prospects. Now the burden of austerity would have to be shared out in a socially just way. “Grexit” was a thing of the past.

It is true, the Greek population did not hand the government a blank cheque for leaving the Euro when it voted “no” in the referendum on July 5th. The propaganda from Berlin and Brussels presented the referendum as a choice between staying in or leaving the Euro. It was hoped that Greeks would vote in a similar way as GDR citizens did in 1990, thus deciding to not leave the “western currency”. By linking with protest culture and promising a negotiated solution SYRIZA successfully secured a “No”. Now we have a negotiated settlement. Even if this agreement means that ongoing debates about Greece’s status in the Eurozone have come to an end, one question nevertheless remains: What are the perspectives for the Greek economy in this environment? This is about facts, not beliefs and speculations.

Taking aside the individual aspects of the austerity programme - a stabilisation of the Greek finance system would without doubt lead to positive results. Greek savers and companies have withdrawn at least 40 billion Euro from their bank accounts since November 2014 alone - putting their cash “under mattresses” or stashing it abroad. Even if only some of this money should flow back into Greek bank accounts it would work like an economic stimulus programme. Should debt payments by the Greek state be set off beyond that

by a new memorandum the brutal cuts in public expenditure from last quarter, caused by scraping together all reserves to service the debt, could be halted. Maybe there could even be public orders for private companies again.

But what about the medium-term perspective? At first a look back. The Greek economic structure has changed a lot during the last 20 years. Between 1995 and 2007 the Greek economy experienced massive growth. When adjusted to prices GDP grew by 55 per cent during that period. In 2007 it was on a level of 155 per cent if the year 1996 equals 100 per cent. Economic performance has collapsed drastically since the crisis began in 2009. It is now on the same level as when Greece joined the Euro 15 years ago. This massive collapse of GDP was caused directly by the crisis, but also by austerity programmes and high amounts of debt in need of servicing.

The largest amount of gross value added in Greece is - like elsewhere - to be found in the service sector. Without tourism and shipping nothing goes. But this does not mean that classic sectors of the economy are unimportant. On the contrary. It is here that both stabilising and destabilising economic developments show themselves in Greece. The share of farming in gross value added shrank from 8 to 3 per cent between 1995 and 2007. Today it is stable at 4 per cent. The share of industry shrank from 15 per cent in 1995 to 13 per cent in 1998 and has remained there since. In 2014 it was 12 per cent. In the 1990s Greek industry experienced a massive structural crisis. The hopes invested in joining the Euro were not least a reaction to this. The business fluctuations since then can clearly be seen in the construction sector. During the mid-1990s its share was only 6 per cent.

In 2004 it was a healthy 9 per cent. In 2014 it was only just about 2 per cent of gross value added.

The small country’s dependency on imports has increased visibly. In 1995 Greece imported goods and services worth 22 per cent of GDP. In 2000 - with the perspective of joining the Euro on January 1st 2001 - the level was 35 per cent already. It has more or less stayed there since. However this means the Greek import quota still remains below EU-average (42.9%) and distinctly below the average of other peripheral countries like Portugal (39.4%), Romania (41.1%) or Bulgaria (67.9%). Exports were unable to keep up with growing imports. The greatest foreign trade deficit appeared in the years of boom and crash from 2007 until 2010. When counted together Greek foreign trade developed deficits and thus foreign debt worth 314 billion Euro between 1995 and today. More than two thirds of this developed between joining the Euro and the end of 2010.

Real change needs extensive investment. One aspect of the Brussels agreement from July 12th is to ease Greek access to EU-subsidies worth 35 billion Euro. What does this mean? Investment in Greece was 57.7 billion Euro in 2008. In 2014 - the year of real growth highly lauded in Brussels - it was about 21 billion. Thus the promised subsidies do not even cover one year’s loss of investments. And the 35 billion promised will be paid out during the course of a number of years at best. Far reaching economic change in Greece cannot be expected using instruments such as these. A solid place at the periphery of the Euro system is all that is promised by the elites in Berlin, Paris and Brussels to the Greek population.

After years of economic decline and a deeply frightening financial crisis even

the vague promise of stabilisation - that it won’t get any worse - is a positive message that cannot be underestimated.

But the new austerity programme forced on Greece with the agreement of July 13th also means that previous austerity programmes continue. Their consequences are known and have been described. Domestic demand will shrink again, at least in the medium term, due to even higher consumer taxes - VAT is

But after the great public mobilisations of the last years people will not simply and modestly return to their private lives, trying to scrape a living on the market. People find reasons to look for alternatives everywhere. Even sober statistics say they are right: No other Eurozone country is shaped by such open economic inequality as Greece. The long growth up to 2007 has led to a shrinking of the share of companies

### Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras’ summary comments at the European Parliament, July 8<sup>th</sup>

“And I want to remind you, Mr. Weber that the strongest example of solidarity in modern European history occurred in 1953 when your country was indebted and looted following two world wars, and Europe and the European people [including Greece; FCH eds.] demonstrated exceptional solidarity at the London Summit in 1953. When they decided to write off 60% of Germany’s debt and they included a growth clause. This was the most important moment of solidarity in modern European history.”

### Anonymous - from within the gang:

“On the weekend when the ECB stopped, we had the heart attack. [...] Different organs are getting numb. Some stop working, others are trying but they don’t have enough blood. [...] We have underestimated their power. It’s a power that enters the very fabric of society [...]. We have very few levers. The European edifice is already Kafkaesque.”

*Taken from an interview with an unnamed member of the Greek negotiation team published on July 8th. Source see box on page two.*

to be set at 23 per cent, an EU record - and further pensions cuts. VAT increases for restaurants and the removal of tax breaks for the Greek islands will harm the important tourism industry and increase relative advantages of the competition, for example in Turkey. Cuts in tax benefits for those farmers still in business will prevent the important renewal of that industry. Thus taking aside short term upswing effects related to the latest crisis, future economic prospects do not look rosy at all.

and the self employed in the “national income” according to official statistics. But it has always been above 50, sometimes significantly above 60 per cent. Even when the high percentage of the self employed (30 per cent) among wage earners is taken into account this is an incredible amount. This is where a struggle about suggestions for a socially just distribution of the burdens of crisis will be waged: With or without SYRIZA.





Northern Greece: Refugees on their way towards the Greek-Macedonian border. Picture: Vasilis Tsartsanis

# Refugees – EU – Greece

## Solidarity networks in front line to care for arriving refugees

**T**he number of refugees arriving in Europe from northern Africa, Syria, Eritrea, Afghanistan and other regions is growing rapidly. They have two main reasons for fleeing their respective countries: On one hand war and destruction; on the other economic misery and hunger. In both cases OECD – countries and therefore the European Union bear a good chunk of the responsibility for this. They deliver weapons for these wars. They bombed Libya and Afghanistan into their present

state of lawlessness and mass suffering. At first they supported the Assad-regime in Syria for many years (profiting from local torture methods along the way) only to then change course by arming an opposition en masse which then gave birth to the terror forces of the “Islamic State”.

OECD countries in general and especially the EU are at the forefront of forcing free trade agreements on the refugees’ home countries. The results are the ruin of regional economies, starvation, poverty –

and hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Once these people have stranded on European shores the much quoted “European solidarity” seizes to be worth the paper it is written on. The row about how to distribute a few 10.000 refugees across the various EU-countries in order to ease some pressure off Greece and Italy has been going on for months now. In reality we are talking about hundreds of thousands of refugees. In the first half of 2015 Greece registered 68.000 refugees. Italy

registered a bit less, 65.000 refugees. This means: the main route across the Mediterranean has moved from Italy to Greece. Meanwhile the SYRIZA led government is being kicked around by organised EU blackmail. And still this government managed to take effective measure to improve conditions for refugees in the country.

## An outcry from Idomeni in the north of Greece

**W**here Europe closes its eyes and ears and issues bans, warlike dangers are growing. Mafia-style groups profit from helpless refugees: The murderous marches of Syrian, Afghani and African refugees at the borders between northern Greece and FYROM (Macedonia).

We call on German politicians to come to northern Greece and bear witness to the suffering and the deadly dangers confronting countless refugees at the “borders within Europe”! This explosive hot-spot is not present in the minds of our people in authority! Thousands of men, women and children arrive by train or by journeying many kilometres on foot. Exhausted they dwell in fields and reeds near the Macedonian border. They head out in groups, led by people smugglers and other people offering assistance to cross the border. Macedonian border officials fend them off for days, only to then let groups travel on. These arm themselves with sticks and bars, knowing that beyond the border gangs and also police are waiting for them to rob their last remaining property

and their passports. Many of these then circulate in Europe providing safety for criminals and others. Every day cases of gang violence are being registered: Refugees return severely injured. Bleeding and battered people barely find medical assistance in the small health centre in Polikastro which is 20 kilometres away. It does not even have an ambulance. The hospital in Kilkis which is at a 50 kilometre distance can barely be reached without the help of other people. Many do not go there, fearing arrest. Time

and again they attempt to cross the border. We have eye witness reports about mistreatments and ambushes. Film producer Vasilis Tsartsanis has made documentaries. He also sent an appeal to European parliament. Whilst state and local government bodies are paralysed by helplessness in view of the mass of refugees, civil society is stepping in at many places: Housewives, business people, teachers and the unemployed join together: They cook, bandage wounds, help and support tirelessly: “We do not

want money for relief measures, the politicians need to find solutions at last.”

Eye witnesses report about “German officers” at the borders of FYROM and in Hungary. There is talk about dogs being let loose on refugees to push them to the ground. Has any German MP asked this question in the German parliament: “Where in Europe are German police units currently active to repel refugees – and with how many officers?”

When are we finally ready to change these brutal measures of deterrence

into a culture of European solidarity and often evoked human rights? We call on members of parliament and other officials to come to Greece right now! Not when “the schedule allows it”! They don’t let earthquake victims wait for three months after the catastrophe! Together with supportive locals we will accompany them to Idomeni where refugees are dwelling under the open sky, waiting for their group to be finally let through by Macedonian armed officers. We will accompany them to doctors and the local population and will provide eye witnesses so that they can see for themselves. Then they can raise their voice: European solutions have to be found for these people arriving en masse in our midst, hoping to secure their survival and to find peace in the European Union. The true spirit of Europe will be determined with the refugee question!

### “I have been to Idomeni...”

German media and politicians have the cheek to now talk up a “humanitarian crisis” which supposedly is the fault of the left wing government. Humanitarian crisis is already here and it is the result of austerity policies and brutal EU-refugee policies. I have just been visiting a solidarity group in Idomeni where the situation is escalating, just as it is on the islands close to the Turkish border. Hundreds of people are without care, food and water, without toilets and without shelter from sun or rain. Without any medical support they are on their way to walk on foot into rich Europe. It is horrible to see people crawling out of

bushes pleading for water and food. Pictures I have previously known only from famines in Africa. The local people, themselves suffering extreme unemployment with barely any money in their pockets are trying their utmost to support these people who are even poorer. They deserve our greatest possible respect. The EU is ridiculing its own principles by standing by on the sidelines.

*Dr. Nadja Rakowitz, managing director of the association of German democratic doctors. [www.vdaee.de](http://www.vdaee.de)*

*Vasilis Tsartsanis Polikastro, Dorothee Vakalis, Katerina Notopoulou Thessaloniki, Dr. Nadja Rakowitz Frankfurt/M, Gerhard Lanzerstorfer Linz Contact: [vasilis.tsartsanis@gmail.com](mailto:vasilis.tsartsanis@gmail.com)*



# Refugee policies: Progress is made

## Politics in the shadow of European deterrence

Dimitrios Angelidis, newspaper of journalists (EFSYN)

**A**fter the referendum the Greek government carried out decisive measures in the political field of migration and asylum. Despite many problems it carried out what Tasia Christodopoulou, secretary of state in the newly founded ministry of migration, described as a return to Greek and European laws and human rights. These had suffered under the openly xenophobic policies of the previous government.

Even the earliest government actions in Spring were welcomed by the UN, the Council of Europe and human rights organisations. They concerned the release of everyone wrongly detained in prisons because they had already requested asylum, or because they belonged to groups in special need of protection, or because

are still being put in jail and there are still reports about people from groups in need of special protection being held in police stations]. The reason for this is that according to European treaties *prison finances cannot be turned over to different purposes*. However the EU does not seem to have budgeted sufficiently for taking in refugees. The mass arrival of refugees was met with panic by media and opposition. This then caused parts of the government to cave in – especially the ministry responsible for the police and prisons.

Still there is progress although be it with limitations. On July 9th parliament agreed a ground breaking draft bill with a huge majority of SYRIZA, Pasok, to Potami and Communist Party (KKE). This happened despite all the turbulences

“Refugees have been trying to reach Greece on small boats via Turkey for years now. During this time Greek coast guards used to brutally push back of people into Turkish waters. The new Greek government has now ordered for this to be stopped. Those doing it were special forces wearing masks and guns. They used to rob migrants and sent them back into the sea afterwards.

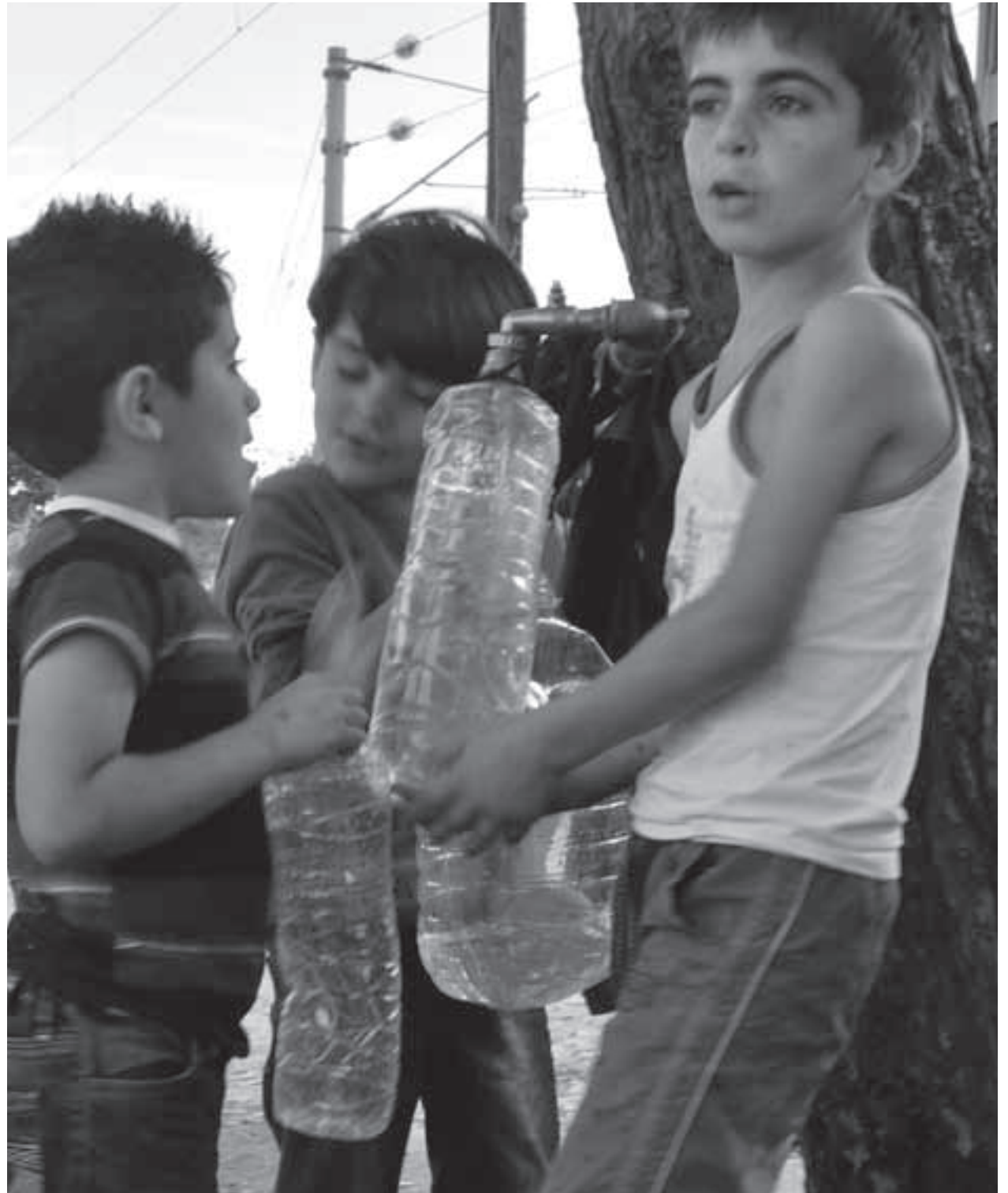
*Hagen Kopp, co-founder of the German “no one is illegal” network and activist in the local refugee initiative “Lampedusa in Hanau”. He helped to develop the transnational project “Watch the Med” as well as the “alarm phone” connected to it. Both initiatives aim to support refugees in distress at sea whilst at the same time increase pressure on the European border regime.*

they had been stuck there for more than 18 months.

However problems in implementing such policies across Greece and Europe quickly arose, partly because these policies are very different to the ruling logic of deterrence. The promise to turn these prisons into open arrival centres could not be kept. [FCH annotation: In northern Greece the number of those still imprisoned is estimated to be 300, in Amydaleza 600. However the period of imprisonment seems to be limited to 6 months now. People without documents

ces with the creditors. Because of this thousands of migrant children will now receive Greek citizenship provided they were either born here or arrived in Greece at a very young age. However harsh standards are being imposed leading to the exclusion of many children. This is supposed to prevent the undermining of the constitution.

This new draft bill also repeals rules punishing the transportation of people without documents on public or private transport providing humanitarian help such as sea rescue, transporting the



Children using a water fountain at the border in Idomeni. Picture Vasilis Tsartsanis

needy or transportation with the aim to apply for asylum. Here, public protest did have an effect.

Using special EU-finances, an asylum office was established in Thessaloniki. Five others opened in the rest of the country. This way at least some aspects of the completely insufficient new

asylum system which came into effect two years ago can now be improved. All claims for asylum had to be made at police stations before.

## Criminal prosecution of practical help for refugees has to end!

Appeal made by solidarity groups on the islands of Chios, Lesbos and Mitlini [June 2015]

Under Greek law people can be sentenced to 10 years for providing practical help in transporting refugees. People are repeatedly being arrested by the police and dragged in front of a state prosecutor. Solidarity groups in the whole country and on Lesbos protested against this with a huge action of civil disobedience against the state on June 14th 2015:



Citizens and visitors joined together to guide refugees from the lonely, far away beaches to the harbour where they could find help and shelter. The following is an

excerpt from their appeal:

“According to Greek law transporting citizens from third countries without the right to enter Greek territory is a criminal offence. The same goes for offering rides

according to international law. [...] Taking aside those requirements of international law above national law obliging the Greek state to provide shelter for refugees, the Greek constitution is also clear:

“Every person present on Greek state territory is guaranteed the absolute protection of life, dignity and freedom irrespective of nationality, race, language and religious or political beliefs.” (Article 5, section 2).

We call for the prosecution of the energetic and supportive citizen’s help on Lesbos to be stopped immediately, so that people are not persecuted anymore just for doing their duty as human beings.

on private or public transport within the country. On the other hand exemptions are being made for transporting people in need of international protection ac-

### Greece registers more refugee arrivals than Italy

From a UNCHR report published on 1.7.2015

137.000 people have crossed the Mediterranean to seek shelter in Europe since the year began. One third of them are Syrian citizens who should almost always qualify for refugee status or other forms of protection. Afghanistan and Eritrea come second and third in the list of main countries of origin. Their citizens are also mostly being awarded refugee status.

UN refugee commissioner António Guterres said: “As Europe debates the best way of dealing with the escalating refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, one thing has to be clear: Those crossing the sea to Europe are refugees seeking shelter from war and persecution”.

Greek, Italian and Spanish figures show how the number of refugees and migrants arriving via the Mediterranean has increased by 83% in the first half of the year (to 137.000 compared with 75.000 during the same period in 2014).

The report further shows how the eastern Mediterranean route from Turkey to Greece has replaced the central Mediterranean route from northern Africa to Italy as the main route across the sea.

Conditions in Greece are whole insufficient with only restricted infrastructure for just 2000 new arrivals being in place. Thus many refugees attempt to move on via Macedonia and Serbia towards Hungary. Currently, 1000 refugees cross the border between Greece and Macedonia each day. A few weeks ago the amount was only 200 per day. There are increasing reports about violent incidents involving smugglers and criminal networks from along this route. Border patrols have been increased.

“Europe has a clear duty to protect those seeking refuge from war and persecution” says António Guterres. “To reject this responsibility threatens the foundations of the humanitarian system so laboriously constructed in Europe.”  
quoted from www.unhcr.de





## “Please carry on producing FactCheck: Hellas!”

Interview with Dimitris Psarras, member of the EFSYN editorial staff, vice president of the EFSYN cooperative

Since when does EFSYN exist and where does your paper stand in the political print-media spectrum?

Our paper was founded in November 2012. Until 2011 most of us worked for the big “Eleftherotypia” paper which was closed down by the owners. Outstanding wages did not get paid. We went on strike for six months. Without success. Thus we decided to set up a newspaper based on cooperative foundations. The paper’s political direction derives from the individual opinions each of us have. All journalists have the right to state their individual opinion in articles carrying their signature. Of course there is a “central” opinion: Our paper is left-wing and pro SYRIZA. Most importantly: Our paper is the only big Greek newspaper with continuously growing sale

What do your internal structures look like?

All members of the EFSYN team are equal members of our cooperative. This includes journalists as well as “technicians”. Everyone brought 1000 Euro to the table. And everyone worked for two months without pay. This was our starting capital. Now we all get paid the same wages. Again, this includes both blue-collar and white-collar workers.

The positions of director, editorial board and the board of the cooperative are all

Of course our paper was part of the “No” campaign. But there were a few EFSYN journalists in favour of “Yes”. We saw it as our most important task to counter the propaganda of other

do not have democracy at heart. They only want to enforce a new and harsh memorandum.

The third issue of FactCheck:HELLAS was an EFSYN supplement on June 22nd. What was the response like?

This issue was very important for us and our readers. The existence of such an important journalistic and political paper in favour of European peoples’ solidarity with Greece is helpful to the Greek people in their struggle to escape the consequences of this crisis. We received a lot of comments. All of them positive.

What were your reactions when you heard about the Greek parliament agreeing a new austerity programme on July 11th?

It was very difficult to let the euphoria created by the referendum go and to move into the harsh reality of the new memorandum. We can see a few positives in it when compared with the old memoranda. For example ship owners will have to pay taxes for the first time. But it is true: We have a new auster-

ity programme. We do not know [at the time this interview was recorded; FCH-eds.] whether there will be a final agreement with the creditors. They are demanding more and more unacceptable concessions from the Greek government. Sure, for the first time there are some countries supporting Greece. But the price is too high.

Do you have any requests for FactCheck:HELLAS?

I can understand that there are now a lot of questions and doubts within the FCH project. It is only natural for these developments to lead to different political interpretations. But solidarity with the people in Greece is now more important than ever. I would like to clarify that all of us who supported the SYRIZA government and fought for a “No” during the referendum campaign are without any illusions. My wish is this: Carry on with the FactCheck:Hellas project. We have trust in you. But we ask in return to trust us and the Greek people.



subject to being elected by the members. Important decisions are made by the general assembly.

Without doubt the week preceding the referendum must have been a challenge for a left-wing newspaper. Did you feel any consequences as a result?

media. They claimed the referendum was about being in favour or against Europe and the Euro. The consequences for us were positive at first. On the Friday before the referendum we were the first paper! But this miracle only lasted for three days. We had to realise very quickly that the creditors



The EFSYN newsroom in Athens on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The occasion is the presentation of a 10.000 Euro donation to the EFSYN editors. It had to be handed over in cash as the banks were already closed at that point. From left to right: EFSYN editor in chief Giannis Smyrlakis, Winfried Wolf (FCH) and Dimitris Psarras, deputy editor in chief. Below: The EFSYN issue from the same day, July 6<sup>th</sup> 2015, picturing a shocked Eurogroup chief J. Dijsselbloem and the staggering referendum result of 61.3 per cent “No” to the dictat the troika consisting of IMF, EU and Berlin government wanted to force on the Greek population. A week later they succeeded.



Dear comrades, dear friends,

In the name of the ZYRIZA central committee I greet your FactCheck:HELLAS initiative from the bottom of my heart. I wish it the best possible success.

Initiatives like yours give the fighting people of Greece the necessary breathing space. At the same time your project helps to develop international unity. It strengthens those who think freely and who struggle against the splits, the nationalisms and racism. This international solidarity provides our- and yourselves with strength for the necessary battles. And it gives us hope that this world can be changed. It would please me to witness your project spreading across Europe soon. We are especially pleased to read FactCheck:HELLAS, the voice of solidarity from our German friends, in Athens.

Athens, 7 July 2015

Tassos Koronákis – secretary of SYRIZA Central Committee