

New Greek PM Mitsotakis receives Archbishop Ieronymos; No changes in clerics payroll regime



New Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on Tuesday morning received Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, His Beatitude Ieronymos, at the Maximos Mansion government house, a courtesy visit by the latter that nevertheless marked as a distinct “about-face” from the previous Greek government’s intent to unilaterally change Church-state relations.

Mitsotakis warmly received the influential Primate of the Church of Greece, with the latter wishing the new Greek prime minister “patience, fortitude and perseverance... as our homeland has many needs”.

Both men referred to the distinct roles between Church and state, while saying that relations must not become the object of petty partisan exploitation. At the same time, both sides said a dialogue between the relevant education and religious affairs ministry with a delegation of Holy Synod members will be revived, in order to deal with pending issues, such as the teaching of religious studies in public schools and whatever exploitation of Church properties.

On his part, Mitsotakis said his government will retain the current payroll and pension regime for Orthodox clerics in the country, breaking with the preceding leftist government, which wanted to remove clerics from the civil servants' payroll, and instead pay salaries for the current number of clerics via another remuneration scheme, which was never fully explained.

On his part, Ieronymos said a draft framework for changes in Church-state relations, negotiated with the previous government, is now null.

No reporters were present at the meeting, as the first contact between the Archbishop to the new prime minister was described as a courtesy and private visit.



Prime Minister GR

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Συνάντηση με τον Μακαριώτατο
Αρχιεπίσκοπο Αθηνών και Πάσης Ελλάδος κ.
Ιερώνυμο. Συμφωνήσαμε ότι πρέπει να γίνει
μια νέα αρχή στις σχέσεις Πολιτείας-
Εκκλησίας βασισμένη στην ειλικρίνεια και το
σεβασμό των διακριτών ρόλων των δύο
θεσμών, μακριά από κάθε μικροκομματική
εκμετάλλευση.



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In a related development, new Education and Religious Affairs Minister Niki Kerameos also emphasized on Tuesday, during a television appearance, that no changes will be instituted in the payroll regime for clerics.

“The proposal by the previous government regarding clerics’ payroll, for which we objected, has collapsed,” she said.

Kerameos is scheduled to meet with His Beatitude Ieronymos on Wednesday.

Photo: Christos Mponis