

Greek Prime Minister Urges No Vote in Referendum on Bailout Terms



Athens, July 2 (RHC)-- Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has pledged to press ahead with a referendum on the terms of a bailout deal with Athens' international creditors, calling for a No vote in the country's upcoming poll.

A No vote in the July 5th referendum would not endanger Greece's place in the eurozone or in the European Union, but would instead exert pressure on the country's international lenders to provide Athens with an economically viable agreement, Tsipras said in a televised address to the nation on Wednesday. "A 'No' vote does not signify a rupture with Europe, but a return to the Europe of values," he said.

The premier also called on Europe to stop acting in an "undemocratic way" concerning Greece's planned referendum, adding that the program used by European creditors in the Mediterranean country over the past few years was a failure and led Athens to bankruptcy.

He further accused Europe's financial leaders of "blackmail," saying it was "shameful" that Greek banks were forced to close over the debt crisis.

In another development on Wednesday, the Council of Europe said the referendum on bailout proposals made by Greece's creditors is organized hastily and does not meet European standards. "It is obvious that the timeline is too short with regards to our standards," said Daniel Holtgen, the spokesman for the Council's secretary general Thorbjørn Jagland.

Meanwhile, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said the planned Greek vote amounted to a choice between remaining in the single currency bloc or returning to the drachma, the country's former currency.

Greece made a fresh reform offer to its lenders on June 30th to resolve the debt crisis after defaulting on its debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

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