

# Athens<sup>+</sup>Plus

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## Redesigning space Nowhere

The multitalented Dimitris Papaioannou speaks about his special inauguration show for the National Theater. **Pages 24-25**



## Last chance Goal in sight

Greece must win its final two World Cup qualifiers to keep its South Africa 2010 dream alive. **Page 18**



## On the catwalk Greek talent abroad

From New York to Paris, via London, Milan and Barcelona, designers with Greek roots show their spring/summer 2010 collections. **Page 23**

# New government, fresh hope

After a resounding victory in the October 4 elections, PASOK leader George Papandreou has named a largely untested Cabinet which has the task of taking Greece out of the doldrums and making life easier for citizens



[Iron Press]

**A new government** got down to work this week after PASOK's emphatic election victory over New Democracy on October 4. Prime Minister George Papandreou unveiled a relatively youthful Cabinet, which also contains nine women (photo) – a record number for Greece. Addressing his new team, Pa-

pandreou emphasized that the PASOK government must focus its attention on stamping out corruption, reviving the economy, reforming the public sector and protecting the environment. In a rarely observed spirit of cooperation, the new ministers were welcomed to their departments by outgoing

New Democracy officials, who managed to put aside any bitterness at their more than 10 percent defeat in the polls. The loss has sparked a leadership contest in the conservative party, after outgoing Premier Costas Karamanlis stepped down from the post. **Pages 2, 4-5, 7, 8 & 11**



## Sweet Pick-me-up

Three desserts from master confectioner Stelios Parliaros, all made with coffee. **Page 33**

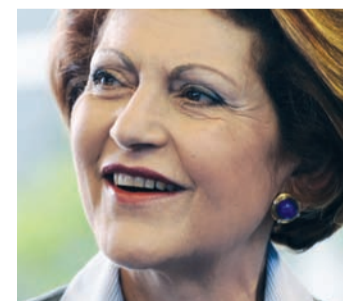


## Berlin Wall to wall

A series of films at the Goethe Institute pays tribute to the German capital, from division to reunification. **Page 35**

## Road to Denmark Global warning

European Commissioner for the Environment Stavros Dimas talks to Athens Plus about the challenges facing participants ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in early December. **Page 15**



## Flu Restoring health

European Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou tells Athens Plus about next week's crucial talks on the H1N1 virus. **Page 13**

**Transition** National Theater revisits two previous hits, debuts a children's play by Eugene Trivizas **Page 28**





**Oliver Viel** Customer relations director of world's largest student survey sheds light on its European findings

# The hopes and fears of tomorrow's employees

BY JULIA PANAYOTOU

**With unemployment** across Europe shaping into an uncomfortable future for many graduates, what do young graduates across the continent, and Greece in particular, think about their education and their job prospects? What do the youth of European countries have in common with each other and how do cultural and political differences factor into the dissimilarities?

Attempting to gauge the climate is the annual online trendence Graduate Barometer ([www.trendence.com](http://www.trendence.com)), the largest quantitative survey available on the subject, the results of which have been published across Europe in newspapers including *The Guardian* in the UK and Spain's *El Pais*.

The aim is to gain insight into how young "Europeans think about their future." The annual online survey asks students across the continent about their expectations and preferences in their first postgrad job. Questions asked include what companies they would most like to work for, the tools they use to job hunt and what factors are the most important when it comes to finding a job.

In 2009, the second year Greece has taken part, 22 countries were covered with 196,000 participants, including 1,005 in Greece. The findings for business and engineering/IT students have been released, while this winter the 2009 findings for students studying all other subjects will be available.

Athens Plus found out from trendence customer relations director Oliver Viel how Greek graduates were both similar and different from other Europeans of their age.

**How did Greece stand out in the study findings?**

An important finding in the Greek results is that the number of banks ranked among the top 10 employers in the Business Edition is a lot higher than in all other countries. Despite the economic crisis, banks are still very popular employers in Greece, unlike in most other European countries. In most countries – especially in Switzerland, of course – we measure an enormous loss of trust in banks. Greek graduates do not seem to be influenced as heavily as their European fellow students.

**In what ways are Greek graduates similar to other European graduates?**

All across Europe we can see that auditing firms are becoming more attractive as employers are able to hold their position. These companies have to put a lot of effort and money into their employer brand. They see this as adding value to their company and therefore are willing to invest money in their employer brand – even in times of crisis.

We also observe a strong commitment toward national companies as first employers. Especially in times of crisis, these rather traditional companies seem to guarantee a comparatively stable environment. All over Europe job security is



becoming more and more important for graduates.

**What were the most surprising findings?**

It really surprised us that luxury brands entered the country rankings in several markets – and they perform considerably well. LVMH is just one example. In Switzerland, watchmakers like Patek Philippe or Rolex all of a sudden have become attractive; Gucci in Italy could strengthen its position just like luxury car manufacturers in Germany. Especially now students are looking for traditional employers – luxury brands emanate an environment of tradition and therefore seem to be very stable as product and employer brands.

**Is there a way to take the variations of**

**different cultures into account when it comes to questions on job outlook and the like?**

You are absolutely right, culture is an important factor. This makes the survey so interesting. What we can see regarding the results is only the sensed attractiveness of employers. You can compare this to the election of a president: People do not vote for the candidate with the best attitude for this job but for the candidate who gives the best impression. Before having this person as a president, you cannot see whether the choice is good or not.

**What would be the best country out of the group to find a job, at least for business and engineering/IT students?**

The trendence Graduate Barometer only measures what students think about prospective employers and working conditions as well as their career plans. Most of the students don't know how to evaluate the working conditions within 22 countries and therefore we cannot say which one is the best country to find a job.

Of course, there are certain differences regarding the educational cultures one has to take into account when comparing. For example, in Great Britain, it does not matter what you study and it is not a great problem to change a job or industry after a couple of years. In Germany or Switzerland, in contrast, it is very important not only what subject you studied but even what classes you took and what topic you wrote your thesis about. Education in Germany is a lot more specialized and takes longer. Therefore, both students and employers are not as flexible as in other countries. Another good example is France: There it is important to enter a good school; the grade you get at the end is secondary to future employers.

**Does the study give any insight on the debate between public versus private universities?**

Looking at the willingness to pay tuition fees in general, we realize when talking to the students that in countries with these fees students tend to regard this money they spend as an investment in their future. They are more critical when judging their universities and regard university education more as a service than students from countries without general tuition fees.

Traditionally, Greece is a country with a lot of people working abroad. Therefore, going abroad seems to be a lot more natural than in other countries. In addition to that, mobility programs such as Erasmus make it a lot easier for young people to experience life abroad during their education. These students gain a lot of experience and therefore are willing to work abroad, at least for a while, later on. At the same time, students already learn at university that foreign languages and intercultural experience are skills one absolutely needs in order to start a successful career. Big international firms rarely hire people without international experience.

**A majority of Greek students said "no" when asked if their university course provides them with the skills necessary for the labor market. What do findings like that reveal?**

The field phase of the survey took place at the same time as the strikes caused by the university reforms in Greece. It is obvious that in these times students were not prepared to compliment their university.

 A general summary of the survey can be found at [trendence.de](http://trendence.de).

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Negative climate

‘The field phase of the survey took place at the same time as the strikes caused by the university reforms in Greece’

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Safer choices

‘All over Europe job security is becoming more and more important for graduates’