

## Survey

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## The three parties of PASOK

Public opinion toward the transformation of the ruling party over time

The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the socialists coming to power (18/10/1981) finds PASOK at the lowest point in its history since the restoration of democracy in Greece. The ruling party – which at some time in their life has been voted for by 6 out of 10 current adults (61%) – has found itself in a state of contrariety not only to the social strata for which it has long spoken, but also to its historically shaped policy and ideological identity. On the basis of the classical index of party identification, only 16% of adult citizens (1 in 6) today feel ‘close’ or ‘very close’ to PASOK. It is unnecessary to stress that such a low percentage for the party’s core support within Greek society has never been recorded since 1981. The problem facing PASOK is not only the fact that 9 in 10 citizens (87%) believe that the party is moving in the wrong direction, even though this percentage is the highest ever recorded by the respective index. Of greater importance is the fact that 2/3 (66%) of the total electorate (i.e. without taking into account the trend toward abstention) now tends to spurn PASOK’s overall contribution to the country’s governance. Compared to the previous decade, when 58% assessed it positively and only 32% negatively (the available data are for 2000), the picture today has changed dramatically.

### The three periods of PASOK

As far as public opinion is concerned, the process of PASOK’s political and ideological shift is viewed in a personalized way. The party’s three entirely distinct periods are identified with its respective leaders. The present-day PASOK of George Papandreou cannot easily be associated with the PASOK of his predecessor, Costas Simitis, nor or course with the PASOK of his father and the party’s founder, Andreas Papandreou. What differentiates the three leaders is first of all their comparative assessment in the ranking of the country’s prime ministers since the restoration of democracy in 1974. Here, Andreas Papandreou is rated by **36%** of respondents as the most important prime minister of the period, while C. Simitis by only 3% and George Papandreou by 1%. On the other hand, the ideological shift that has taken place is most clearly reflected in their placement on the Left/Right scale.

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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 819 adults (18+) from across Greece. The survey was carried out: 4-7/10/2011. Published by: newspaper KATHIMERINI.

The comparison of the three corresponding periods of the country's governance is also revealing. The first government of A. Papandreou (1981-1985) remains the most popular since the restoration of democracy (33%), while the first government of C. Simitis (1996-2000) registers just 4% and the present government of G. Papandreou 1%. The institutional changes of the first period attract high rates of acceptance: the establishment of the National Health Service 89%, the recognition of the National Resistance 75% and the democratization of labor unionism 53%. As for the achievements of the Simitis government, only Cyprus' accession to the EU is acknowledged (80%), while Greece's accession to EMU and particularly the Olympic Games draw higher percentages of disapproval. The country's present governance by G. Papandreou is assessed negatively mainly on account of the universal disapproval of the Memorandum, which is condemned by 83% of respondents. Based on a comparison of the 'three PASOKs' in seven (7) areas of governance, the PASOK of A. Papandreou is considered to be the one under whose governance Greek citizens had a better standard of living (64%) and health system (63%), a better economy (63%), education (44%) and public administration (35%), while the country's position in the world was stronger (56%). Only infrastructure works are credited to the PASOK of C. Simitis (46%), and nothing at all to the PASOK of G. Papandreou.

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