

EASSW - European Association
of Schools of Social Work



21 July 2017

Dear Minister of Education,

The European Association of Schools of Social Work brings together over 300 different universities supporting social work education across Europe. EASSW represents social work education at the European level at the European Commission, the Council of Europe and with other international organizations.

It is with great disappointment that we heard about the possibility of merging the Social Work program at the TEI of Athens with other programs in the field of allied health or occupational therapy or preschool education, as part of a broader restructuring.

The Social Work program, students and staff at the TEI of Athens, over the years, have become well respected, prestigious and vibrant contributor to our academic field. Not only do colleagues from the TEI of Athens organize some of the most well attended scientific symposia in Europe but they also rigorously contribute to excellence in research and education. We are not aware of many social work teams that have engaged with global aspects of social work as proactively as colleagues from Athens have done over the years.

A possible move and merging of the Social Work program may obscure its social science base and shift focus from the social to other disciplines. As our organizational (which represents educators) and the International Federation of Social Workers (which represents practitioners) emphasize this is a regressive move and contrary to all our work in the past few years focusing on the social work role in promoting sustainable, inclusive communities as the backbone to economic health. It moves the focus back to a personal, individual level of intervention rather than transformational change to equitable and inclusive societies.

At a time when qualified and critically-minded social workers are needed more than ever, your proposal may be seen as a vote of no confidence to social work practitioners, people who use services and students.

It is for the above reasons that we urge the Greek Ministry of Education to rethink and reverse proposals on the social work program's merger.

Our Association will be monitoring developments closely and is at your disposal for consultation and discussions.

Kind regards,

Professor Vasilios Ioakimidis

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