



## GEORGES TASSIOPOULOS

### “Elections 2009: Challenges for the two main parties”

The last parliamentary election in Greece took place a few days ago and now is the right time for a brief analysis of the post-electoral situation. After five years in power, New Democracy's top priority now is to choose a new leader as soon as possible. There is a strong demand from its supporters for a deep change in ideological and organizational level. There is no doubt that the Congress of November 7 will be the first step of a new era of the Greek Conservative party, for the better or the worse. Knowing that LAOS could take a benefit of any faux-pas the party barons have to be extremely careful at the end of the Costas Karamanlis' leadership. Because, just like all western democracies, the Hellenic Republic needs not only a strong government but also a strong opposition party.

What is the most important thing now for PASOK is to prove of its efficiency, as a party in power, and not to break the promises made during the electoral campaign. There is no doubt that a return to populism should be fatal. What's at stake is its credibility. After a big crisis in 2007, PASOK is actually in a delicate position: because of the win with a 10.44% margin and a ND in disorder, its main opponent is...PASOK itself! Will the new PM manage to impose a new style of leadership, in which party politics and government affairs are not the two sides of the same coin? For the time being, that's an open question.

Greece is a country of the extremes: For some, the glass of water is not only half full, but plenty. For others, it is not only half empty, but empty. Is Greece an underdeveloped country, where nothing works? Or, is Greece a developed country deeply inspired by the Scandinavian model? Neither is actually true. Like all countries in the world, Greece has its strengths and weaknesses. What is more important is that as a member of the EU since 1981, it should move faster than all of its neighbours towards a Western European way of life. Just ask the Greeks who arrive in Athens after 10 years of absence abroad of how much this country has changed since the last time they were there.

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