

Τετάρτη, 8 Ιανουαρίου 2014

Δηλώσεις του Πρωθυπουργού κ. Αντώνη Σαμαρά και του Προέδρου της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής κ. Jose Manuel Barroso

Αντώνης Σαμαράς: Καλησπέρα σας, πρώτα από όλα, και καλή χρονιά σε όλους! Είχα σήμερα τη χαρά να συναντηθώ με τον Πρόεδρο της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής, το φίλο μου τον Jose Manuel Barroso και το Κολλέγιο των Επιτρόπων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, στην επίσημη τελετή με την οποία η Ελλάδα αναλαμβάνει την Προεδρία της Ευρώπης, για πέμπτη φορά στην ιστορία της.

Στις συζητήσεις που είχαμε επισήμανα ότι η Ελλάδα φιλοδοξεί στην Προεδρία της να πετύχει την πιο θετική επαφή του Ευρωπαίου πολίτη με την Ένωση.

Γι' αυτό το λόγο, οι αρχές που θα οδηγούν την πολιτική μας το πρώτο εξάμηνο του 2014 θα είναι πρωταρχικά η αντιμετώπιση των ζωτικών προβλημάτων που αφορούν στο ίδιο το μέλλον της Ευρώπης:

α) η οικονομική ανάκαμψη, η καταπολέμηση της ανεργίας- που είναι η μεγάλη σύγχρονη πληγή-, η θωράκιση της συνοχής της Ένωσης και- θα έλεγα- κυρίως της κοινωνικής συνοχής της Ένωσης, η κατοχύρωση της Ευρωπαϊκής ασφάλειας, εσωτερικής και εξωτερικής.

β) είναι μετά η εμβάθυνση της Οικονομικής και Νομισματικής Ένωσης, ώστε να αντιμετωπιστούν αυτά τα οποία θα ονομάσω «κατασκευαστικά ελλείμματα» που ανέδειξε η κρίση, προκειμένου κυρίως να διασφαλίσουμε πλήρως το ενιαίο μας νόμισμα, το ευρώ.

γ) τρίτο σημείο η δημοκρατική νομιμοποίηση και λογοδοσία της Ένωσης, καθώς και αλληλεγγύη ανάμεσα στα κράτη-μέλη και τους λαούς της. Όστε να ενισχυθεί το κοινό Ευρωπαϊκό μας οικοδόμημα και να διευρυνθούν τα δικαιώματα των πολιτών.

Με πυξίδα, λοιπόν, αυτές τις αρχές, η Ελληνική Προεδρία θα επιδιώξει: (1) την τόνωση της ανάπτυξης και της απασχόλησης, (2) την εμβάθυνση της Ευρωζώνης, (3) τη συνολική διαχείριση της μετανάστευσης και (4) την Ανάπτυξη των θαλάσσιων πολιτικών, καθώς και την θωράκιση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ασφάλειας.

Περισσότερη Ευρώπη, καλύτερη Ευρώπη, πιο συνεκτική Ευρώπη! Περισσότερη ασφάλεια για τους Ευρωπαϊκούς λαούς. Περισσότερες ευκαιρίες και περισσότερη ευημερία για τους Ευρωπαίους πολίτες. Κι όλα αυτά με περισσότερα έργα και περισσότερη λογοδοσία.

Η Ελλάδα με τεράστιες θυσίες αφήνει πίσω της την κρίση. Η Ευρώπη αφήνει πίσω της την κρίση. Ασφαλώς δεν λύθηκαν όλα τα προβλήματα. Ασφαλώς, έχουμε ακόμα πολλά να κάνουμε... Αλλά τώρα η Ελλάδα έχει σταθεί στα πόδια της, η Ευρώπη ξέρει καλά το δρόμο της. Κοιτάξτε πίσω πόσα περάσαμε μόνο τα τελευταία χρόνια. Και κοιτάξτε γύρω σας που βρισκόμαστε σήμερα. Και τι γίνεται γύρω μας, γύρω από την Ευρώπη... Πάνω μας, πάνω στην επιτυχία, δηλαδή, του Ευρωπαϊκού εγχειρήματος, έχουν εναποθέσει τις ελπίδες τους, όχι μόνο οι λαοί της ίδιας της Ευρώπης, αλλά και πολλοί λαοί έξω από την Ευρώπη, στην περιφέρειά της αλλά και πιο πέρα ακόμα.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ολοκλήρωση που τώρα μπαίνει στην πιο αποφασιστική φάση της, είναι σίγουρα, λοιπόν, η μεγάλη ελπίδα για τους λαούς της Ευρώπης. Κάτι που υπήρξε «άπιαστο όνειρο» για πολλές γενιές Ευρωπαίων και που τώρα γίνεται πραγματικότητα. Αλλά η Ολοκλήρωση της Ένωσής μας- επαναλαμβάνω- είναι και ελπίδα για πολλούς λαούς εκτός Ευρώπης, οι οποίοι καταλαβαίνουν ότι μια ισχυρή και ενωμένη Ευρώπη είναι και ασφαλέστερη εγγύηση για έναν καλύτερο και για έναν ασφαλέστερο κόσμο.

Κύριε Πρόεδρε, θα ήθελα να σας ευχαριστήσω πολύ για την παρουσία σας εδώ, για το γεγονός ότι σε αυτή τη φάση τη δύσκολη, την οποία ακολουθούν Ευρωεκλογές, είσαστε εδώ μαζί με το Κολλέγιο των Επιτρόπων και αναλύσαμε μαζί σε λεπτομέρειες ένα-ένα τα ζητήματα τα οποία αφορούν στην Ελληνική Προεδρία και το πρώτο εξάμηνο του 2014. Θέλω να ξέρετε ότι για μας σήμερα είναι μια ξεχωριστή μέρα για τον κάθε Έλληνα και την κάθε Ελληνίδα. Η Ελλάδα πέρασε απίστευτες δυσκολίες. Η Ελλάδα «έχασε» βιοτικό επίπεδο που δεν έχει χάσει κανένας λαός από τον Β΄ Παγκόσμιο πόλεμο μέχρι σήμερα. Και το έκανε συντονισμένα, με τη βοήθεια της Ευρώπης, προκειμένου να δώσουμε το δικαίωμα στα νέα παιδιά να έχουν μέλλον, να έχουν Ελπίδα και να έχουν γνώση ότι η Ευρώπη ενωμένη μπορεί να λύνει τα προβλήματα και μπορεί να εξυπηρετεί τους ανώτερους ανθρώπινους, πολιτικούς, ηθικούς, οικονομικούς, κοινωνικούς στόχους.

Κύριε Πρόεδρε, και πάλι σας ευχαριστώ πολύ που μου δώσατε αυτή την ευκαιρία σήμερα και να πω μόνον ότι ο καλός καιρός που έχει έξω και ο ήλιος που σας υποδέχτηκε αποκτά και έναν ιδιαίτερο συμβολισμό σήμερα, γιατί αυτή πρέπει να είναι και η Ελπίδα και το μέλλον για μια καλύτερη Ευρώπη. Σας ευχαριστώ και πάλι πολύ.

José Manuel Barroso: Thank you very much Mr. Prime Minister, dear friend, Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, Happy New Year. And I really believe this year for Europe is going to be better than the last years, namely, in economic terms. I am very pleased to be here in Athens as Greece embarks on its fifth Council presidency – making it a very experienced pilot of the European Union. As we were saying before this meeting, this is my third Greek presidency. I was cooperating with the Greek presidency in 1994, as foreign minister of my country, in 2003, as Prime Minister of my country, and now, as Commission President, I have the honor and the pleasure to cooperate with the Greek presidency and the leadership of my friend, Antonis Samaras. We have just met, not only personally – both of us, in a bilateral – but also the full Greek government and the College of Commissioners. And I can tell you that the Greek presidency is, of course, very well prepared and that I see a real determination on the Greek authorities to make it a success for Greece and for Europe. And Greece can count on the full support of the European Commission for that purpose. As the Greek presidency motto says, «Europe is our common quest».

Prime Minister Samaras and I also touched upon developments in the Greek economy and the financial assistance program. I will go into more detail on this later. But let me make a general comment, since we are now in a New Year mood, about the economic situation in Europe and what we can expect for this year, namely, regarding the problems that were mentioned in many analyses regarding the euro area.

As I said exactly one year ago, 2013 would be, and it was, the year when the European economy start to turn the corner. And it was, in fact, the year of a change of perceptions and expectations regarding the European economy. Let's not forget that not so much time ago, people were making speculations about Greek exit, about the implosion of the euro, also about the implosion of the European Union.

So, the very fact that we are here in Athens today, celebrating the beginning of the Greek Presidency – of a full member of the European Union, and a full member of the euro area – is clear evidence that those predictions were wrong. And that Greece was able to make notable efforts – namely, the Greek people – and that the euro area economy has shown its resilience and that, basically, we are on the right track.

I have said, precisely one year ago, that the existential crisis of the euro would be behind us, and I believe this is the case now. We are, generally speaking, emerging from recession and I hope that this year Greece will get out of the recession. Last year, Ireland became the first euro area member to emerge successfully from its adjustment program. We welcomed our 18th euro area member state, Latvia, another country that has made a huge, very demanding, financial assistance program and now is the country with the highest growth rate in the European Union. This shows that the programs do work when

they are properly implemented. This is demonstrated by the fact that just now, in recent days, Ireland was able to issue long-term debt at lower levels than countries in the European Union, in the euro area, that did not request a financial program.

So, you have one country that could not finance itself some time ago, and now exiting the program, it is able to do it in a better condition than countries that did not need a financial assistance program. I think that is a very clear demonstration that programs work, provided they are implemented with determination and, of course, in the right way. Because let's not forget what was, and is, the goal of the programs. The goal of the programs was to avoid disorderly default and to help countries stand on their own feet and be able to finance themselves directly – and not just relying on the solidarity of other European countries.

Let's look at Spain, which had a special program for the banks. We expect Spain to exit this program successfully this month. In fact, the support given to the Spanish banks is bearing fruit and this program has been very successfully implemented. Take the case of Portugal, where positive growth is back since the second quarter of last year and where the external deficit has been corrected and interest rate spreads are being reduced. And just today, Eurostat figures confirm that for the ninth consecutive month unemployment is going down. Take also the case of Cyprus – of course it is a more recent program – but the first signals are also encouraging.

And now, let's take the case of Greece, because I also believe that regarding Greece sometimes there is a perception that is not completely correct, that underestimates the big efforts, the remarkable efforts that the Greek authorities and the Greek people have been doing, particularly over the last 18 months. Greece is set to emerge from recession this year and Greece is expected now to reach a primary budget surplus. This progress is restoring confidence among Greece's European partners and attracting the attention of international investors. So, my point is very clear: programs work and we should not waste the efforts made so far. It would be a mistake to put at risk the successful exit of the countries from the programs. Having said that, we know well that there is, there are, extremely difficult situations, including in a country like Greece – social difficulties, hardship, very important sacrifices – and we know that those positive effects that we are already seeing are not immediately felt by the man and woman on the street.

I'm also fully aware of the difficulties the Greek people are going through and I really want to pay tribute to them for their courage and their dignity. And I encourage the Greek people, under the leadership of their government, not to give up and jeopardize what already has been achieved. I think we can say to the Greek people that your efforts and sacrifices are opening a better future. This year, we face the challenge of firming up the recovery, at a time when unemployment remains at an unacceptable level. To turn the situation around we need to boost investment and particularly to improve access to finance for SMEs. I welcome Greece's focus on these priorities.

So, while we cannot say the crisis is behind us, because we still have unacceptably high levels of unemployment in some of our countries, and we still have problems of financing to the economy, namely to SMEs, meaning that there is still a problem of coherence, financial coherence in the euro area, the reality is that we are solving, one by one, the different problems.

This is also the first year of the new seven-year European budget, which can be a lever for such investment. Together, we must ensure that European Union-funded programs get off to a solid start.

Once again, let me give the example of Greece. Some time ago, Greece was among the worst performers in terms of absorption of funds. Today Greece is one of the best performers in terms of implementation of the programs, in terms of absorption capacity. This shows that it is possible to change practices, habits; it is possible if there is a commitment to reform.

For the future, Prime Minister Samaras and I agree that we must go further in terms of European integration, particularly in the euro area. The Banking Union is one of our top priorities. I welcome the recent political agreement on the Single Resolution Mechanism, which marks the beginning of the end of bank bailouts. We need to ensure the SRM is finally adopted, from a legal point of view, before the European elections, to help boost confidence in the European banking sector and get credit flowing to businesses. We absolutely need this leg, the Single Resolution Mechanism, on the body of the European Banking Union. We must also pursue work on a deeper Economic and Monetary Union, while making sure it maintains and reinforces a strong social dimension. These ideas should build on rules already in place under the so-called European Semester. I am glad to see that the Greek Presidency is also prioritizing agreements on key files to boost trade and the single market, as well as an ambitious energy and climate change framework to 2030. We are going to present our framework proposals during this month of January – we, I mean the Commission.

And the Greek Presidency's focus on improving the framework for human mobility and on promoting maritime issues will also help to chart our course to recovery together. Coming back to the Greek situation and the European Union-IMF program: Let me remind you that in December, the Eurogroup was able to approve the disbursement of 1 billion euro after Greece achieved four important milestones agreed as part of the program.

However, while the sky is clearing, there are still some clouds on the horizon. The situation is still fragile. It is not the time to slow down the pace of reform. This is the time to use that Greek determination to finally agree the fiscal package, take forward tax and public administration reform, privatizations, improve the business environment and open up product and service markets.

I encourage Greece to use all the means at its disposal – including the help of the Commission's Task Force for Greece – to help these reforms along. The Commission continues to stand by Greece in the efforts to build a better future.

I want to say that to you, because I am very proud of it. While others some time ago had doubts about Greece in the euro area, the European Commission stood always by the side of Greece – always – saying that it was fundamental for Greece but also fundamental for the European Union and for European integration. That was the position taken consistently by the European Commission, and we remain loyal to that position. Prime Minister Samaras, dear friend, this Presidency offers Greece a chance to show that the next time is not to be defined by the crisis but by the lessons Greece has learned from the crisis, and that we all have learned as well.

I am confident that Greece, which has always given such an important contribution to European civilization – in fact, without Greece there would be no European civilization as we understand it – is going to use this Presidency to show that modern Greece – not only classic Greece, modern Greece – can give also a very important contribution to the European Union.

I wish you and the Greek people all the best. You can count on the European Commission to help you deliver our common objectives. Thank you.

Κοινή συνέντευξη τύπου του Πρωθυπουργού κ. Αντώνη Σαμαρά και του Προέδρου της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής κ. Jose Manuel Barroso

Ο Πρωθυπουργός κ. Αντώνης Σαμαράς και ο Πρόεδρος της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής κ. Jose Manuel Barroso, μετά τις κοινές δηλώσεις τους, απάντησαν σε ερωτήσεις δημοσιογράφων:

Κυβερνητικός εκπρόσωπος: Κυρίες και κύριοι, λόγω της πίεσης χρόνου θα υπάρξουν μόνο δυο ερωτήσεις, μία από κάθε πλευρά. Ladies and gentlemen of the press due to the very tight schedule, there'll be only two questions, one for each side. But for the members of the international press, we have arranged an hourly meeting on Friday with the Prime Minister at the Maximos Mansion, the Prime Minister's headquarters. So, you will have the chance to discuss with him and ask him whatever more you need to ask. Η πρώτη ερώτηση στον κ. Peter Spiegel από τους Financial Times.

Δημοσιογράφος: Thank you, sir. Peter Spiegel from the Financial Times. I have a question for both leaders, if I could. Mister Prime Minister, you mentioned in your open remarks that there is a major event that is going to occur during the Presidency, which is the EU Parliament Elections. We have seen polling here in Greece that have shown that SYRIZA is past, is going to be the biggest party coming out on the elections and that PASOK, your political partner, could do very badly. How concerned are you about potential political instability that could be caused during the Presidency and could that put at risk your return to growth and your chances to exiting the program and potentially even cause national elections here in Greece? And Mr. Barroso, if I can ask you the same question but ask you from broadly European perspective, you said in your state... union address last year that political instability you thought was the biggest risk factor to return to sustainable growth. It's not just Greece. We have in France, we have in the Netherlands, polls that show that anti-Euro parties are now potentially the biggest parties in the European elections. How concerned are you that more broadly in Europe that could be the kind political stability that you were worried about, that could threaten, as you said in your open remarks 2014 being a European year of growth? Thank you very much.

Αντώνης Σαμαράς: I will briefly answer my question. First of all, I want to tell you that as European elections are coming, there is stability in this government. And this is a stable government, will remain stable until the next elections, which I hope will take place in 2016. Second of all, those coming European elections, they are indeed imminent and people will have to decide on whether they want Europe or they do not want Europe. I agree they could decide that they want Europe with some Euro-skepticist approach. But I cannot agree with those people who do not want this Europe to exist. In fact, you mentioned a name, this specific gentleman you mentioned and his party are abdicated for coming tonight to the celebrations for Europe, where obviously everybody who is interested in Europe would love to come. These are ideas that are anti-European as a whole, may I say, that in more general ways are anti-western ideas, are anti-NATO, they have nothing to do with our concept of Europe. Therefore, we are not in any way particularly having to address today a problem which would be a real dilemma for Greek people in the coming elections.

I also understand and I can agree that Newton's third law, action-reaction, creates the possibility for people to simply want to vote against in order to show their anger. Now, this is a phenomenon that has already taken place in Greece with, for instance, the Golden Dawn and other extremist parties that do not want- may I say- Democracy at all to function and work in this country. When, for instance, you are oriented to ideas and goals of Golden Dawn, you have nothing to do with Democracy. I understand that some people like to show anger for those huge sacrifices they had to go through and these austerity measures they had to go through. And I also understand that a lot of people were, and some of them are still, -and this is very important- suffocating from those extreme austerity measures. However, I have full trust to the Greek people that when they vote, they also vote for their children and they also vote for the future of the country they love. And they know that both for the country they love and for their future, the solution is more and better Europe. And this is what we are building today.

Jose Manuel Barroso: So, Peter Spiegel from the Financial Times says that 2014 is a year of elections. And it's true, European elections. And my question- if I may respond to a question with a question- is the following: is that a problem? Do we believe that to have European elections in 2014 is a problem? 2014 is exactly- since you are speaking about dates- one century after the beginning of First World War. When many years ago Europeans were killing themselves all over the continent. That was Europe some time ago. And even later, as you know. Today, Europe, Europeans are prepared to vote in three elections. I don't think it is a problem, I think is a great opportunity, first of all to have an honest debate about Europe and I once again call all the political forces to engage in a real European debate. I call more specifically on the mainstream political parties of comfort zone to abandon the idea that the European Integration can be driven by political consents, to understand European Integration as a Democratic project, not a technocratic or a beurocratic one. And to discuss Europe, to discuss Europe with those who are against Europe and European Integration. And to make the case, for Europe. And I am sure that the pro-European forces will win next elections. I have no doubt about it. Having said this, I recognize that because of the crisis and we know that in terms of crisis and in terms of unemployment, extremists, populist forces can rise. That's true. They are in Europe, not only in Greece, by the way. Including, some of the more advanced countries, some of the more prosperous countries, extreme parties, some time with xenophobic discourse, not to mention racist positions that don't like our way of building a community that is based on values. Don't like foreigners, because they believe foreigners are bad, they don't share, they are not committed the same way we are to the European values, I know that. But in Democracy what can we do? We can win by rational arguments. So, it's possible that some of those forces here and there gain some positions, yes, but I don't expect those forces to win. I am sure that the pro-European forces are going to win. So, I don't see a fundamental problem of political stability in Europe. On the contrary, Europe will remain fundamentally stable along the lines of the European Integration, indeed making progress, as we just made in terms of the Banking Union some weeks ago.

Coming now to the concrete issue of national stability, yes, you are right, I've said and I keep it, that one of the problems we may have, in specific national contexts is political instability, as some negative impact on the economic and financial confidence. This is true and we have seen it in two or three countries, where there was political instability, I put it crisis, domestic crisis in fact, in the coalition, or in relations between governments and opposition, we have seen that that debt was bad for investments' confidence. And it was immediately punished by the markets. This is the reason for the responsible political forces to understand that we are not fully out of the crisis and that they should- if they are responsible forces- they should show a sense of responsibility. Because the electors don't want their countries to suffer. I am sure that even those are critical for some of the programs, want the countries to succeed. I am sure that the majority of the Greek People want Greece to conclude successfully its program. And it will be a mistake now to waste all the efforts already made. So, I think, very sincerely, that while there are some forces that may come up in the next European elections that will not put, in fundamental risk political stability, and I hope that European Political forces will use this occasion to make the case for Europe and afterwards, after the elections, whatever the result is, they will try to draw the lessons from that elections and to see what we can do better for the future.

Δημοσιογράφος: Η ερώτηση είναι κοινή και για τους δύο: Πολλοί μέσα στην Ευρώπη μιλούν με πολύ θετικά λόγια τόσο για την ανάληψη της Ελληνικής Προεδρίας όσο και για την αντιμετώπιση της οικονομικής κρίσης από τη χώρα μας. Όμως υπάρχουν και αυτοί που στέκονται είτε με επιφύλαξη είτε μιλούν και επικριτικά για τη Χώρα μας. Τι απαντάτε σε αυτούς, κυρίως που στέκονται επικριτικά απέναντι στην Ελλάδα;

Αντώνης Σαμαράς: Ο καθένας ασφαλώς έχει το δικαίωμα και το σέβομαι, της γνώμης του. Νομίζω όμως ότι ο καλύτερος για ν' απαντήσει είναι εκείνος ο οποίος παρακολουθεί το πιο αντικειμενικό στοιχείο που υπάρχει σήμερα και αυτό το στοιχείο είναι οι αριθμοί, ποιοι είναι οι αριθμοί. Έχουμε μια χρονιά πριν από το Πρόγραμμα, μας περίμεναν για του χρόνου, θα έχουμε από φέτος, πρωτογενές πλεόνασμα.

Και θέλω ιδιαίτερα στους ξένους συναδέλφους, τους δικούς σας δημοσιογράφους που μας κάνουν τη χαρά και την τιμή να βρίσκονται σήμερα στην Αθήνα, να τους πω ότι αυτό για μια χώρα η οποία έχει χάσει τα τελευταία τρία χρόνια το 25% του ακαθάριστου εγχώριου προϊόντος της, για μια χώρα στην οποία αν προσθέσετε σε αυτό το 25% φόρους και

πληθωρισμό για το μέσο πολίτη της χώρας είναι σα να έχει χάσει το 38% με 40% του εισοδήματός του, του διαθέσιμου εισοδήματός του.

Όταν αυτή η χώρα κατορθώνει να έχει ένα χρόνο πριν από το πρόγραμμα πρωτογενές πλεόνασμα, καταλαβαίνετε ότι αυτός ο αριθμός νομίζω δίνει την καλύτερη απάντηση, αλλά να σας πω επίσης ότι είχαμε την ταχύτερη δημοσιονομική προσαρμογή που έχει ποτέ γίνει στον κόσμο.

Και να σας πω ότι σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία του ΟΟΣΑ που είναι ένας κατεξοχήν αντικειμενικός διεθνής οργανισμός η Ελλάδα ήρθε πρώτη φέτος στην εφαρμογή διαρθρωτικών μεταρρυθμίσεων και νομίζω ότι ο καλύτερος καθρέφτης αυτών που λέω και ο καλύτερος κριτής είναι οι ίδιες οι αγορές.

Σήμερα αν δει κανείς που βρίσκονται τα spreads θα καταλάβει ότι έχει πραγματικά όχι απλώς αλλάξει, αλλά έχει τελείως μεταμορφωθεί η ελληνική οικονομική πραγματικότητα. Εάν κοιτάξει τα επιτόκια που πρέπει να πληρώνουμε για ελληνικά δάνεια, θα δει ότι αυτά είναι τρεις φορές χαμηλότερα ή ήταν παλιά τρεις με τέσσερις φορές υψηλότερα από αυτά που είναι σήμερα γύρω στο 75%.

Εάν κοιτάξει το ράλι που συνεχίζεται στο Ελληνικό Χρηματιστήριο, το οποίο είναι στο υψηλότερο σημείο για τους τελευταίους 35 μήνες σήμερα, αντιλαμβάνεται ότι στο σύνολό της η αγορά, δε λέω το ρήμα χειροκροτεί, αλλά λέω σίγουρα ότι η αγορά αποδέχεται αυτή την πραγματικότητα την οποίαν σας περιέγραψα, η οποία κατά την άποψή μου φωτογραφίζει μία Ελλάδα που ναι βγαίνει από την κρίση, ακόμα ο κόσμος υποφέρει, αλλά ξεκίνησε η διαδικασία για τη μείωση της ανεργίας, για τη δημιουργία επενδύσεων, για τη δημιουργία ενός συστήματος που δε θα είναι γραφειοκρατικό κι εναντίον του πολίτη, αλλά θα είναι φιλελεύθερο και υπέρ των δικαιωμάτων του πολίτη.

Κι αυτά νομίζω ότι αθροιζόμενα δίνουν την εικόνα μιας Ελλάδας η οποία μπορεί πλέον να αισιοδοξεί. Και θέλω να σας επαναλάβω ότι για μένα η αισιοδοξία αυτή ακουμπάει τους νέους ανθρώπους, εκεί είναι όλη μέρα το δικό μας το πρόβλημα, η δική μας η αγωνία, πως θα δώσουμε διέξοδο στα όνειρα αυτών των παιδιών. Γιατί σήμερα, όπως ξέρετε, η Ελλάδα κατέχει ρεκόρ στην ανεργία ιδιαίτερα των νέων, που μόλις τώρα τελευταία έπεσε κάτω από το 60%.

Αυτούς τους ανθρώπους παρακολουθούμε, γι' αυτούς τους ανθρώπους αγωνιζόμαστε και μέσα από την Ελληνική Προεδρία υπηρετώντας τους σκοπούς τους ευρωπαϊκούς, γιατί πιστεύουμε στην Ευρώπη, θα κοιτάξουμε ταυτόχρονα να βοηθήσουμε και την Ελλάδα όπως κι όλη την Ευρώπη να ξεπεράσει με πολύ πιο γρήγορους ρυθμούς την κρίση τη σημερινή.

Jose Manuel Barroso: If I understood the question correctly, is about the confidence people from outside can have or not in the Greek Presidency.

I have already said that it is my third Greek Presidency and I remember well, very important contributions that Greece gave to the European project, in 1994 and 2003. I remember well meetings we had in Athens, in Thessaloniki, in Ioannina and in other places, where in fact, Greece was very important to move forward the institutional project. For instance, the project of Constitutional Treaty that afterwards made it possible the Lisbon Treaty and enlargement of European Union.

Some of us that are here today, are here today because we were able to enlarge the European Union to 27 and now to 28 members. And Thessaloniki was one of the most important moments for the enlargement of the European Union. And Greece gave a very important contribution to this. I remember well this signature of the agreement, here, not far from the Acropolis.

So, if someone believes that Greece, by some kind of quality, could not be a successful Presidency, I will say this is a statement based on prejudice. And I don't like stereotypes or prejudices. Point.

Now, coming to the economic situation. Let me also make a point. It is true that the program in Greece was faced with more difficulties than the programs in other countries. And why? Several reasons.

First of all, the situation in Europe became at the moment of the start of the program in Greece more difficult than expected. There was, also, an environment or context factor. Second reason. There was political crisis in Greece. Don't forget that. Coming back to the previous question. There were anticipated elections, there were debates about possible referendum, there were politics that were complicating the problems. At the moment where Greece should be focused on solving the fundamental problems of financial stability, there were political problems that were making things more difficult. Those problems did not happen in other countries.

Third, and this is very important. Some outside voices were very often speaking about Greek exit, making much more difficult efforts of the Greek people. So, there are also some responsibilities, of those outside, when this country was making such a big effort, that they were of course, in terms of market sensibility, making a problem even bigger than it was. You remember that talk about Greek exit, not only coming from some analysts or commentators, but also from some capitals. These has made the problem of Greece bigger than it should be.

Of course, at the origin of the problem, there was a real issue of debt, a very high debt, and, also, of course, some other issues related to competitiveness differential with other countries. But, there were specific reasons that explained why the program of Greece had more difficulty to start than in other countries, including the political ones. That is why I think, Greece like any other country in Europe, has great things. Countries in Europe had always in their history good moments, not so good moments. I do not like prejudices and Greece is as able as any other country to do whatever is needed. In history, we have good moments, we have bad moments. And any view on Europe, based on the idea that some are better than others is exactly the anti-European idea. We are for Europe, based on non discrimination, a Europe where we believe that all the countries have exactly the same dignity. Some are richer, some are poorer, no. In the past it was different. Some are bigger, some are smaller. But we all have the same dignity.