

Heraklion, 5-8 June 2018: Transnational FILO Meeting in title: “Third Age – More than three: No more suffer in silence”

Interview with Theano Vrentzou-Skordalaki – Region of Crete

The Region of Crete undertook, within the framework of the regional dimension of the “Europe 2020”, the National Strategic Framework for Social Inclusion, the elaboration of the Regional Strategy for Social Inclusion & Combating Poverty in Crete.

According to the Regional Strategy, the actions to be taken are fully justified by the current situation in Greece. The demographic characteristics of the population of the Region of Crete (high rates of aging and dependency), the economic crisis, the fiscal recession and the rapid rise in unemployment have a direct effect on rising poverty and social exclusion. Fighting against this trend, the Region of Crete has adopted a dynamic model of interventions in crucial areas of social protection, trying to combine the initiatives of the central and regional administration with the crucial role that the civil society could play in this direction.



High priority groups of the Regional Strategy for Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty include lonely people and seniors (65+) who do not receive public support at the level of allowance or other support and facing severe living difficulties. Active aging is one of the measures that should be taken under the priority of getting accesses of vulnerable groups to the supportive public and private services. The areas of intervention of the Region of Crete in the field of active aging include:

- ▶ Access for the elderly to appropriate high-quality care, long-term care and social services
- ▶ Creation of a regional network of health and welfare professionals with voluntary sector organizations to improve the quality of life of the elderly
- ▶ Access for the elderly to techniques of active participation in social and family life, including through volunteering, lifelong learning, cultural expression and sport
- ▶ Promote systematic research of problems and opportunities associated with aging populations.
- ▶ Changing perceptions and stereotypes towards aging in general and the older workforce
- ▶ Adaptation of employees to the retirement scheme (at the level of enterprises or organizations of the social partners)

In this context, “FILO-Fighting Loneliness” is an ambitious project that could lead to innovative proposals for new skills development of professionals in the field of combating loneliness and activating the social life of the elderly in Crete.