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Cherish the Past, Embrace the Future

**Special Issue: Greece's Prime
Minister Alexis Tsipras in London**



PM Tsipras meets with British Prime Minister Theresa May in London

Greece and Britain must improve their economic ties at all levels now more than ever, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said at a meeting at 10 Downing Street with British Prime Minister Theresa May on Tuesday 26 June.

Both countries have had to deal with severe challenges the past few years, Tsipras said, speaking of Greece's economic crisis and challenges following the Brexit referendum.

Following the meeting, Tsipras said his visit to London had been constructive and the timing excellent. There are prospects for closer cooperation between Greece and the United Kingdom, he added, and cited the present collaboration in defense.

Eurogroup's historic decision gives Greece a new perspective and makes Greece an active player in the Mediterranean and the Balkans

"I had the opportunity for a very constructive meeting with Prime Minister Theresa May," the Greek premier said, "at a great moment for Greece," following the Eurogroup decision on the completion of the last adjustment program and debt reduction.

The PM said that he had also raised the issue of the return to Greece of the Parthenon Marbles with May, saying their natural place was with the Parthenon, where ancient Greeks gave birth to a global cultural heritage.

Friendship between Greece, UK strongest ever, says May

"Friendship between the UK and Greece is stronger today than it ever has been," the UK Prime Minister Theresa May had said ahead of her meeting with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in London.

"the visit is a demonstration of the strong historic links between our two countries, and the deep co-operation we enjoy today."







The Downing Street's announcement

"This afternoon the Prime Minister welcomed Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras of Greece to Downing Street for the first time. The Prime Minister noted that the friendship between the UK and Greece goes back centuries and is stronger today than it ever has been with millions of British citizens travelling to Greece every year. She thanked Prime Minister Tsipras for the warm welcome given to the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall on their recent visit to Athens and Crete.

The Prime Minister congratulated Prime Minister Tsipras on the progress made by the Greek economy and the important steps taken last week towards Greece's exit from the economic adjustment programme in August. The leaders agreed that as the Greek economy continues to recover, there is potential for deeper business links in the energy, tourism, education and shipping sectors.

They discussed the issues that Greece faces with illegal migration and agreed that this is a shared challenge that requires a co-ordinated and comprehensive response including through the continued implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement. The Prime Minister said that the UK would continue to play its part in supporting a sustainable solution after we leave the EU. She said that the UK would send an additional Border Force

cutter to the Aegean to carry out vital search and rescue operations.

The Prime Minister updated Prime Minister Tsipras on the continuing progress that the UK and EU have made on issues relating to the UK's withdrawal from the EU. They agreed that a deep and comprehensive future partnership on trade and security was in the interests of the UK, the EU and EU Member States including Greece.

They discussed regional issues and agreed on the importance of encouraging further steps towards a settlement in Cyprus. Prime Minister Tsipras welcomed the constructive role the UK had played in the talks so far as one of the guarantors. The Prime Minister also took the opportunity to welcome the historic agreement reached on the longstanding Name Issue with Greece's Northern Neighbour and the benefits this will bring to regional stability.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Tsipras discussed relations between Turkey and Greece agreeing that continued dialogue was vital in ensuring regional stability.

Finally, the Prime Minister reiterated the need for the international community to uphold the rules based international system including by calling out and responding to malign activity by Russia."



PM Tsipras meets Jeremy Corbyn

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and the leader of the Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn discussed the possibilities of cooperation among the left and progressive forces of Europe, according to sources.

The two leaders also discussed the Brexit issue, the latest developments in the European Union, the rise of the far right and several populist parties, the refugee issue, and the recent FYROM name developments. Corbyn congratulated Tsipras on how he dealt with both the refugee and FYROM issues, and in particular on Greece's contribution to the refugee issue. The Labour Party leader compared it to other European countries which have not contributed to the issue but have, as he said, reinforced xenophobia and racism instead.

There was a wide exchange of positions and views on the economy, with Corbyn and Tsipras expressing common concerns about the problems that both countries are facing.

The two party leaders also discussed the Cyprus issue, with the Greek prime minister reiterating his set position for a fair and sustainable solution.

Tsipras also thanked Corbyn for his recent statement regarding the return of the Parthenon Marbles.



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PM Tsipras meets with the Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain Gregorios



PM Tsipras at the City of London

PM Tsipras met with financial sector leaders in London's City district, in order to enhance the outward orientation of Greece's economy.

Tsipras was received by the Vice Chair of City's Policy and Resources Committee Tom Sleight.

In the aftermath of the Eurogroup's debt relief decision, the prime minister's contacts with influential executives of the investment/financial community in the City, Europe's foremost financial centre, are seen as a clear international message about the prospects of the Greek economy and the post-programme period after the memorandum.

A few hours before the meeting Standard and Poor's ratings agency had upgraded Greece's credit rating by one notch, from 'B' to 'B+', citing reduced debt servicing risks following the previous week's deal with the country's international creditors.

"The positive outlook on Greece reflects further upside rating potential from the policy and financing environment over the next year," it said.



Greek PM meets with young Greeks working in London

On 25 June Prime Minister met with young Greek professionals, entrepreneurs and scientists living and working in London. The meeting took place at the Hellenic Centre in London.

Mr Tsipras talked about the recent Eurogroup deal on managing the country's debt, about his government's plan for economic development and about the prospect of a new dawn following Greece's exit from the bailout programme on 20 August.

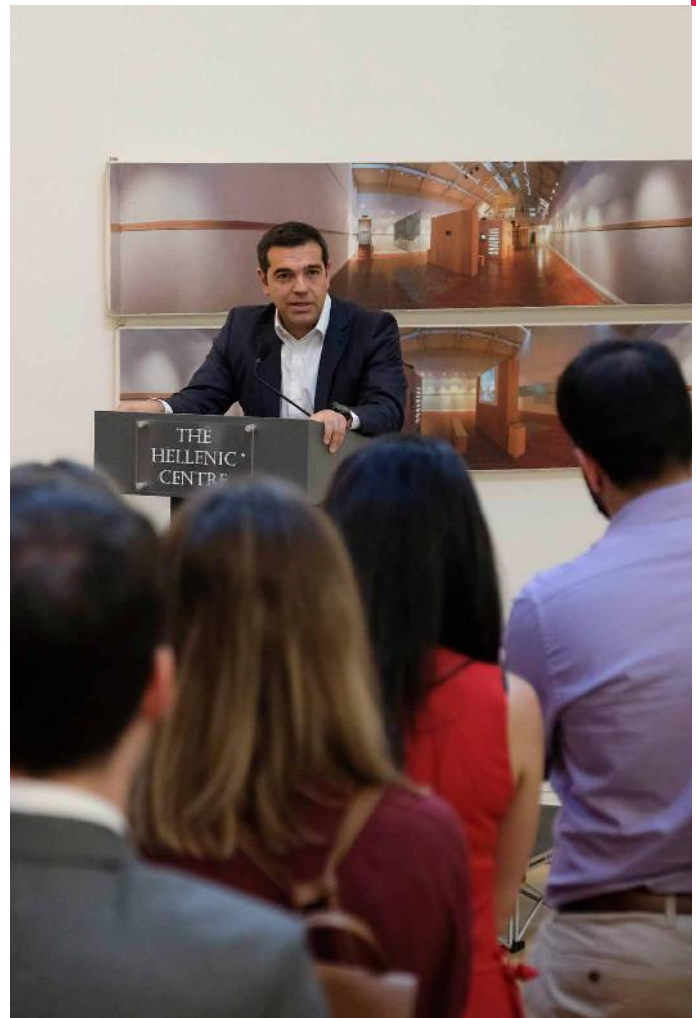
He noted that Greece has the potential to become a key country for scientific research, new technologies' development, start-up companies and collaborative projects.

He also referred to funding sources for new business projects in Greece and then asked those invited to speak about what they want to see changing in the country so that the 'brain drain' of recent years can turn to 'brain gain', either by these skilled professionals returning to their mother country or by their achievements and work providing a practical benefit for Greece and its people.

The young Greek entrepreneurs asked for structural changes that will increase transparency and will make the country even more business-friendly, with a reference by some to the need for lower taxes.

They also asked for regular contact with relevant state organisations and departments for ideas of collaboration to develop and provide results.

Greece has the potential to become a key country for scientific research, new technologies' development, start-up companies and collaborative projects



London Business School - In Conversation with Alexis Tsipras

Greek PM: We believe that Europe can and will change. But this is a long process

Alexis Tsipras said we have to enhance solidarity and block right wing populism at the same time

Speaking to an audience at London Business School (LBS), Tsipras said:

“Unemployment, poverty, inequalities and marginalisation are part of our European reality. And we need answers. We need policies to address them, because they are far removed from the European ideals that brought us together.

“Some might say, ‘Let Europe and its institutions crash and burn. Each one of us can face those issues alone. We can even hide in our shells and watch the others stumble.’ This thought is both appalling and delusional.



“It’s appalling because it forces the clock of history to turn back to our most troublesome period [the aftermath of World War One], when each nation tried to impose its will on other countries. An era that brought agony and despair to the people of Europe. It’s delusional, because in this era of globalisation everything is intertwined: markets, trade, industry and, of course, people.”

Tsipras called for solidarity on all crucial issues

“In order to block the prevalence of chauvinism, racism and xenophobia in Europe, we need a fundamental renewal of EU institutions and decision-making processes,”

“We need to open the doors of our institutions and let in a breath of fresh air. We need to tackle the democratic deficit of the EU.”

“We have to shape the new face of Europe and we need the world to see the changes we have made.

From 2015 to 2018, Greece has turned itself from an example of monumental fiscal failure to a case study for fiscal overachievement and economic recovery

Europe must become an actor of stabilization and a global leader that will push other actors to abandon their cold-war tactics. We must put forward a new comprehensive peace-oriented model of European and global security.”

“Europe cannot afford to look back to its miserable past of conflict and division. Europe must be a strong, open, democratic power that seeks to change the world by being a beacon of progress for the rest to follow. I am confident that in the end we will achieve this.”

The Greek Economy

“After 2016, which was the year of stabilization, 2017 ended with a growth rate of 1,4% and in 2018, the figures are going to be above that. The first quarter of 2018, marked an all-decade high in growth rate, at the height of 2,3%.

The 4 billion EUR that were invested in Greece last year are also the highest FDI amount since 2008. Exports are flourishing. Manufacture is now on a

steady growing path. The banking sector is stable, with capital sufficiency and with an ongoing plan to reduce non performing loans.

Tourism, one of our strongest industries, is breaking one record after the other. And in 2018, a staggering 32 million of visitors are going to mark an all-time high.

350.000 new jobs were created, leading to a total decrease of 7% during the last three years.”

“Our brighter days, are still to come.
After a substantial decision on debt relief
by the Eurogroup, Greece is now ready to
access the capital markets again.
And stand again on its feet.”



Greece is now part of the Berlin Process.

PM participates in the Western Balkans Summit in London

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras visited London on 10 July to participate in the Western Balkans Summit, the fifth summit convened under the Berlin Process. It is the first time that a Greek prime minister is invited to participate in the Berlin Process, an initiative inaugurated by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2014. Tsipras attended a working lunch with all the other leaders of the countries participating in the summit, along with heads of the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Regional Cooperation Council's (RCC) Secretary General Goran Svilanovic and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office. The Greek prime minister met in the afternoon with his Albanian counterpart Edi Rama. The summit concluded with a reception in the presence of Charles, Prince of Wales.

PM: Greece becoming a leader in the Balkans

"Today, Greece is returning. Today, Greece is coming out of the crisis and acquiring a leadership role in the

Balkans," said Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras after the completion of the Western Balkans Summit on 10 July in London.

The Greek premier added that Greece is acquiring weight in the region that can guarantee the European prospects of the countries in the western Balkans, security, peace and stability and their growth momentum.

Greek PM talks about change at Western Balkans Summit

Greece exited the crises because it believed that the solution to the economy, refugee problem and regional stability is neither nationalism, nor inaction or pushing the problem into the future, said Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras at the Western Balkans Summit in London.

"The period we went through was exceptionally difficult for the Balkans," said the prime minister, highlighting that in 2014 Jean-Claude Juncker, head of the European Commission, had announced a freeze on the EU's enlargement process.

"Beyond the economic crisis, Europe experienced the worst refugees crisis in post war history, which





focused on the area. As part of this, there were those that sought a Grexit, that wanted to reduce or do away with the Schengen agreement, the end of the EU enlargement and the one sided shutting down of the Balkan corridor. We experienced a horrendous coup attempt in Turkey and crises in Albania and FYROM," he said.

"Things are changing. With the Prespes agreement, the agreement between Bulgaria- FYROM, with the attempt to solve issues between Greece-Albania, with the successful Bulgarian presidency of the EU presidency and the revitalization of the Thessaloniki agenda for the enlargement of the EU," he added.

PM Tsipras meets Rama

Greece and Albania will conclude their agreement "with a new document of strategic partnership," Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama told the Athens-Macedonia News Agency (ANA) on the sidelines of the EU-Western Balkans Summit concluding in London.

"As you know, we are also facing difficult but absolutely necessary process of solving issues among us, Albania and Greece," Rama told ANA. "The most important thing is that we use these problems to not only to solve them but also to transform the solution into a new level of partnership and cooperation." The two countries have had relations for seventy years, he noted, "which have been characterized by

more and more natural bonds between the people."

The Albanian premier added, "It is very natural, and somehow through the solution we will reach the level of normal people, of average citizens who have already overcome the past and have embraced each other."

Rama welcomed the agreement between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) on the name issue, saying that "this is a good moment to somehow praise certain results, first and foremost the great achievement of Greece and Northern Macedonia, thanks to very courageous and brave, and also visionary leadership of (Prime Ministers) Alexis (Tsipras) and Zoran (Zaev), who also took their own share of risk to confirm something that was not easy; but they showed that where there is a will, there is a way."

Commenting on reactions against the agreement in both countries, Rama noted, "Of course they (Tsipras and Zaev) are confronted with reactions, but at the same time the reactions are showing that this has been a quite bold decision that will be of benefit to both Greece and Northern Macedonia, and the Balkans overall."

In terms of the EU-Western Balkans Summit and the Berlin Process, Prime Minister Rama said the following: "This is an important process that has been launched five years ago and it is going on, at



a good pace, I believe. It helps a lot to keep all of us together and to make us move together. Of course, it is happening at a period of time when things in Europe are not so good, so it looks like a Balkan curse. Once upon a time, when Europe was getting better, we were getting worse, now we are getting better, Europe is getting worse.”

UK hosts Western Balkans Summit

As noted in the Summit’s conclusions, the leaders participating at the Western Balkans Summit congratulated Prime Ministers Zaeu and Tsipras on securing an agreement on the Name issue.



The leaders participating at the Western Balkans Summit congratulated Prime Ministers Zaev and Tsipras on securing an agreement on the Name issue

*Source: ANA-MPA
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