

Thousands rally in pro-austerity demonstration in Athens

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In Athens' main Syntagma Square, more than 10,000 people gathered Tuesday evening to call for a "Yes" vote in Sunday's referendum on EU austerity measures in Greece. Many demonstrators carried European Union and Greek flags, as well as pro-EU placards, shouting, "Greece, Europe, Democracy" or "Save Democracy, Yes to Euro".

Demands for more austerity and the resignation of the government were common among the protesters. Those attending were mainly the more affluent sections of the middle class, including professionals and managerial level public sector employees.

Numerous well-heeled executive and business types also attended, who were politically affiliated to the former governing big business parties, New Democracy (ND) and the social-democratic PASOK. No party officially claimed to have organised the protest, but it was supported by both ND and PASOK. Many big and medium-size companies backed the demonstration.

Denouncing the Syriza government as "liars", one woman carrying a Greek flag, said, "We need a civilized government again". Others called for a government of national unity, including the parties of the "left, right and centre."

Speaking from a public address system, the mayor of Athens, who was previously supported by PASOK, told the demonstration that the government should resign.

The size of the protest was reportedly boosted by workers, who were compelled to attend the demonstration, according to a report in the *Guardian*. The newspaper published a note from one of its readers who said the Greek ministry of employment and social insurance reported that dozens of complaints were made to it throughout the day by workers.

Those who refused to join delegations were apparently threatened with immediate dismissal.

According to the reader, "The ministry mentions shipping companies, companies trading in foodstuffs, German companies trading electric goods and insurance companies explicitly, but adds that the complaints come 'from everywhere imaginable'".



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