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New Greek PM Mitsotakis chooses education & religious affairs ministry for first meeting



Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis arrived at the education ministry on Friday morning, choosing the specific ministry in a symbolic move. The visit was scheduled for the previous day but canceled due to emergency coordination efforts to deal with major storm-related damages in northern Halkidiki prefecture.

Mitsotakis was greeted by new Minister Niki Kerameos outside the ministry at 9 a.m., along with Deputy Ministers Sofia Zacharaki and Costas Digalakis. He was accompanied by Minister of State Giorgos Gerapetritis.

The incoming government has repeatedly promised deep reforms in the education sector. In the short-run, its priorities include the immediate abolition of Greece's asylum regime for universities, which essentially render campuses as off-limits to law enforcement, re-instituting magnet schools where enrollment is based on grades and entrance exams, as well as creating enough spots in public pre-schools for all children in tandem with a voucher system for use in private daycare units.

At the same time, the new minister said the recently sworn-in government will not change the nationwide university entrance exam system, at least for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Kerameos also holds the religious affairs portfolio, i.e. Church-state relations, which in the country of 11 million involve the influential Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece, as the vast majority of the country's native-born population belongs to the Orthodox Church.