

THE FOREIGNERS APPEAR TO BE RESERVED REGARDING THEIR ENGAGEMENT

The big port projects sunk

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In pre-electoral indolence, the grandiose governmental projects for strategic collaborations of the Greek ports with Chinese and Arab investors are sinking, which creates strong reactions from the foreign investors.

The dissatisfaction shown by the Chinese politicians and managers during the recent trip of the Greek delegation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Dora Bakogianni in China combines with the continuous complaints of the Arab towards the political leadership of the Ministry of Mercantile Marine, and also with the reactions of other interested parties.

According well-informed sources in Piraeus, all (Chinese, Arab, Swiss, Israeli, American and Danish) concerned appear particularly reserved as to whether the government will make concrete its engagements of last year regarding the valorisation of the ports of the country and the concession, to huge foreign transport enterprises, of the exploitation of Piraeus and Thessaloniki installations.

Misunderstanding

The same business sources notice that those involved (on the Greek side) fall victim of their own misunderstandings. Last summer, the responsible minister, Mr Kefalogiannis, was promising « earth and water » to the representatives of Chinese CoSco, anticipating the concession of the installations of the Piraeus via state-to-state agreement. The plan changed, and was replaced by an international call for competition. But even this did not progress, after the reaction of the workers.

The activity is also intense in the economic staff, towards which, as it is heard, the representatives of Arab Dubai Ports and Chinese China Shipping turned themselves. During the current (essentially pre-electoral) period, and considering how things have turned, and the plan of concession can hardly progress, since powerful reactions from the workers should then be expected.

According to the first plans of the YEN, which took the initiative of acting without the collaboration of the Ministry of Economy, the Greek side would have granted the exploitation of the mercantile centre of Piraeus, storage spaces and exclusive use of one quay to Chinese interests - promises that were made last summer, in presence of the Greek Prime Minister, to the powerful man of Chinese maritime affairs, Mr Captain Wei. Following this, it was realised that this could not progress, since it goes against the rules of the E.C. The government then tried to take over the... reef, making public its intention to continue on the process of an open call for competition, which led to the strike of the workers of the port which, in turn, led to a stop of about two months of the loading and unloading of goods, leading the market to suffocate during the Christmas period.

The governmental side accepted the demands of the workers, so that the acceptability of the plans of exploitation of the ports could be re-examined. However, the anticipation of those responsible of a positive answer from the workers led to a new deadlock in the discussions and a new deadlock in the situation.



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