

**GSC UPDATE 11  (9th November 2012)**

**Wednesday 7th November was US election day so there was very little coverage of an immensely important day in the history of Greece.**

**Just after midnight on the 8th, the Greek Parliament adopted the Troika’s 3rd Memorandum of extreme austerity measures.**

**Do follow some of the links below especially the one showing Syriza MPs joining the Athens demo -**

[**http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPp9Ze4cFqI&feature=player\_embedded**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPp9Ze4cFqI&feature=player_embedded)

**And do join the protests on November 14th!**

1. **Wednesday 14 November is European TUC Day of Action Against Austerity** **– General Strikes** will take place in Greece, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus and Malta, with other action taken by trade unions in Italy, Belgium, France, and Germany.  There are solidarity protests in London, Manchester, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Birmingham, Brighton, Cambridge and Glasgow - see  <http://www.coalitionofresistance.org.uk>, [www.greecesolidarity.org](http://www.greecesolidarity.org) and respective Facebook sites.
2. **Join the twilight solidarity protest in London on Wednesday 14 November, at 5pm, outside the European Commission, 32 Smith Square, Westminster, London SW1P 3EU** (tubes: St James Park or Westminster)  It will be followed by a photo-shoot with Big Ben backdrop, and then, from 7, with an Indoor Rally at the nearby Emmanuel Centre, 9-23 {north end of} Marsham Street, London, SW1P 3DW - organised by the Coalition of Resistance, supported by the TUC, UNITE, PCS and a number of unions, Greece Solidarity Campaign, London Against the Troika. Speakers include: Tony Benn, Mark Serwotka (PCS), Len McCluskey (UNITE), John McDonnell MP.  We are hoping that the next TUC General Secretary, Frances O’Grady may be able, at short notice, to untangle some other obligations to join us.
3. **Circulate this video** - made by the P.I.I.G.S Group – promoting the solidarity protest and rally on Wednesday November 14: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G92Qz6tkaIk&feature=plcp>.  The P.I.I.G.S activists are a kind of Euro Uncut for people from Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain (the P.I.I.G.S. countries).  They have also organised from **5 pm, on Monday 12th Nov, a ‘The Lord Mayor's Banquet vs. The Pigs Banquet’** event at the Guildhall.  No self-respecting pleb should miss the action - The Lord Mayors’ guests are expected to arrive at 6 pm.
4. **We need you to get involved and come to the next Greece Solidarity Campaign Organising Meeting** 6.30 - 7.30 on **Wednesday 21 November**, at the Lucas Arms (upstairs room), 245 Grays Inn Road on corner of Cromer Street (5 minutes walk from Kings Cross).  For future reference these are held every third Wed of month.

***~ If you are not outraged, you are not paying attention ~***

1. **A DAY OF SHAME, when the Troika-imposed Memorandum 3\* (detailed in the Appendix below) was approved in Athens on Wednesday 7 Nov 2012**

{This section is based on a Special Update sent to the Greece Solidarity Campaign from Syriza European Policy Dept in Greece sent 8/11/12 at 00:45 local time.}

“After a completely anti-constitutional  ‘express process’ that lasted for less than 24 hours, the Greek Parliament voted for the new austerity measures prescribed in the 800 pages (!) of the 3rd Memorandum (cuts of 13.5 billion Euro).

The second day of the 48-hour general strike of the trade-unions reached its momentum today, after 17.00 local time, when more than 100.000 demonstrators gathered on Syntagma Square and surrounded the Parliament.  Heavy rain did not prevent the citizens of Athens from joining the demonstration.

During the demonstration, the 71 MPs of SYRIZA USF temporarily left the Room of the Parliament, holding a banner with the slogan "You destroyed the country! Leave now!" and joined the demonstrators on the Square.

{See pictures of yesterday’s demonstration here: <http://www.left.gr/article.php?id=12361>) and see the video here of the Syriza MPs walking onto the Parliament balcony and then joining the demonstration in Syntagma Square, which is chanting “Neither Venizelos or Samaras: the Time for the Left has Arrived!” -  <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPp9Ze4cFqI&feature=player_embedded>}

But the Riot Police did everything possible to "clean up" the Square before the time of the final vote:  Water cannons (first time that they were used in Greece), stun grenades and extensive use of tear-gas.  In total there were more than 100 arrests and at least 5 injured demonstrators.

The voting process ended at around 00:30 am local time: the 3rd Memorandum has been ratified 153-128-18 with one MP absent.

**RESULTS:**

**FOR:** 153/299 = 126 New Democracy (leader Samaras) + 27 PASOK (leader Venizelos)

{N.B. that the Greek constitution awards 50 extra seats to the largest party (i.e. New Democracy) so some say there is no real mandate and the Government’s actual vote for is really 103!}

**AGAINST**: 128/299 = 71 SYRIZA USF; 20 Independent Greeks; 18 Golden Dawn; 12 KKE; 3 Democratic Left (against the official position of their party); 2 PASOK (against the official position of their party); 3 independents.

**‘ABSTENTION’** (register a blank vote, but present): 18/299 = 13 Democratic Left (the official position of the party); 3 PASOK (against the official position of their party); 1 New Democracy (against the official position of his party).

**ABSENT:** 1/300 (Kostas Skandalidis was absent on purpose, against the official position of his party, PASOK)

Immediately after the announcement of the result, the leaders of New Democracy (Mr Samaras) and PASOK (Mr Venizelos) expelled 7 MPs from their Parliamentary Groups, for not voting in favour of the measures (6 from PASOK and 1 from New Democracy).

The battle continues with the next  crucial vote, on Sunday 11 November on the Budget 2013.  Until Sunday there will be consecutive demonstrations all over the country.”

1. **A DAY OF RESISTANCE** – **“Neither Venizelos or Samaras the Time for the Left has Arrived!”**

**Alexis Tsipras, Syriza leader** appealed on Wednesday to the MPs of the two junior parties in the coalition government to vote against the package of austerity cuts. Tsipras urged Pasok and Democratic Left MPs not to fall in line with the ‘front of the Memorandum’ but to align themselves, even at this late hour, "*with the people for the defence of democracy and society". Syriza's leader stressed that each MP's responsibility toward the country and the people took precedence over any fleeting party discipline and urged MPs to "rise to your historic responsibility and contribute to the great change that the people need*".

**Public Transport came to a halt** for a second consecutive day in Athens on Wednesday 8th as employees took part in a two-day general strike called by the country's two major trade unions GSEE and ADEDY, in protest against the package of new austerity measures. Buses, trolleys and OSE railway trains were affected. The Athens Metro and ISAP urban trains were running from 3pm to the end of the shift, to facilitate participation of the public in the planned protest rally on Syntagma Square at 5pm. Taxi services were hit by a rolling 24-hour strikes that began on Monday.

**Local government employees staged a take-over** of the Administrative Reform ministry on Wednesday, protesting the austerity measures contained in the omnibus bill, particularly those affecting local government and public sector workers. Some 200 local government employees, members of the POE-OTA local government workers' union staged a take-over of the ministry headquarters on central Vassilissis Sophias Avenue, while a 15-member POE-OTA delegation was meeting with minister Antonis Manitakis in the latter's office. The take-over ended after the meeting with Manitakis.

1. **Manolis Glezos, Chair of National Council for the Pursuit of German Debts to Greece**, says: Please go to <http://www.greece.org/blogs/wwii/> and sign our petition which asks the German Government to honour its obligations towards Greece, which have been outstanding for decades, by repaying the forced occupation-time loan and the war reparations for the material damages inflicted and the crimes and the looting that were perpetrated by the German war machine in WW2.
2. **To view the newsletter of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy**, an American organisation trying to build solidarity with the Greek People, and organising a rally at the United Nations next Wednesday 11 November, see <http://www.mailermailer.com/x?function=view&c=160953603s-c44c28e1%2a951436v-a046576b>
3. **If you are interested in Greek music, food, theatre, culture, language,** subscribe to a very useful free Greek Listings newsletter: <http://www.eugreeka.com/subscribe>.

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[Unions representing over 3 million members are affiliated to the Greece Solidarity Campaign.](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3J4v4KNDQI&feature=relmfu)

[Join or affiliate your organisation to the Greece Solidarity Campaign: you can run off an information leaflet using the membership form at http://www.greecesolidarity.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Greece-Solidarity-Leaflet.pdf](http://greece.greekreporter.com/2012/10/30/greeks-threaten-albanian-classmate-with-golden-dawn/d093906fd721737815e690d296228142_l/)

αλληλεγγύη και φιλία - solidarity and friendship – Paul Mackney – Co-Chair, Greece Solidarity Campaign

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

**\*APPENDIX**

**Details of the ‘third memorandum of austerity measures’ voted through by the Greek Parliament** whichaccording to *To Vima* (newspaper), include:

\*Restructure of public sector 719 million euro  / \*Municipalities 210 million euro  cuts

\*Wages, bonuses and allowances cuts 1.497 billion euro  / \*Pensions, increase of retirement age 5,475 billion euro

\*Cuts in social welfare 307 billion euro / \* Health care sector 1.113 billion euro

\*Defence spending (closure of military camps, cancellation of new armament deals etc) 406 million euro

\*Education (universities & technical colleges mergers, reducing funding in sports and culture 133 million euro

\*Cuts in state-run enterprises 495 million euro

\*New taxation system (cancellation of tax free amount, tax hikes in tobacco products, tax hike in the interests rates from bank deposits from 10% to 15% etc)  3.89 billion euro.

**Cuts, Cuts, Cuts -** 230 pages  that will leave millions of households with a minimum income enough  just to cover basic needs. According to[leaked information](http://www.matrix24.gr/2012/11/%CF%84%CE%B1-150-%CE%BC%CE%AD%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B1-%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%85-%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CF%84%CF%81%CE%AD%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%85%CE%BD-%CF%84%CE%B7-%CE%B6%CF%89%CE%AE-%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%82/)main changes will be:

* Cuts in main and supplementary pensions 5% for 1,000-1,500 euro, 10% for 1,5001-2,000 euro and 15% for pensions in more than 2,000 euro.
* Increase of retirement age from 65 to 67.
* Social welfare benefits (EKAS) for low-pensioners only for those over 65 years old.
* Cuts for special payrolls 2% for wages up to 1,000 euro and up to 35% for more than 4,000 euro monthly salary. Retrospective as of 1. August 2012.
* Up to 40% salary cuts for employees of state-run enterprises and municipalities.
* Abolition of Christmas/Eastern & Vacation bonuses to wages of civil servants and pensioners.
* Cuts in several allowances of civil servants.
* Increase of working hours from 36.5 hours per week to 40 hours per week for civil servants.
* Decreases in overtime payments
* Reductions in pensions for disabled people
* Reductions in jobless allowances, i.e. seasonal workers
* Reduction in social welfare spending
* Hiring scheme 1:5 until 2015

**Cuts in health sector** will leave thousands if not millions without sufficient health care.  The bill foresees among others: Reducing health services for uninsured (25% of Greeks are without job, while uninsured labour blooms), reducing medicine from official lists, reducing spending for health care cost (medical services and drugs).  In addition a new tax system will raise taxes for low and medium incomes and reduce taxes for the rich.

The spending cuts and ‘structural reforms’ are a precondition for Greece to receive the bailout tranche of 31.5 billion euro. Prime Minister Antonis Samaras said recently that the country has money until November 16th. The billions that will come with the bailout tranche will be spent for the recapitalization of the banks and by the state to pay outstanding debts to suppliers.  Under time pressure Greek government is pushing for the bill to pass through the Parliament and thus before the Eurogroup meeting on November 12th, where the eurozone finance ministers were allegedly to give the green light for the disbursement of the 31.5 billion euro.”