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**Abstract**

The current financial crisis is blamed for the proliferation of neoliberal policies in Greek universities. However, this article argues that the imposition of relevant policies has wider causes linked to contradictions observed during the democratization and modernization of universities over the last 40 years. At the same time policymakers are seeking 'external' support to mitigate the doubts of pressure groups, such as academic staff, students, and mass media, regarding the need to implement unpopular reforms in Greek universities. Set against this political backdrop, the present article argues that the references of the Greek political leadership to European discourse about universities are a strategy to build alliances within the country for the promotion of neoliberal reforms in the field of tertiary education. The implementation of these reforms has been facilitated through the financial crisis, which has pressured the Greek governments to take immediate measures for the sake of the 'national economy?'. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Zmas, Aristotelis, E-Mail: a.zmas@euc.ac.cy