



27/02/2013

The Constitution: it needs to be revised, but it's imperative that it is implemented

The Greek Constitution of 1975 is a good Constitution. Yet, certain provisions may require revision and the current circumstances are favorable. This, however, will not cure the ailing political system, as the problem does not ultimately lie in the Constitution itself, but rather in its flawed implementation.

This comprises the postscript of the event on the topic "Revision of the Constitution: for a New Republic" which took place on Monday 25 February 2013 at the EPLO headquarters in Athens.

Panagiotis Pikrammenos, former Prime Minister of Greece, presided over the event, while Charalampos Athanasiou, Alternate Minister of Interior, Nikos Konstantopoulos, lawyer and former President of the Synaspismos party, Miltiadis Papaioannou, former Minister and Giorgos Gerapetritis, Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Athens, were the speakers.

In their addresses, they referred to the following:

P. Pikrammenos: "The circumstances are favorable for "therapeutic interventions" to the Constitution of 1975, and not revisions serving temporary political agendas."

Ch. Athanasiou: "The new Constitution should look towards the future rather than the present. The law on ministerial responsibility should change. In the electoral system, proportionality is essential and should be reinforced, due to the current circumstances. A law on the way in which parties operate ensuring complete freedom of speech and impartiality of voting for MPs, should be introduced."

N. Konstantopoulos: "The widest possible participation in the discussion on the revision should be assured, rather than simply having predetermined positions by the parties presented "for all to come and choose from". Brave interventions that almost resemble those of a Constitutional Assembly are needed. Changes in the way in which parties operate are needed. The media phenomenon of imposing policy rather than seeking influence, resulting in a replica democracy instead of a true democracy should be addressed."

M. Papaioannou: "The problem is the flawed implementation of the Constitution. We do not respect the laws and this is exhibited by the powers that be. A second Parliament (a Senate) should be created. The eligible age for standing as a candidate MP should change from 25 to 21. The President of the Republic should be elected by the Parliament but the Parliament should not be dissolved during this process."

G. Gerapetritis: "It is not the Constitution that has caused the degeneration in the way the Parliament functions. The United Kingdom does not have a Constitution and yet it operates effectively. The preliminary committees do not work. There should be parliamentary incompatibility regarding MPs becoming Ministers."

Discussion among the audience, that consisted of high judges, former Ministers and other politicians, academics, lawyers and journalists, followed.



EPLO
European Public Law
Organization

The event concluded with the EPLO Director, Prof. Spyridon Flogaitis, wishing for a much needed political agreement to be reached for the country's good, during these difficult times. "The initiative of the international organization [the EPLO] to organize this event will be further developed" he underlined. "More events will follow, focusing on specific issues relating to the revision of the Constitution".