

**ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΤΙΚΟΣ ΜΟΡΦΩΤΙΚΟΣ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΣ
ΓΥΝΑΙΚΩΝ ΔΡΟΣΕΡΟΥ ΞΑΝΘΗΣ
«Η ΕΛΠΙΔΑ»**



Αρ. Πρωτο.: 479

Dear Rosa,

Thank you very much for your prompt reply!

We are also very happy to have seeing you and we really enjoyed the Congress. We are keen to maintain the momentum! We will of course stay in contact with you and Maripaz for future ideas and exchanges, we really value your assistance and collaboration.

The main objective we are currently pursuing is the formation of a Roma Women Federation in Greece. In general, gender rights -though an absolute priority- are compromised in Greece not only for minority groups but also for the mainstream population. There is almost no research and/or reliable baseline data on several issues such as domestic violence and SGBV incidents, no relevant national protocols and/or public servants' training and awareness. Roma women -as many times said- are suffering from double marginalization: they are marginalized because they are Roma and they are also marginalized -even by members of their own communities- for being women.

Thrace of all places in Greece, manifests further complications: Roma in Thrace are also Muslims. That practically signifies two things: a long-term indifference by state authorities with regards to the living conditions and rights of this group of population combined with a keen political interest with regards to the wider geopolitics of the region. This strange combination, instead of contributing to the area's and people's status improvement through peaceful coexistence of all different populations has further exacerbated the area's problems and underdevelopment. As also discussed during the Congress and mentioned in my previous email, Thrace is the only place in Europe where provisions of Sharia law are pretty much the norm, up to date. That of course has evident, negative effects to women's civil rights and societal status.

We would thus aim to initiate the effort in Thrace while the Federation will clearly have a country-wide character. We firmly believe that it is about time to launch a more structured and organized effort to bring together Roma women activists and stakeholders in Greece.

We envisage the Roma Women Federation to be an open platform for exchange, human rights, gender and minorities' advocacy and representation. We would further pursue linking up this platform to EU, as a necessary step
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towards sustainability, funding but also a more pro-active and effective advocacy on Roma and gender issues. We would be interested to also cooperate with other similar national initiatives across Europe, again in view of enhancing Roma women's voice and participation. The Congress has already provided us with some very useful insights and actual links in this direction.

What is more, is that we are also elaborating on a sustainability plan for this platform as we really believe that such a project may well be self-financed after the initial period of its shaping and operation, adding also in focus issues of employment and income generation.

Last but not least, we have already promoted the idea among regional and state officials that have pledged their commitment and support.

I think this email is getting too long, so I'll just stop here 😊 However, I can send you a basic concept note in case you need more info.

We are in general aware that there will be some new funding opportunities on behalf of the EC: Calls for proposals we could apply. We would be grateful if you could further guide us in this regard as well as if you accept to collaborate with us in a joint project. In case, you think there are also some other opportunities or steps we could take in order to materialize our idea, please guide us accordingly. We definitely need you on our side in order to move ahead with this one.

Best,
Sabiha

Ξάνθη, 6/4/2018

Η Πρόεδρος του Πολιτιστικού Μορφωτικού
Συλλόγου Γυναικών Δροσερού Ξάνθης
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