

Church of Greece closely watching constitutional revision process



The legislative procedure to revise Greece's constitution, which was begun by the previous government in Parliament, will now resume, but with a new Greek government in power and with a new Parliament composition. The entire process is being closely followed by the Church of Greece, especially over any possible revisions to Article 3, which deals directly with Church-state relations in the predominately Orthodox Christian nation of 11 million.

The relevant Parliament president has already invited the six parties represented in the legislature to appoint MPs on a relevant committee tasked with constitutional revision. Committee members will then have one month to draft recommendations for standing constitutional revision proposals, which were submitted in the previous legislative session. The current Parliament plenum must ratify relevant proposals for constitutional revisions to be effected.

A standing proposal by leftist SYRIZA party for a revision of Article 3 involves an addition of the phrase whereby the Greek State is "...neutral as far as religion is concerned."

A further clarification, as proposed by SYRIZA, would stipulate that the term

“dominant religion” will not be an acknowledgment of an official state religion, and would not have any adverse effect on the rights of other religions, or on the rights of adherents of other religions.

The stated position of the previous government generated heightened opposition by political parties and the Church.

At the time, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, in fact, issued a statement expressing its opposition to any revision of Article 3 in Greece’s constitution.