

Greek PM, Luxembourg counterpart express confidence in Greece's future

ATHENS, June 11 (Xinhua) -- Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras and visiting Luxembourg Premier and former Eurogroup chief Jean-Claude Juncker reaffirmed confidence that Greece is on the path to economic recovery during talks in Athens on Tuesday. "My visit comes in a much better period compared to the past. Nobody talks about Grexit anymore," Juncker said during a joint press briefing after the meeting with Samaras, praising Greece's "impressive progress" in painful efforts to avoid a chaotic default and possible exit from the euro zone since 2010. Expressing optimism for the future, Juncker called on European Union partners to further support the debt-laden country to combat the problem of unemployment which is very intense especially among youth in the third year of austerity and sixth year of deep recession. On his part, Samaras expressed determination "not to allow Greece to return to darkness." "I have no right to show much optimism, but we proved wrong doomsayers. We might have not overcome the crisis yet, but we have paved the road to a brighter future," he said. Noting the improved climate for Greece internationally, Samaras attributed the change partly to the contribution of the country's "true friends, such as Juncker." Before winding up his two-day visit to Athens, Juncker was decorated with Greece's higher honor by Greek President Karolos Papoulias for his support to Greece's efforts to address the crisis. Addressing an event hosted by the Greek Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, Juncker said he is "proud to have reacted to the Grexit," and strongly criticized the "arrogant rhetoric of some politicians and media in Northern Europe against Greece."