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‘Thorns’ remain in ongoing Church-state dialogue



A new meeting, probably on Tuesday, is expected to take place between members of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece’s standing Holy Synod and the Greek education and religious affairs minister.

Indications from the dialogue between the two sides so far shows that the Church is not willing to back down from its positions regarding the current payroll regime for clergymen, which it considers as inalienable. On its part, the Greek government has signaled that it will proceed with changes, considering, as it claims, that “conditions in society have matured.”

At the same time, government sources told the Orthodoxia news agency that Thursday’s razor-thin approval (151 MPs out of 300 in Parliament) of a ruling party proposal to revise certain paragraphs of Article 3 of Greece’s constitution – which delineates Church-state relations in the predominately Eastern Orthodox nation – gives the government a “slight advantage” in ongoing negotiations with the Holy Synod’s committee.

The first reports on Thursday afternoon pointed to a failure to pass the constitutional revision proposal, as only 150 MPs voted in favor, something that

was overturned shortly thereafter, when the tally reached 151.