

Greek Prime Minister Warns of Difficulties After Reaching Bailout Deal



Athens, February 23 (RHC)-- Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras says his country has won a significant battle while acknowledging that "real difficulties" lie ahead, after Athens reached a deal with its creditors to extend the debt-stricken nation's bailout loan. "We won a battle, not the war," Tsipras said on Saturday in an address to the nation less than 12 hours after the agreement was sealed in Brussels.

The leftist leader hailed the agreement as a "decisive step" that "achieved much" toward ending austerity, but said Greece has "a long and difficult road ahead." The Greek prime minister said: "In effect it cancels austerity. In a few days we have achieved a lot but we have a long road ahead. We have taken a decisive step to change course within the eurozone. Now negotiations enter a new, effective stage."

The agreement to extend Greece's bailout loan by four months was reached during preparatory talks between Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis, German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief, Christine Lagarde, and Eurogroup chairman, Jeroen Dijsselbloem.

Tsipras' Syriza party won the Greek general elections in early January on the promise that it would renegotiate the terms of the country's bailout program with the European Union. His government has tried to revise the terms of the country's \$240-billion (USD 270 billion) bailout it received in 2010 in return for imposing harsh austerity measures.

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