

Mitsotakis: No revision of Art III if ND wins upcoming general election



New Democracy (ND) party president Kyriakos Mitsotakis on Wednesday pledged that his center-right party will not proceed with any revisions to the iconic Article III of Greece's constitution, assuming the party comes in first in Sunday's general election and forms a government.

The specific article, which defines relations between the Greek state and the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece, is up for revision by the next Parliament plenum to arise from the snap July 7 election.

Mitsotakis made the statement during a brief exchange with a clergyman in the central city of Volos, while adding that Church-state relations in the predominately Christian Orthodox nation are well-defined and distinct.

Mitsotakis and ND field a comfortable lead over left-wing SYRIZA party, at least as far as mainstream opinion polls are concerns. The outgoing Tsipras government had repeatedly promoted and advanced what it called “religious neutrality” on the part of the Greek state.

The specific article reads:

Relations of Church and State

Article 31.

1. The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. The Orthodox Church of Greece, acknowledging our Lord Jesus Christ as its head, is inseparably united in doctrine with the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople and with every other Church of Christ of the same doctrine, observing unwaveringly, as they do, the holy apostolic and synodal canons and sacred traditions. It is autocephalous and is administered by the Holy Synod of serving Bishops and the Permanent Holy Synod originating thereof and assembled as specified by the Statutory Charter of the Church in compliance with the provisions of the Patriarchal Tome of June 29, 1850 and the Synodal Act of September 4, 1928.
2. The ecclesiastical regime existing in certain districts of the State shall not be deemed contrary to the provisions of the preceding paragraph.
3. The text of the Holy Scripture shall be maintained unaltered. Official translation of the text into any other form of language, without prior sanction by the Autocephalous Church of Greece and the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople, is prohibited.