

Most Germans want Greece out of eurozone

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(THE AUSTRALIAN) - A majority of Germans want Greece to leave the eurozone and oppose additional concessions to the left-wing Greek government in the present bailout negotiations, according to a latest survey, highlighting the domestic pressure on German Chancellor Angela Merkel to pursue a tough stance.

The survey conducted by Mannheimer Forschungsgruppe Wahlen for public broadcaster ZDF showed that the mood has turned sour against Greece, with 51 per cent now opposing Greek membership in the euro, compared with 45 per cent in a survey published March 27. Only 41 per cent want to keep Greece in the euro, compared with 49 per cent earlier.

Seven out of ten Germans oppose further concessions in the bailout talks, while 24 per cent of the 1,230 people polled June 9-11 said there is still room to accommodate Greece.

The findings show that Ms. Merkel has to find a balance between Greek demands for concession from its international creditors and growing frustration among German voters and lawmakers over the negotiations that have been dragging on for four months.

While other officials, including European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, have said that they are losing patience with Greece, the German leader insists that talks must continue and that she wants to keep Greece in the eurozone.

Cash-strapped Athens and its international creditors, the International Monetary Fund, the eurozone partners and the European Central Bank, have been in talks to free up €7.2 billion (\$US8.12 billion) in much needed aid in exchange for economic reforms.

But the negotiations have produced insufficient results in repeated talks between the Greek government and its lenders, with the IMF announcing Thursday that it has halted talks due to a lack of progress toward a deal, increasing the risks that the country might run out of cash and could even leave the eurozone.