

# *Greek President Tasks New Anti-Austerity Party with Forming Government*

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Athens, August 25 (RHC)-- A new anti-austerity party formed by the Greek lawmakers who recently left Prime Minister Tsipras' ruling Syriza Party in a show of protest has been given the mandate to form a coalition government in an effort to avoid snap polls in the country.

Panagiotis Lafazanis, the leader of the newly-formed Popular Unity Party, received the mandate from Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos in the capital, Athens, on Monday after the liberal-conservative New Democracy Party failed to form a coalition. Lafazanis has promised to steer the country away from austerity.

"Popular Unity is the force that wants to represent and express the "OXI" (No) with consistency, firmness and tip the end. The referendum's "NO" is not defeated," he said in reference to a June 25th plebiscite, in which the Greeks overwhelmingly voted against the tough austerity measures required by the country's international creditors in exchange for a third bailout package.

The then government, however, opted against the people's will and accepted the reforms demanded in exchange for the bailout.

The Popular Unity now has three days to form a coalition. Neither of the two parties is expected to find coalition partners, a situation which will set the stage for early elections in the country after Tsipras stepped down last week. The premier has proposed September 20th as the date for the snap vote.

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