

Speech of Headmistress Mrs Afentouli Sofia

Thessaloniki 20-03-17

Mr and Mrs spokesman instead of Regional Governance

Mr President of Regional Education

Mr Head of Secondary Education of Thessaloniki,

Mr President of the School Committee,

Mrs in charge of Educational issues,

Mr and Mrs Headmasters and Headmistresses of nearby schools,

My dear Colleagues, my dear Students,

We are honoured with your presence here for the opening ceremony of the works of the programme "Promote Integrated Environment to Guarantee Refugees Acceptance through Erasmus plus".

We are very happy to welcome the teachers, the students and the participants of this programme from Germany, Belgium and Italy. Our friends welcome to Greece.

«Καλώς ήρθατε στην Ελλάδα»

Allow me to refer briefly to the history of our school, which is one of the oldest in Thessaloniki.

The school complex where we are today was founded in 1930 although it was established as a school in 1914 as the 2nd High School for boys in a nearby building. It started to operate, officially on the 3rd of November 1914 during the 1st World War.

The 2nd Secondary School has already been a school with an urban character, having as students the privileged ones from the city because it was located in the heart of Thessaloniki.

Fortunate to had distinguished teachers and its students played a very significant role in the cultural, social and political evolution of Greece some years after their graduation.

It had always been open to the challenges of our times and has participated in many programmes.

Specifically I refer to:

- A pioneering 10 - year partnership of schools programme with the Lycee Victor Hugo of Caen
- An environmental program which had to do with the protection of water as a natural resource called Commenius
- Exchanges of students and twinning with the Scuola di Greco in Italy
- Partnership and twinning with high school Makarios in Cyprus
- Partnership and twinning the Zappeio Lyceum in Constantinople, Turkey.

This year Mr Giannikis, Mrs Glaraki and Mr Andreadis took the initiative to take part in this Erasmus plus programme entitled "Promote Integrated Environment to Guarantee Refugees Acceptance through Erasmus plus".

The ultimate goal of this programme is to make local communities aware of the greatest massive movement of peoples that has been reported in recent history and one of the most significant humanistic crises that the post - war Europe had to deal with.

Under these circumstances we will all cooperate; that is teachers and students from the 4 countries because we are confident that the school will help to smooth the integration of the refugees in the educational process, their emotional strengthening and the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills so that not any young refugee must feel alienated in his new homeland.

It is not the international treaties that impose this cooperation but our fundamental humanistic and democratic notion that defines our identity as Greeks, our experiences and our traditional hospitality we are proud of.

I personally and the faculty of all the teachers in my school are very confident that the works of this programme will prove to be very successful. We trust the new generation, our students that they will embrace everyone involved and will demand live in a future without discrimination and racism and with the consolidates values of democracy, equality of rights and freedom of expression.

I wish you a pleasant and delightful stay in our city, Thessaloniki that used to be the crossroads of people and civilizations.

I am sure that when you come to know its history, often marked of refugee flows, and feel the rhythms of its life you will love it, too.

I would like to thank all those who contribute, each one in his way, in organizing this programme.

Welcome to our school, our city, our country.

Our best wishes for the success of your programme.