

Athens, 13.3.2013

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Subject: "Offensive transphobic discrimination against LGBT organizations by the Greek Ministry of Education-run Observatory for School Violence and Bullying".

With this Press Release we wish to report a **case of serious discrimination on grounds of gender identity** on behalf of a representative of the Observatory of School Violence and Bullying, run by the Ministry of Education.

Specifically, on Monday March 11, 2013 Greek LGBT organization delegates were scheduled to meet Ms Mavropoulou, legal advisor for the Observatory. When Ms Mavropoulou was informed that one of the four delegates is a transgender person, she demanded that she only meet with one of the delegates (the spokesman for the organization "Homophobia in Education"), otherwise she would proceed to cancel the meeting for "personal reasons"

In Detail: One hour before the meeting, Ms Mavropoulou's secretary called us to inquire about the names of the delegates, for the security check at the entry. We told her to inform the guards, if she deemed it necessary, that one of the delegates is a trans woman (i.e. her legal gender does not conform with her presentation).

**Upon hearing there would be a trans person among the delegates, the secretary displayed overt displeasure and was upset, insisting this is something "we ought to have informed her about in advance" and that "it is not certain any more how this will proceed"**. We called Ms Mavropoulou who asked that we call again within 5 minutes. After many attempts, and while we were on our way to the Ministry, we were put through to her.

She proceeded to tell us that, despite us having been in contact for the past few weeks arranging this meeting, she will not meet with more than one delegate, and she suggested she only meet with the spokesman for "Homophobia in Education". She made it clear that if we did not comply, **she would cancel the meeting "for personal reasons"**.

We explained that this is **cause for offense and we will not stand for it**. We maintained that we had clearly stated from the beginning of the negotiations that we the delegates are LGBT-identified persons, and that we are very concerned about school violence, social isolation and discrimination, and we have formulated and published very specific questions and solutions, in accordance to what is being done in all European countries.

We can in no way justify, under these circumstances, the cancellation of this meeting which is very important to us. We believe the aforementioned behavior clearly falls under transphobic discrimination.

Ms Mavropoulou insisted that despite all these objections, which we made known to her, she would rather cancel the meeting. Which she did.

The offensive discriminatory behavior thrown our way notwithstanding, we are left seriously questioning how this “Observatory” operates, even though we initially hailed it as a promising new institution. They claim to prevent and combat school violence and bullying, however there have been recorded and published reports of school violence and bullying at school, on grounds of gender identity (<http://transgendersupportassociation.wordpress.com/2012/12/10/report-of-discrimination-intimidation-and-racist-violence-against-a-trans-woman-in-education/>) and yet their representative is overtly dismayed and negative at the prospect of meeting a representative from the trans community.

We believe this incident to be a serious case of discrimination on grounds of gender identity, we believe this kind of behavior to be transphobic and in effect contrary and negatory to the goals of the Ministry of Education Observatory for the Prevention of School Violence and Bullying.

We invite the Ministry of Education to take the occurrence into serious consideration and re-examine whether the terms of operation of such a crucial institution correspond to European and International standards

## ***THE ORGANIZATIONS***

**- Greek Gay & Lesbian Community**

<http://www.olke.org> e-mail: [info@olke.org](mailto:info@olke.org)

**- Greek Transgender Support Association**

<http://www.transgender-association.gr> e-mail: [transgender.support.association@gmail.com](mailto:transgender.support.association@gmail.com)

**- Colour Youth, LGBT Youth Community of Athens**

<http://www.colouryouth.gr/> e-mail: [info@colouryouth.gr](mailto:info@colouryouth.gr)

**- Group Homophobia in Education**

[www.omofovia.gr](http://www.omofovia.gr) , e-mail: [info@omofovia.gr](mailto:info@omofovia.gr)

**- Lesbian Group Of Athens**

<http://ww.loa.gr> e-mail: [lesbiangroup@hotmail.com](mailto:lesbiangroup@hotmail.com)

**- Athens Pride – Φεστιβάλ Υπηρηφάνειας**

<http://www.athenspride.eu> e-mail: [info@athenspride.eu](mailto:info@athenspride.eu)

**- Thessaloniki Pride**

[www.thessalonikipride.com](http://www.thessalonikipride.com) e-mail:  
[contact@thessalonikipride.commailto:contact@thessalonikipride.com](mailto:contact@thessalonikipride.commailto:contact@thessalonikipride.com)

**- SYMPRAXI - Partnership for Gender Issues**

<http://reocities.com/sympraxis/> e-mail: [sympraxis.gender@gmail.com](mailto:sympraxis.gender@gmail.com)

**- Hellenic Action for Human Rights - “Pleiades”**

<http://hellenicaction.blogspot.gr/> e-mail: [electrakoutra@yahoo.gr](mailto:electrakoutra@yahoo.gr)

**- Synthesis**

<http://www.10percent.gr/> e-mail: [info@10percent.gr](mailto:info@10percent.gr)

**- Positive Voice**

<http://www.positivevoice.gr> e-mail: [info@positivevoice.gr](mailto:info@positivevoice.gr)

**- Act Up ΔΡΑΣΕ HELLAS**

<http://actupathens.blogspot.gr/> e-mail: [actup@otenet.gr](mailto:actup@otenet.gr)

**- World without wars and violence**

[www.kosmosxorispolemous.gr](http://www.kosmosxorispolemous.gr) , e-mail:  
[info@kosmosxorispolemous.gr](mailto:info@kosmosxorispolemous.gr)

**- Lesb.Equal.-Lesbians for Equality**

<http://lesbianbimafia.blogspot.gr/> e-mail: [penguinas2005@yahoo.gr](mailto:penguinas2005@yahoo.gr)

**- Homophonia**

<http://thessalonikipride.wordpress.com/>

**- Rainbow Families**

<http://ouraniotoksofamilies.blogspot.ch/> e-mail: [xaris1789@hotmail.com](mailto:xaris1789@hotmail.com)

**- Good As You(th)**

<http://www.goodasyouth.com/> e-mail:  
[good\\_as\\_you\\_thess@hotmail.com](mailto:good_as_you_thess@hotmail.com)

**- QueerTrans**

<http://queertrans.espiv.net> e-mail: [contactqueertrans@espiv.net](mailto:contactqueertrans@espiv.net)

**- Proud Press**

<http://proudpress.blogspot.gr/> e-mail: [webmaster.proudpress@gmail.com](mailto:webmaster.proudpress@gmail.com)

**- lgbt / Red**

<http://www.kokkino.org/> e-mail: [lgbt@kokkino.org](mailto:lgbt@kokkino.org)