

Most Greeks consider austerity measures "unfair": survey

ATHENS, Sept. 23 (Xinhua) -- An overwhelming majority of Greek citizens turn down the austerity packages promoted in return of bailout loans as "unfair" and express anxiety for the future, a series of opinion polls showed.

Nine out of 10 respondents in the survey of MRB polling firm conducted for Sunday's local newspaper Real News said that the rounds of cuts on wages and pensions introduced to tackle the Greek debt crisis under agreements with international creditors add pressure on the poorest Greeks.

Seventy percent of respondents said they want Greece to stay in the eurozone, but only three out of 10 think the stability and growth plan implemented since 2010 in exchange of vital financial aid from EU and International Monetary Fund is the way to avoid a chaotic bankruptcy and a Greek exit from euro.

Disappointment has taken its toll on the popularity of the three-party coalition government which took over after June's national elections.

As the government led by Prime Minister Antonis Samaras negotiates with lenders a fresh austerity package of 11.5 billion euros (14.9 billion U.S. dollars) to unlock further loans, his conservative New Democracy (ND) party's lead over the anti-austerity Radical Left Coalition (SYRIZA) has narrowed.

According to the Real News survey, ND garners 22.9 percent of votes, SYRIZA 22.4 percent, while the neo-fascist Chryssi Avgi (Golden Dawn) wins the third place from ND's socialist PASOK coalition partners with 9 percent of votes versus 7.9 percent.

Another two polls conducted for two other local dailies showed similar results, with the survey of Metron Analysis polling firm printed in Ependitis (Investor) newspaper giving SYRIZA a marginal lead of 20.8 percent against 19.6 percent for ND.

According to the same survey, 57 percent of Greeks support an annulment of bailout agreements with international lenders, even though such a step could lead to a catastrophic financial collapse.

In the fifth year of deep recession, fear, anxiety and pessimism about their financial future are the emotions prevailing amongst Greeks, according to a survey by Focus Bari. Nine out of 10 respondents said that they have been affected by the crisis on all levels, including emotions.

Due to cuts on wages, pensions, tax increases and uncertainty, they said they have made cuts in household expenses, including food, starting from entertainment, clothing, electrical appliances and traveling.