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**Publication date**

2015

**Document Version**

Final published version

[Link to publication](#)

**Citation for published version (APA):**

Abazi, V. (Author), & Tauschinsky, E. (Author). (2015). Willing to Trust? : On Greek Referendum and Confidential Negotiations. Web publication or website, BlogActiv. <https://acelg.blogactiv.eu/2015/07/03/willing-to-trust-on-greek-referendum-and-confidential-negotiations/>

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# Willing to Trust? : On Greek Referendum and Confidential Negotiations

July 3, 2015



In the recent news about Greece, there is one issue that keeps on resurfacing: trust. News reports will state that there is a [‘trust gap’](#) between Greece and the Troika, that creditors [don’t trust Greece’s](#) plans and the breakdown of the talks was ultimately caused [by a lack of trust](#) between the negotiating parties. In [an article we just published](#), we go more into the details of what trust is and how it works. Focusing on public access to information, we explain how a ‘trust’ approach differs from the ‘control’ approach often taken, and how a regime catering for better access to

motivational information would do better on the trust axis. Motivational information means information on decision makers, not only decisions; about what they want, not only what they do. These points are worth recalling in the current European financial debate.

**By Vigjilence Abazi and Eljalill Tauschinsky**

On Sunday 5 July, Greek citizens are faced with a key decision not only for their own fate but also for the destiny of Europe. But what will they be saying No or Yes to? Since meetings mostly took place behind closed doors, we know more about the blame–game between Brussels and Athens than the specific decisions to be taken. Do we actually know the proposals at the negotiation table? Besides the legal and financial facts, do we know the motives of the main actors?

As we have [argued before](#), without transparency and clarity on who does what, when and how, it becomes difficult for citizens to decipher how decisions that profoundly affect their lives are taken or what are the decisive motives behind them.

And this brings us full circle back to the news on Greece and trust. How are we to understand the alleged lack of trust in the confidential negotiations on the Greek crisis?

The first thing to remember is that neither trust nor distrust are unchangeable facts. Trust might be more quickly destroyed than built, but it can be built and it can be destroyed.

The second thing, and this is something we also emphatically stress in our article mentioned above, is that no amount of control or factual information can build trust. Knowledge about past behaviour might help

create or suspend suspicion, but it is not determinate for the creation of trust.

Especially in the current volatile context, past behaviour is not necessarily the right tool to predict future success. Instead, the creation of *trust is based on the willingness* from the decision-makers to believe in the **character, ability, strength, and truth** of the opposing negotiating party.

In current European political leadership it is this *willingness* to trust which is core.

But at the heart of the referendum lays even a harder choice: Given too little information, the Greek citizens are asked to take the leap of faith without knowing whether European responsibility will meet them.

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