



Dear Anna,

Alexis Tsipras has shown remarkable leadership qualities since he was elected. But how much credibility has he lost on the way between promises he was incapable of keeping? Is there any chance he can convince a majority that a government led by him would be best suited to steer the country through the next years?

As the opinion polls in the final countdown to the snap elections in Greece next Sunday display a growing support for SYRIZA's main contender New Democracy (ND), thus levelling ND's and SYRIZA's chances in the run, several observers hurried to argue that the star of Tsipras faded. It has been also argued that – given Tsipras' inability to deliver on his anti-austerity promises – his credibility dwindled and he might not be able to lead SYRIZA to a victory in the elections. Well, not necessarily...

Tsipras is a very bright politician who has come to an understanding that what really matters in politics is not what you have done but how you present what you have done. He made it evident during the televised debate last Monday. As the case of the third bailout program for Greece proves, Tsipras possesses the ability of turning his defeat into a virtue, and still benefit from it.

Tsipras also remained unaffected by the attitude and contestable media interventions of Yanis Varoufakis that eventually led to a rupture in his government. The ousting of Varoufakis was done in a very skillful and well-coordinated framing of this event in the Greek tabloids. Tsipras' new minister of economy and finance, Euclid Tsakalotos, made the story of the next day. Gone is the king! Long live the king!

An average Greek voter has been convinced that Tsipras fought a brave battle on the Eurogroup front and that, unlike his predecessors on the post of prime-minister, he had the zeal to run a referendum. The same voter does not understand however that it was only under the threat of Grexit that the SYRIZA government started producing some counterproposals to those offered by the creditors. The same voter is also ignorant of the fact that the July 5 referendum was redundant in that the Greek citizens were asked about a Eurogroup's proposal that was invalid at the time of the referendum.

Finally, Tsipras is charming, not to say magnetic. This gained him Merkel's and Juncker's personal sympathy; and this is what earns him respect among young and middle-aged Greeks.

All these factors give Tsipras an incredible political capital. There is a pool of voters that – while ideologically ignorant and politically undecided – may decide to cast their vote not in favour of SYRIZA but in favour of Tsipras, i.e. on account of his perceived personal virtues, skills and abilities. This also means that the issue of credibility is not the most important one when examining Tsipras' political future on the Greek political scene. It also means that – in all likelihood – Tsipras will be able to form a government following the elections on Sunday.

Alexis Tsipras has one more asset: so far he has always proved to be lucky. The question is: how long can one be lucky?

Best wishes!

Anna



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