

## Survey

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## Measures without social consensus

Even before being passed by parliament and of course before their implementation, popular support for the government's new measures is very low. Two in 3 citizens (66% - [figure 1](#)) are against the measures, while this figure is even higher among those segments of the active population which are directly affected, e.g. salaried employees in the public sector (68%), in the private sector (69%) and the unemployed (73%). Eight in 10 respondents consider the measures "unjust" ([figure 2](#)), while 6 in 10 believe that "they serve the interests of the few" and not the "common good". The sweeping structural changes in existing labor and social relations, which the government is trying to introduce, constitute the new historical plan imposed by the ruling elite. It is, however, a plan characterized by a considerable degree of subjectivity. For, as can be calculated on the basis of the survey findings, its acceptance does not exceed 25% of the electorate (just 1 in 4). A percentage that certainly does not create favorable conditions for compliance with the planned social changes on the part of the dominated classes. On the contrary, it points to social isolation and delegitimization. Even the majority of the governing party's electoral base is opposed to the measures (52% against, compared to just 32% in favor - [figure 3](#)). To the social isolation one must also add the corresponding ideological: The predominant ideological argument ("the measures are a one-way street") that is persistently reproduced by almost all the media, is accepted by only one-third (32%) of the electorate ([figure 4](#)).

Another impressive finding is the fact that 9 in 10 respondents (91%) appear to be aware that the measures will have an impact on their personal and family financial situation. Of course this is not unrelated to the fact that the changes that are being advanced regarding labor conditions and standard of living do not target only salaried employees in the public sector and pensioners but the general population of the country in its entirety, with the exception of a small minority. However, the universal nature of the social 'threat' created by the new measures for society as a whole also constitutes the first risk for their failure, given that it allows the convergence and unification of the most diverse and heterogenous social groups and strata into an exceptionally broad social alliance of disapproval.

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#### Survey profile

The results presented in this analysis are based on a telephone opinion survey, with a general population sample of 500 adults (18+) from across Greece. The survey was carried out: 4/5/2010. Published by: newspaper KATHIMERINI.

FIGURE 1: NEW ECONOMIC MEASURES: FOR OR AGAINST?

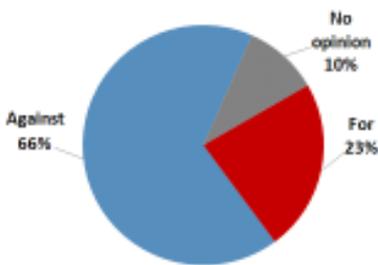


FIGURE 2: NEW ECONOMIC MEASURES: JUST OR UNJUST?

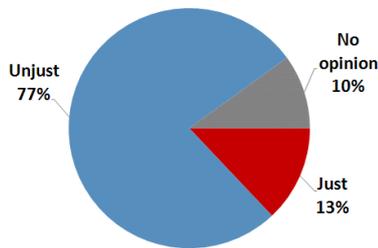


FIGURE 3: NEW ECONOMIC MEASURES: FOR OR AGAINST?  
By vote preference

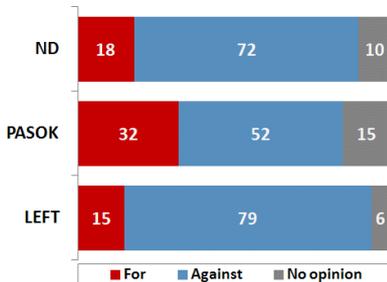
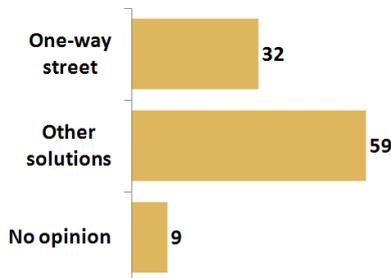


FIGURE 4: NEW ECONOMIC MEASURES: ARE A ONE-WAY STREET OR THER ARE OTHER SOLUTIONS?



On the other hand, two factors limit the growth of social protest. The **first** relates to the low participation in protests – at least for the time being – of younger age groups of the population, which played a leading role in the period 2006-2008 and in the riots of December 2008. It is a fact that the government eventually decided not to reduce the number of university entrants and thus not limit lower and middle class access to higher education. However, the situation regarding universities continues to be flammable, while the majority of students who remain in the ‘university – holding tank for the unemployed’ need very little to ignite. The **second** factor relates to the **lack of confidence** recorded, with regard to the effectiveness of social protest actions. Despite widespread disapproval of the measures, the **high propensity to participate in new protests** (39%), mainly among middle-aged workers, almost **8 in 10** respondents (79%) believe that the measures will eventually be implemented, while a similar percentage (80%) is now of the opinion that strikes will bring no result.

Nevertheless, the protests – which are in progress – have widespread social acceptance: 7 in 10 citizens (68%) approve of the strikes and protest actions that are taking place or are to be staged. If one takes into account the fact that among public sector salaried employees this figure rises to 78% (!), then the possibility of the ‘state apparatus’ becoming ‘paralyzed’ in the coming period can in no way be ruled out. Acceptance of political protest is spread ‘horizontally’ across all political party supporters. Social consensus regarding strikes rallies not only voters on the Left (87%), but is also seen among two-thirds of PASOK supporters (66%) and one half of New Democracy voters (54%). Consequently, it may considerably isolate the two government parties and (further) erode their rickety social cohesion.

Founded in 2001 Public Issue specializes in public opinion research on political, economic and social issues in Greece and Cyprus. Member of the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR) and the European Society for Market Research (ESOMAR).