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Better times for Greeks?

barnsley

[Professor Michael Cox](#), Director of LSE IDEAS and Professor of International Relations at LSE, reflects on being in Greece during the Euro crisis.



The Artemision Bronze

When I arrived in Greece the Saturday before that famous referendum there were three things which I thought I knew about Greece: first, that even if it had a problematic present it continued to have a most glorious past (obviously true); two, that it had incomparable sunsets (nowhere better); and three, that the upcoming referendum was simply going to be 'too close to call'.

However, as we now know, on the following day – the Sunday – there was a landslide for No. So it was not 'too close to call' after all! So I got that wrong at least. But then the tensions really began to rise, in large part because a whole host of writers began to predict a 'Grexit' simply because Syriza would (it was felt) never agree to an austerity programme the electorate had just rejected.

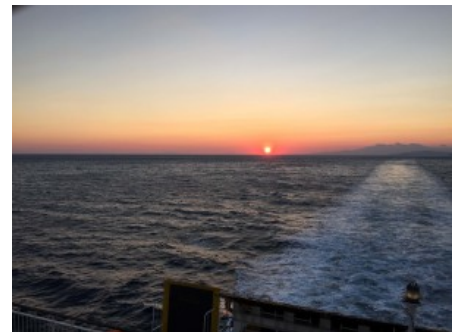
Indeed, before the agreement itself, of all economic experts polled, 55% thought Greece would go out of the Euro. As we now know, (again) Syriza did accept the terms laid down by Europe.. And Greece did not go out of the Euro. Another failure of prediction.

But the terms of the bail-out were extraordinarily tough. So we are not yet at the end of the crisis. We may not even be half way through it. Nothing is now certain.

But of three things – once more – I think I am certain: one, that Europe (inevitably) has emerged from all this more divided than at any time since the 2003 Iraq war; two, that Germany comes out of the crisis (a little unfairly perhaps) looking like the bully of Europe; and three that Britain has emerged from the whole thing (predictably) looking irrelevant.

Read Professor Cox's previous pieces from Greece:

[The Great Game](#)
[Scylla and Charybdis](#)



An incomparable sunset

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