

Greece closes public broadcaster ERT

ATHENS, GREECE: Greece's government on Tuesday announced the immediate closure of public television and radio broadcaster ERT in a move that reportedly affects about 2,700 jobs.

"ERT is a case of an exceptional lack of transparency and incredible extravagance. This ends now," government spokesman Simos Kedikoglou said at a press conference.

Kedikoglou said the organisation will reopen at a later stage under a new format and considerably fewer employees.

All current employees, whom according to local media number nearly 2,700 will be compensated and will be allowed to reapply for a job at the revamped organisation, he said.

People reportedly swarmed to the premises of ERT to show their support shortly after the announcement.

"ERT belongs to the Greek people... It is the only independent and public voice and it has to remain public... We condemn the government's sudden decision," public sector union GSEE said in a statement.

The union of news editors POESY called on private media to hold an immediate strike.

POESY had condemned the expected closure earlier in the day.

"In order to keep in line with the (EU-IMF creditors), the government is willing to sacrifice public television and radio," the union said in a statement.

The socialist Pasok party and the moderate Democratic Left, junior partners in Greece's three-party coalition government, had also expressed their opposition to an immediate closure of ERT when rumours first started circulating earlier in the day.

On Monday, representatives of Greece's international creditors from the European Union, International Monetary Fund and European Central Bank began a regular audit of the country's progress in implementing its austerity programme and structural reforms.

The reforms demanded of debt-laden Greece in return for a bailout include a drastic reduction of the public sector and the merging or closing of public organisations.

ERT employees have been staging work stoppages for months, opposing plans to restructure the broadcaster as demanded by the troika of creditors.

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- channel24: As a consequence here in South Africa, [has lost its Greek TV channel](#), reports channel24.

Source: AFP, via I-Net Bridge

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