

PRIVATISATION, DEREGULATION AND RESISTANCE IN CRISIS EUROPE

ANNEX FOR 'PRIVATISING EUROPE' BRIEFING



13 March 2013

This annex for TNI's briefing "Privatising Europe: Using the Crisis to entrench neoliberalism" is work in progress. Much of it was collected in October 2012; although privatisation details were updated for crisis countries in March 2013.

FRANCE

- Govt holdings estimated worth EUR 88 bn (4.6% of GDP) as of Sept 2010¹
- "The French government has announced that it intends to dispose of 50% of the shares in four regional airports (Lyon, Toulouse, Bordeaux and Montpellier). However, the respective municipal governments that already hold stakes of 15% apiece say they want to acquire these shares themselves."²

GREECE

"Greece's recovery... cannot happen with the government controlling access to key assets..." (EC Report 2012)

Privatisations are meant to generate at least €5.9 billion through 2014, €10.5 billion through 2016, and €25.6 billion through 2020.³

The biggest source of income is to come from disposal of assets held by KED, the Hellenic Public Real Estate Corporation, worth an estimated EUR 35 bn.⁴

Licences and rights to public infrastructure worth EUR 9 bn are focused on Greece's two biggest ports, Thessaloniki and Piraeus, and the country's motorways.⁵

PRIVATISATION	DEREGULATION	RESISTANCE
<p><u>For sale (in the short term or long term) or concession under the 'Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (TAIPED) founded by Law 3986/2011 (3), in article 1.2 of which is stated that, "The product of the assets utilization is used exclusively to pay off the country's public debt"</u></p> <p>Water - Athens and Thessaloniki Water and Sewerage Company (prices of companies are significantly undervalued)</p> <p>Islands - state agency Taiped has identified 40 uninhabited islands and islets that could be leased for as long as 50 years</p> <p>Ports - 12 major ports including further privatisation of Piraeus (a big part of the port has already been sold to Cosco), Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Elefsina, Lavrio, Igoumentsia, Alexandroupolis, Volos, Kavala, Corfu, Patras, Rafina, Heraklion Port Authority</p> <p>Energy - Public Gas Company DESFA & DEPA, South Kavala Off-shore natural gas storage facility, Public Power Corporation</p> <p>Electricity - the Public Power Corporation has more than 20.000 employees. The assets of the company are valued around 16 billion Euros. Its current value in the stock market is 850 million. The cost of a single lignite unit in Ptolemaida is 1.5 billion. The whole company will be sold for less than one of its units. It has hundreds of hydro-electric, thermal and wind-fuelled stations all over Greece.</p> <p>Infrastructure -Hellenic motorways (including the brand new Egnatia linking Turkey with the Ionian sea), Trainose rail operator, regional state airports (there are 39 in Greece), Athens International Airport</p> <p>Hellenic Post</p> <p>State Lotteries</p> <p>Police for hire</p> <p>OPAP, SA</p>	<p>Shipping and commercial road transport were liberalised in July 2010⁶</p> <p>Flexibilisation of occupational and sector agreements on pay and conditions: non automatic extension after non-conclusive negotiations</p> <p>Minimum wage decreased by 22 percent, or 32 percent for under 25s⁷</p> <p>Minmum wage for under 25s is below the poverty line</p> <p>Talks with the Troika on abolishing collective negotiations on general minimum wage and replacing it with imposition by decree</p> <p>Reduction in public-sector salaries by 15 percent⁸</p> <p>Reduction of supplementary pensions between 10 to 20 percent⁹</p> <p>Removal of allowances for families with annual incomes above €45.000, unless they have five or more children¹⁰</p> <p>Introduction of a 1:10 hiring attrition rule in state owned enterprises¹¹</p> <p>Reduction of health spending of over one billion¹²</p> <p>Retirement age raised from 61 to 65¹³</p> <p>Reduction of 150,000 public-sector jobs through hiring freeze and elimination of temporary contracts¹⁴</p> <p>Extension of the "trial period" during which workers can be dismissed without notice to one year</p> <p>The law of fast-track investments passed in 2011 allowed concessions of beaches for 50 years and changes in the use of land only with ministerial decisions (without going through the Parliament). This is a big danger for forests. The Ministry of Environment has used this legislation to order cutting down the forest of Skouries in Chalkidiki to let Eldorado Gold build a mine.</p>	<p>Sept 2012: Transport strike blocks Athens¹⁵</p> <p>Sept: Taxation employees strike¹⁶</p> <p>Sept: Professors, teachers, researchers protest cuts¹⁷</p> <p>September 18, new general strike. Some 50.000 marched in Athens. In some small cities some of the biggest demos ever.</p> <p>26 Sept 2012: General strike; 200,000 march¹⁸ in Athens</p> <p>Tens of thousands demonstrate during Angela Merkel's visit against the new 13.5 billion cuts plan including firing of 15,000 public servants.</p> <p>Campaign to prevent privatisation of Thessaloniki water utility and for turning it into a citizens-controlled public utility (see below)</p> <p>Campaign against privatisation of Athens water utility (see below)</p> <p>Port workers' unions resist sale of ports and 'Chinese' labour condition imposed in Pireaus by Cosco.</p> <p>Unpaid workers from naval constructions, a patisserie chain, and tens of other companies in mobilisations.</p> <p>Effort from metal workers of Vio.Met. (http://biom-metal.blogspot.be/p/english.html) to run their own factory</p> <p>Union of Public Power Company (GENOP) threaten repeated 48 hour strikes if a new austerity plan is submitted in the Parliament and until it get withdrawn.</p> <p>Neighbourhood assemblies organised against cuts in municipalities, extreme-right + police violence and in order to organise daily solidarity.</p> <p>Members of the unions of EYDAP (Athens) and EYATH (Thessaloniki) have started juridical procedures against the transfer of the state's percentage to TAIPED.</p>

136 Movement: a people's movement to prevent the privatisation of the water and sewage system in the city of Thessaloniki

The Water Supply and Sewage Public Company of Thessaloniki (EYATH) serves six municipal communities of Thessaloniki, 11 regional communities and over one million people. In response to the loan conditions set by the 'Troika' to receive rescue loans, the Greek Parliament passed a new law to sell 40% of the shares of EYATH. In the summer of 2011, a new people's movement to protect Thessaloniki's public water system was born. 136 Movement (www.136.gr) is a grassroots movement that aims to stop the sale of EYATH and to put forward a citizen's option to keep water management in public hands through democratic control and not-for-profit policies. 136 Movement's strategy is two-fold. First, it will attempt to stop the sale of the public water and sewerage company. Second, in case that the sell-off continues, they will compete in the bidding process with the global water transnational companies via a "citizen's participation" in the public tender. The 136 Movement is developing a plan for the social and democratic management of the company through the creation of 16 local cooperatives that will be owned by the citizens of Thessaloniki. The plan is to build a model of public water services that is based on transparency, democratic functioning and administration, non-for-profit management, and participation of at least 372,000 households per water meter, which is 72 percent of the total households in Thessaloniki. The idea is for each household to participate in the process through contributing 136 EUR, which is the amount needed per household to complete the 50 million EUR acquisition of EYATH.

Save Greek Water

This new initiative was born in July 2012 in Athens to oppose privatisation of water resources and water services. Save Greek Water has created a space to inform the public about the risks of privatisation of water, witnessed across the world. The initiative aims to connect different organisations and people, starting with a petition distributed through AVAAZ aimed at collecting 20,000 signatures. Beyond opposing water privatisation, they advocate democratic and sustainable ways to manage precious common goods like water. European and international civil society groups are supporting Save Greek Water initiative.

IRELAND

"The authorities have re-affirmed their commitment to use at least half of the proceeds from planned state asset sales for eventual debt reduction, while also reinvesting the remainder of the proceeds, once realised, in projects of a commercial nature, meeting ex-ante cost benefit criteria, enhancing employment, and preserving long-term fiscal sustainability, including programme and EDP fiscal targets." (EC Report, 2012)¹⁹

Potential privatisation proceeds could total EUR 5 bn (or 3.2% of GDP)²⁰

Irish privatisation is not interested in maximum revenue generation, mainly focusing instead on competition aspects.²¹

PRIVATISATION	DEREGULATION	RESISTANCE
<p>Bord Gáis Energy²²</p> <p>Electricity Supply Board power generation assets²³</p> <p>Harvesting rights to Coillte forestry assets²⁴</p> <p>Remaining 25% of Aer Lingus, dependent on "market conditions and antitrust concerns."²⁵</p> <p>Create Irish Water, introduce metering and stop taxation based universal water delivery²⁶</p> <p>Airports and seaports to be restructured and disposed of.²⁷</p> <p>"To improve the health of the government budget, the National Pension Reserve Fund already disposed of assets worth EUR 10 bn in H1 2011."²⁸</p> <p>Two-thirds of the nationalised Bank of Ireland had largely returned to private hands by July 2011.²⁹</p>	<p>Increase "labour market flexibility" and reallocate labour within and across sectors³⁰</p> <p>Reform welfare to reduce disincentives to work³¹</p> <p>Recalculate public service pensions and raise retirement age to 66-70 years³²</p> <p>Continue to reduce public service workforce³³ by 24,750 over 2008 levels, back to 2005 levels³⁴</p> <p>Road construction, education and healthcare facilities to be financed through Private Public Partnership arrangements involving the EIB, the NPRF, domestic banks, private sector sources, and some proceeds of state asset sales.³⁵</p> <p>Reduction of minimum wage by one euro to €7.65³⁶</p> <p>Public service pay cuts of 10 percent</p> <p>Introduction of a Site Value Tax to fund essential locally-delivered services, expected to bring in €530 million³⁷</p>	<p>Pharmaceutical and private health insurance sectors resist plan to charge private patients in the public hospitals³⁸</p> <p>A national campaign, No to Water charges, is arguing for taxpayers' money to be invested in water infrastructure, rather than seeking to penalise low income households with exorbitant charges to pay off debts. http://www.nowatercharges.ie/.</p> <p>A coalition of union and conservation groups is campaigning against selling off harvesting rights from Ireland's state-owned forests. http://www.saveourforests.ie/</p>

ITALY

Govt holdings estimated worth EUR 80 bn (5.2% of GDP) In Sept 2011³⁹

Govt assets (incl. those of the regions and municipalities but excluding potential proceeds from the sale of emission rights) could add up to EUR 571 bn, or close to 37% of GDP.⁴⁰

“Some 350 historic buildings in the capital and historic towns across the country are to flogged off, including Castello Orsini di Soriano in Cimiano, Palazzo Bolis Gualdo in Milan and Palazzo Diedo in Venice. Euros 42 billion worth of property is being put onto the market, a sizeable chunk the country’s Euros 600 billion public property portfolio.”⁴¹

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<p>City of Turin to sell 19 properties⁴²</p> <p>Planned sale of 350 buildings €1.5 billion (\$1.86 billion)⁴³</p> <p>Venice to sell and 18 properties including Diedo Palace⁴⁴</p> <p>Milan to sell 100 buildings including Palazzo Bolis Gualdo for €31 million⁴⁵</p> <p>Italian agencies at all levels said to own €42 billion of properties that are surplus or underused⁴⁶</p> <p>Municipal transport and waste services</p> <p>Post: proposals to privatise parts of postal service</p>	<p>Salary freeze for public employees until 2014; cuts to central government ministries; cut 10 percent public funding for political parties; reduction of transfers to local administrations⁴⁷</p> <p>Increase in women’s retirement age to bring it to par with men’s⁴⁸</p> <p>Pension reform requiring Italians to work 41 years before retirement⁴⁹</p> <p>Property tax reinstated on primary residencies and tax increase on other property taxes, expected to bring in €10 billion⁵⁰</p> <p>Liberalisation of protected industries including pharmacies, taxis, lawyers, notaries, gas stations, and ENI⁵¹</p>	<p>Sept: Doctors, professors on strike against Italy’s spending cuts⁵²</p> <p>In July 2012, Italian Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional Article 4 of the Decree Law 138 of August 13, 2011, by which, the Berlusconi government re-introduced the privatisation of local public services⁵³</p> <p>26 million Italians say water and public services should remain public⁵⁴</p> <p><u>Italian social movement: series of victories for public water</u></p> <p>The national grassroots movement initiated by the Forum Italiano dei Movimenti per l’Acqua worked tirelessly and achieved significant victories. In June 2011, more than 55% of Italians voted in the Referendum against the privatisation of water services. Over 95% (or 26 million) of those that voted said yes to public water. One hundred municipalities passed resolutions endorsing water as a common good. Under austerity policies, however, the European Central Bank tried to undermine democracy by demanding that Italy embarks on water privatisation. The ECB demanded a “comprehensive, far-reaching and credible reform strategy, including the full liberalisation of local public services and of professional services”. With many actions and including civil disobedience, the Italian Water Movement forced the Italian government of former European Commissioner Mario Monti to withdraw a proposal to liberalise water services on 19 January 2012. In July 2012, the Constitutional Court confirmed that the Decree Law introduced by the Berlusconi government was unconstitutional, therefore inadmissible. Importantly this ruling also blocks all subsequent attempts by the Monti government to privatise.</p>

PORTUGAL

Receipts anticipated from privatisation activities will total EUR 6.47 bn by 2013, corresponding to 4% of current debt or 3.7% of GDP.⁵⁵ This has been revised down more recently to EUR 5bn.

PRIVATISATION	DEREGULATION	RESISTANCE
<p>Sale of Caixa Seguros⁵⁶</p> <p>Banco Português de Negócios (nationalised in 2008) sold for EUR 40 m.⁵⁷</p> <p>Sectors of CGD such as insurance.⁵⁸</p> <p>Airline TAP Portugal (but latter temporarily withdrawn)</p> <p>Airport operator ANA</p> <p>Postal service Correios de Portugal⁵⁹</p> <p>Public water company of Águas de Portugal and waste company EGF being prepared⁶⁰</p> <p>Reduction of state holdings in EDP⁶¹ 40% stake in REN-Redes Energéticas Nacionais SA for €592 million to State Grid International of China and Oman Oil Co^{62, 63}</p> <p>Third Energy Package to liberalise electricity and gas sectors⁶⁴</p> <p>Privatisation/concession of cargo subsidiary of CP (CP Carga)⁶⁵</p>	<p>Special rights (golden shares) which the government held in some companies were abolished. Moreover, it was set out in law that such special rights would never be created again. One of the relevant companies is Portugal Telecom. The government’s veto right in the case of disposals has been abolished.⁶⁶</p> <p>Pay cuts for senior public sector staff and politicians of five percent⁶⁷</p> <p>Suspension for two years of holiday and Christmas bonuses for public servants and retirees⁶⁸</p> <p>Cuts to social welfare programs⁶⁹</p>	<p><u>Água de todos campaign in Portugal</u></p> <p>The campaign has collected more than 10,000 signatures to oppose privatisation of the public water company Águas de Portugal and to defend water services and an essential human right. The public workers’ union STAL plays a very important role in the campaign.</p> <p><u>The Portuguese Debt Audit Campaign (IAC)</u> presented a Provisional Report in 2012 and is calling for urgent renegotiation of debt with all creditors. http://auditoriacidada.info</p>

SPAIN		
PRIVATISATION	DEREGULATION	RESISTANCE
<p>49% of Aena Aeropuertos⁷⁰ banking recapitalization and restructuring⁷¹</p> <p>6th November 2012, the privatisation process of water services company, Aigües Ter – Llobregat (ATLL) was concluded.</p> <p>6th November 2012, AGBAR, a company controlled by SUEZ, and operating without contract in Barcelona created a new joint company. Its ownership will be 85% private and will not only deal with the water supply but also with sanitation.</p> <p>Health: Plan to privatise staffing of 6 public hospital and 27 health centers.</p>	<p>Reduction in public funding of political parties by 20 percent⁷²</p> <p>Public sector hiring freeze in 2012⁷³</p> <p>Public sector wages and minimum wage freeze⁷⁴</p> <p>Spending cuts totaling €8.9 billion⁷⁵</p> <p>Cut a further € 10 billion a year from public spending in health-care and education, particularly for pensioners and high income earners⁷⁶</p> <p>University fees will increase sharply⁷⁷</p>	<p>Popular consultation said No to privatisation in Madrid</p> <p>Social movement groups have successfully organised a popular consultation in March 2012 in the region of Madrid to mobilise opposition to plans to privatise the public water company Isabel II Canal. This company supplies water to 6 million people in Madrid. 98.9% of the 180,000 citizens that joined the consultation were against privatisation; the consultation involved 319 polling stations created jointly by M-15 (Indignados), neighborhood groups, Izquierda Unida and the Plataforma contra la privatización del Canal de Isabel II. http://www.plataformacontralprivatizaciondelcyii.org</p> <p>Plataform Aigua és Vida (AeV) consists of 28 organisations and neighborhood associations, unions, environmentalists in Barcelona challenging AGBAR which they argue is operating 'illegally.' They are calling on municipalities to submit administrative challenges to the privatisation of ATLL.</p> <p>Different popular collectives (known as 'citizen waves') have formed to defend public services, choosing different colours. On 23 February 2013, the different 'waves' came together for a massive protest in Madrid. http://mareaciudadana.blogspot.nl</p>

UNITED KINGDOM		
PRIVATISATION	DEREGULATION	RESISTANCE
<p>National Health Services carve-up⁷⁸ Private contractors have eyes on contracts worth up to 20 bn GBP a year</p> <p>Probation Services; Court Interpreters</p> <p>Delivery of welfare benefits</p> <p>Local council services</p> <p>Police services; proposed full privatisation of fire and rescue services</p> <p>Banks: Northern Rock and other nationalised banks to be sold off</p>	<p>Welfare reform introducing a £26,000-a-year cap on yearly family benefits⁷⁹</p> <p>Introduction of a single tier pension for future retirees⁸⁰</p>	<p>Campaigns in Edinburgh by public sector unions and residents overturned privatisation plans in January 2012. Similar campaigns are underway in Barnet, Bristol, Cornwall, Newcastle, Oxford, Suffolk and other cities across UK. http://www.coalitionofresistance.org.uk</p> <p>An internet-based organisation, 38 degrees, helped mobilise a million people to fight privatisation of health services. www.38degrees.co.uk</p>

Endnotes

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