**Greece Lightning**

Groups of people who know no better are currently crowding the streets of Athens and see the EU as nothing more than a ruthless debt collector. Once again preparations for new, vital EU/IMF funding are underway so that Greece can meet its forthcoming loan installments. It has become a country that cannot go bankrupt because of the ‘domino effect’ that financial institutions themselves have created. However much we may seek comfort from the possible (and rapidly declining) value of ‘collateral’ in Greek state assets, one thing is certain and that is that this is not the answer to the debt repayment problem. A desperate population with structural unemployment approaching 20% and a dismally struggling economy will never be able to resolve this mismatch from its current position.

One hundred and ten billion euros is equivalent to the investment of around ten Dutch 'Delta Works' projects. But I never hear any positive news for the Greeks from politicians. Alongside negative opinionating on culture, morality and the country’s bureaucracy, all I see is people looking to the residual value of the collateral. And that while we all know that any debt rescheduling should focus primarily on achieving a recovery in a country’s autonomous economic activity. In other words, on efforts to enable it to bounce back stronger, albeit sadder and wiser.

 Given that we are in any event going to have to provide substantial amounts of funding, now is the time to demonstrate some creativity when deciding how best to use the money. What about trying to fundamentally reposition the Greek economy and make it a stronger, Southern European member of the EU? With Chinese investors recognizing Piraeus as a major port for Southern Europe, the funding currently required could perhaps best be used to improve the country’s infrastructure. Its roads and railways, for example. What about revitalizing the traditional manufacturing industry – using all the latest technology – and seeing what that could achieve, specifically in the case of Greece? In other words, investing billions in a win-win situation for both Greece and Europe. Make the Greeks proud of their unique position in Europe. Let them fight for a leading position as a gateway to Europe. What about investing in water, solar energy and agribusiness? Let our industrial and technical services talents share in the sunny prospect of billions of euros of investment budgets. That way we would provide structural help to our Greek neighbors. Admittedly lenders might have to wait longer for their ‘returns’ and principal. But anything is better than a Minister of Finance and, therefore, the regulators – as part of their responsibilities for supervising prudent investment policies – ‘forcing’ pension funds and banks to pump money into a country with no plan for the future.

 Where is the EU master plan? Where is the panel of economists in Athens helping the Greeks take charge of the situation? All I see is them whining and lamenting on TV discussion programs and chat shows.

 I see the EU debt problem as an opportunity to get the EU back where it belongs. After all, there is a good reason why ‘Europe’ is a word that comes from the Greek.

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