

Cultural and Educational Women Association of Drosero Xanthi “ELPIDA” (“THE HOPE”)



R/N 662
20 September 2019

TO:
Saska Jovanovic

Dear Saska Jovanovic,

In more than a decade of working together, our Association – ELPIDA – has communicated about the issues we are dealing with as European Roma and to make it public to other Roma women's clubs and affiliated organizations that are defending human rights.

We all know and care about the rights of our children and women. Our Association, in its 15 years of operation, has managed to become known to every political party on the Greek political scene and to every politician and member of the Hellenic Parliament. In November 2007, the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Karolos Papoulias, awarded us in recognition of the work of our Association. The awards ceremony for the 2007 Islands of Quality Event was organized by the Citizens' Movement for an Open Society and the Greek Guidance. It was the first time a Roma woman had given a speech at the old Parliament building.

At the political level, a special honor for us was the visit of 50 candidates from the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in November 2008, in recognition of our work in the Thrace region.

In 2009, I received the 2nd International Women of Courage Award for a successful and sustained effort to promote the issues of the Roma community in Thrace (proposed by the American Mission to Greece). The award was presented at the Consulate of the United States in Thessaloniki by US Ambassador Daniel Speckhard.

In 2013 I received the Gold Medal from the Rotary Club of Thessaloniki at the 61st Awards Ceremony entitled "Benefit, Social Offering and Self-Sacrifice" and at the European level in 2016, I was honored to receive the "Personality of European Roma

President Telephone number: +30 69885366777, +30 2541063630
e-mail:sullogoselpida@gmail.com
www.drosero.com

Spirit" at the 2016 ERSA Awards, presented by the Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC).

In September 2018, after years of effort in the field of education, we turned to the Prosecutor of Xanthi asking him to intervene to get our children into public schools outside the settlement and to deal with the school dropout problem. He called for a concerted effort by all bodies, the Primary Directorate of Xanthi and the Ministry of Education, after informing them of sanctions by European courts. In January 2019, we were able to integrate the first 27 elementary school children and have them leave the segregated schools of our settlement. In the process of enrolling in May 2019, we were able to increase the number of children reaching 100 primary and kindergarten children. Our Association, in its 2018 census, collected 227 statements from parents who wish their children to attend schools in the city of Xanthi. We are hoping and fighting to keep increasing the number. The children in our settlement are now 3,000. The important thing is that a real start has been made.

The most difficult problem our Association is currently facing is that even though all of the responsible people were aware of the number of children that would be entering school this year, they did not make adequate arrangements for the elementary school children, such as providing school busses. It should be noted here that our 100-year-old settlement has not yet been incorporated into the city plan of Xanthi and therefore it does not have urban transport to connect it with the urban fabric of the city. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Education and local authorities did not comply with what the prosecutor had requested and this was illegal discrimination against a population group. They did not respect the law of the Constitution N.3304 / 2005 (Government Gazette 16th).

In addition, there was no information available to the parents of these 100 children. Parents have been coming to the Association from September 1 until the day the schools were opened to help them find out if their child was admitted to school in Xanthi and if so to which school. They continue to come to this day to ask for our help. Even the school bus and school attendant for the first 3 days did not have a proper list in their hands, and so didn't know which school to leave the children at. And finally, for the 50 kindergarten kids who had been informed in which kindergarten they will be attending the new school year, they were not informed that there is no bus yet.

President Telephone number: +30 69885366777, +30 2541063630
e-mail:sullogospida@gmail.com
www.drosero.com


The Association, being an accredited body and by its articles of association, has tried several times to help and become a bridge of communication between the inhabitants of Xanthi and those of Drosero, our settlement, in order to have a better future for our children. As stated above, according to the Ministry of Education circular d.11684 / C1 / 10-09-2008, are obliged to make every effort to support and integrate Roma children into the educational process, but they ignore this circular and do not apply Φ.3 / 960/102679 / C1 / 20-08-2010 and Φ.6 / 451 / 115136 / C1 / 16-09-2010, and do not ensure uninterrupted attendance of Roma children throughout the school year, as provided, nor encourage Roma pupils to attend school and obstruct the enrollment of children in the public schools of Xanthi.

We, on the basis of the above laws and European laws, strive to ensure that it is signed on the education of Roma children. If you believe you have someone in the UN, with whom you can share and discuss this issue, we warmly urge you to do so. Dear Saska, for your convenience, we also send you the latest requests we have sent to the Commission.

Sincerely,

The President of the Women Association of
Drosero Xanthi
«ELPIDA»




Souleiman Sampicha

President Telephone number: +30 69885366777, +30 2541063630
e-mail:sullogoselpida@gmail.com
www.drosero.com