

18th Hellenic Conference of Elected Women at Local Government Level

The National Network of Elected Women of the First and Second Degree of Local Government “ATHENA”, in collaboration with the Municipality of Andros and the South Aegean Region held its 18th Conference in Andros under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior, during 13-16 June 2013.

The Conference addressed issues regarding women’s entrepreneurship, social actions in local government and economic development, and implementation of the Law “Kallikratis”. A particular focus was placed on the encouragement and promotion of women in politics; in addition, the causes for women’s decreased participation in public affairs were investigated alongside gender stereotypes that prevent them from taking an active role in politics. The conference was attended by 450 Elected Women, while the list of speakers involved Ministers, MPs, Regional Governors, Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Presidents of Organizations and Scientists. It was a remarkable meeting, providing the opportunity to Elected Women in Local Government for information exchange, cooperation, discussion and encouragement of their participation in decision making centers.

During the Conference, Mrs. Heleni Varnava, City Councillor of the Municipality of Oropos and Head of DISO made a statement informing attendants of the European Program “More Women in European Politics - More women in 2014” which is funded by the European Union under the “Fundamental rights and citizenship” program, addressing the existing inequality between men and women in politics and in particular in the European Parliament. This program involves fourteen countries with their respective partners and associate partners; and promotes the exchange of experiences through a European dialogue in order to encourage the active participation of women in politics, with the cooperation of political parties within an international perspective framework. For the purpose of this program each partner-country has created a Local Action Group aiming to develop a national campaign-strategy in order to increase women’s participation in politics and more specifically in European Politics. In this context, one of the major activities involves the development of support training programs for women candidates. The representative partner of the program from Greece is “Kentro Merimnas Oikogeneias kai Paidiou” – KMOP (Family and Childcare Center) which has an active

participation on gender equality issues and continues to dynamically intervene in public debate on the afore mentioned matter.

Mrs. Heleni Varnava invited the National Network and women attending the conference to participate in the program with their own suggestions so that the participation of women is not only quantitative but also qualitative in order to achieve a democratic representation of citizens. The response of the National Network was positive and indicated willingness to cooperate.