

HALF CAFF

The News To Go



June 11, 2018

Happy Monday, everyone!

And before we begin, we want to ask you for a small favor (no, we're not asking for money). As we continue to grow, The Bubble is always trying to create the best quality content in order to keep you informed. From time to time, we like to do a quick survey so you, our readers, can help us understand your interests and preferences. Are you here for the political content? Is it the cool restaurants? Are you just trying to practice your English? We want to know! So please [click on this link](#) and take five minutes of your time. It's quick, simple and you could win a stay at The Haig in the heart of Palermo Hollywood.

OK, now that that's out of the way, this is what happened in the last seven days:

ARGENTINA REACHED A US \$50 BILLION STAND-BY AGREEMENT WITH THE IMF

The Argentine government announced last week it reached a US \$50 billion, 36-month stand-by agreement with the International Monetary Fund. The Macri administration resorted to the international organization in mid-May,

following a sharp depreciation of the peso, a result of a foreign exchange crisis. President Macri called it "a historic agreement" for Argentina this morning.

The government also reached separate agreements with the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the CAF development bank of Latin America. overall, they amount to US \$5.65 billion.

This is the largest loan the IMF has agreed to in its history, and amounts to about 1,110 percent of Argentina's quota in the organization. Although its Executive Board still has not officially approved the staff-level agreement – is set to do so on June 20 – the fund's Managing Director, Christine Lagarde, officially came out to congratulate President Mauricio Macri, indicating she was "pleased that we can contribute to this effort by providing our financial support, which will bolster market confidence, allowing the authorities time to address a range of long-standing vulnerabilities.

Shortly before the IMF announcement, Treasury Minister Nicolás Dujovne and Central Bank (BCRA) Governor Federico Sturzenegger held a press conference to outline the details of the agreement, which Dujovne assured "illustrates the support of the international community of Argentina."

"It is good news, we are extremely happy," began Dujovne, who nonetheless argued that the loan will not have a "magical effect," as "the IMF can help us, but solving our problems is up to us." "We are convinced that we are going down the right path. We managed to avoid a crisis. We have a consistent plan and seek support for it," he added.

Argentine authorities intend to draw on the first tranche of the arrangement, of approximately US \$15 billion, immediately after the Executive Board's vote, but subsequently treat the loan as precautionary, the [IMF explained in a release](#).

The agreement will have palpable consequences. The government has pledged to accelerate the reduction of its primary fiscal deficit – i.e the fact that it spends more than it collects. Although the goal for this year, of a 2.7 percent deficit,

will remain untouched, next year's will have to be of 1.3 percent of the GDP, rather than the initially intended 2.2 percent.

The new ulterior target aims at reaching fiscal balance in 2020 instead of 2021. With an eventual surplus, the government would be able to stop rolling over sovereign debt interests – that is, issuing long-term debt to pay soon-to-expire debt – and begin paying them with its own money, putting an end to the snowball effect.

HITTING THE FAN: THE LOWER HOUSE COULD VOTE ON DECRIMINALIZATION OF ABORTION THIS WEEK

Deputies advocating for the campaign for legal, free, and safe abortion have modified the wording of the “voluntary interruption of the pregnancy,” in an attempt to garner support from undecided lawmakers and ensure its passing tomorrow, when the four commissions discussing it since April will vote on it. And, if it passes that first round, send it to the floor of the Lower House, where it would be debated and voted on Wednesday, June 13.

The new wording was debated by the commissions last week, and sources in Congress told The Bubble that it is possible the bill “will continue to be modified” until Tuesday.

You can read the [current draft here](#).

Perhaps the most relevant modification introduced is the so-called “conscious objector” figure, which would authorize doctors to refuse performing abortions. The bill clarifies that, however, they will only be allowed to do so if they have previously expressed it in writing before the top authority of the health center in which they work. At the same time, authorities will have to include them in a register and also inform the top health authority of its jurisdiction.

Nonetheless, there are exceptions: doctors will not be authorized to refuse if the woman requires immediate medical attention. And also, since the health

center as an institution will not be able to object, it will have to ensure the woman can access to an abortion (through another medical professional, for example), should she require so.

Another relevant change would include the requirement for women under 16 years of age to also secure written consent of their parent or legal guardian, as well as their own. In the previous bill, consent was considered valid from age 13 onward, while the consent from one parent or a legal guardian was required in situations where the person seeking an abortion is younger than 13.

The new bill would also introduce the need for health centers to provide “adequate information, as well as previous and posterior medical, social, and psychological attention to the voluntary interruption of the pregnancy, as well as adequate and reliable information regarding contraceptive methods, as well as their provision.”

The bill continues to authorize women for require free, legal, and safe abortions until the fourteenth week of gestation, and further along if the pregnancy were a result of rape; if the woman’s life was at risk; or if it was diagnosed that the fetus’ life outside the womb would not be viable.

As it stands, it also sets out that the public and private health systems must incorporate abortions into the services that they offer. Furthermore, the language in the draft legislation sets out that abortions do not require prior judicial authorization, and that they must take place in a period no greater than five days after it is requested.

PERONISM IS STILL TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO BECOME A STRONG OPPOSITION TO MACRI NEXT YEAR

Seeking a path to unity ahead of the 2019 presidential elections, Peronist factions sympathetic to the leadership of the ousted Partido Justicialista (PJ) chair have agreed to establish a political commission to paper over divisions within the party.

At a party congress chaired by Lawmaker José Luis Gioja – [who is contesting the decision by an electoral judge to name Luis Barrionuevo trustee of the party](#) – a commission drawn from the various factions was entrusted with the task of “of achieving unity in Peronism.”

Kirchnerites, sympathizers of Sergio Massa, and delegates representing provincial Peronists met at the Ferro stadium last week in the Caballito neighborhood of Buenos Aires in a show of strength that was openly defiant of Barrionuevo’s leadership. Formosa Governor Gildo Insfrán formally called for the congress to take place.

Absent was Senator Miguel Angel Pichetto (Río Negro) – the PJ’s broker in the Senate and a former political ally of former president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner who has now declared her a political adversary. In the same vein, governors represented by the “Argentina Federal” caucus – like Salta Governor Juan Manuel Urtubey or the independent-minded Peronists from Córdoba – in Congress were also absent.

As such, the commission is made up of members representing a mix of factions that has shown itself to be hostile to the Cambiemos government. San Luis Governor Alberto Rodríguez Saá, the chair of the Buenos Aires provincial party Gustavo Menéndez, the chair of the Kirchnerite caucus in the Lower House, Agustín Rossi, lawmakers Eduardo “Wado” de Pedro (of the Kirchnerite youth group La Cámpora), Cristina Álvarez Rodríguez, Silvina Franca, María Emilia Soria, Estela Neder, and Fernando Espinoza. The chair of the La Pampa province PJ, Rubén Marín, and the chair of the Tucumán PJ, Beatriz Rojkés de Alperovich, as well as Ginés González García, Health minister for former presidents Eduardo Duhalde and Néstor Kirchner.

Further to the various factions within the PJ, the control of the party is subject to judicial dispute after Barrionuevo was named trustee. The decision has been appealed before the highest electoral court, [and in the meantime Barrionuevo has already promised to find his own presidential candidate for 2019.](#)

Gioja tasked the commission with working “to achieve unity in Peronism, so that all together, we can end in 2019 this suffering that the government is subjecting us to.” Should a consensus candidate not appear going forward, Gioja left the door open to a primary.

The 2017 midterm elections featured three Peronist tickets in the province of Buenos Aires, including a run by Cristina Fernández de Kirchner under the [*Unidad Ciudadana*](#) ticket after she refused to participate in a primary against Florencio Randazzo within the PJ.

Santiago del Estero Lieutenant Governor José Emilio Nader ahead of the congress said that “it doesn’t matter if you’re Kirchnerite, a traditional *justicialista*, or Massista” in light of the “urgent need to build an alternative to this government,” according to Télam.

Enjoy the week, everyone!