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Foreign Minister Lavrov Denies Greece Asked Russia for Financial Help – Report

By The Moscow Times

July 03, 2015



Anti-EU protesters hang a banner from Lycabettus hill in Athens, Greece. The banner reads in Greek and English: "No to austerity, no to fear."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said late last week that Greece had not asked Russia for financial help, the RIA news agency reported.

Greece held a bailout referendum on Sunday to decide whether to take an offer from international creditors of more austerity measures in return for more loans. The result of the referendum was still unknown as of print time in Moscow on Sunday.

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has sought closer ties with Russia since taking office earlier this year, but the Kremlin has repeatedly played down suggestions Russia might bail out Greece.

Russia earlier said financial aid to Athens was not discussed when Tsipras visited St.

Petersburg in June for talks with President Vladimir Putin.

Lavrov has previously expressed hope that Brussels would not implement "negative scenarios" and that Greece would overcome its current problems.

Russia has relatively little exposure to Greek banks and government debt, but a Greek exit from the euro zone would limit risk appetite worldwide, possibly hitting Russian assets which are already seen as risky.

(MT, Reuters)

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