

Minister of Education

Government of Greece

Zagreb, October 30, 2017

Dear Minister,

The majority of Social Work Schools in Europe are leading to a Bachelor Degree as they are established at the University Level. All of them give Social Work students the opportunity to continue their post-graduate studies at a Master's degree and Doctoral Level, giving emphasis on theory and practice. It is therefore necessary the Social Work Graduate Programme in Greece to be clearly established at the University level and students should be given the opportunity to register directly and upon entry to the University at the Social Work Graduate Programme that has clear learning goals, objectives and evaluation processes. The Greek Social Work Graduate Programme should be implemented at the University level, according to European and International standards in order to enhance Social Work Education in Greece and serve mobility and European students and staff exchange purposes.

We have learned that the Greek Ministry of Education decided in August 2017 to abolish the two Technological Educational Institutes (TEI of Athens and TEI of Piraeus) and establish the University of West Attica (UWA) by uniting the two TEI. The Ministry of Education has set certain criteria for the Departments to be autonomous in the UWA as well as the Departments that have to be merged with other similar Departments.

The Department of Social Work meets all the criteria for being an autonomous Department in the UWA to be founded. However, the Administration of TEI of Athens intends to merge Department with irrelevant Departments (Management, Community Health, etc.). As a result, social work students will have to attend common classes with irrelevant courses for the first two years of their studies and the last two years (Social Work direction) they will attend the major courses in Social Work.

This perspective is downgrading the level of social work education, disdains the social work profession and twists its professional identity.

Social Work professors, students, colleagues, Hellenic Association of Social Workers (SKLE), and European Association of Schools of Social Work are strictly opposed to this perspective. Support resolutions from Organizations and Social Services (from Greece and abroad), picketing and protest activities of professors, students and professional social workers have raised awareness and exercised any possible pressure in order to overthrow this negative perspective. This perspective becomes even more crucial due to the severe psychosocial effects of the long lasting economic crisis in the Greek society which needs social services of high quality and well qualified social workers.

Therefore, we strongly support the autonomy of Department of Social Work in the new University of West Attica

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'N. Žganec' in a cursive script.

Nino Žganec,

President of the EASSW