

Opinion regarding the appointment of Professor Elena Marushiakova to Dr. Honoris at Södertörn University

We who at Södertörn University work in the framework of the governmental assignment for Södertörn University to develop a Romani teachers programme and Romani Studies hereby state the following position on the decision to appoint Elena Marushiakova to Dr Honoris at Södertörn University.

- 1) We did not know about her nomination and none of us was consulted regarding the suitability of Professor Marushiakova;
- 2) We distance ourselves from the decision, since we are convinced that her appointment would not strengthen our assignment but rather on the contrary risk to jeopardize the trust and credibility of the University, which has been gained in relationship to Romani civil society in Sweden and internationally. This assessment is among other things based on the fact that Professor Marushiakova has used her position as President of the Gypsy Lore Society (GLS) to prevent a necessary working-through the colonial and racist legacy of the GLS. She has done so both during the GLS Istanbul conference in 2012 and the GLS conference at Södertörn University at 2016. Additional critical aspects are that she in Istanbul 2012 dismissed the criticism uttered by Romani activists that the GLS-conference was held in an area which had been "cleansed" of Roma and as recently as during the conference at Södertörn University in 2016 dismissed all criticism against gypsylorism (orientalism) and thereby has positioned herself against critical Romani and non-Romani scholars in the field (Selling, Jan, 2018 "Assessing the Historical Irresponsibility of the Gypsy Lore Society in Light of Romani Subaltern Challenges". In: *Critical Romani Studies Journal*. Vol. 1. No. 1, p 44-61.).). Furthermore, the appointment of Professor Marushiakova could damage to the strategic work of the University, since her polemic acting creates problems in international research collaboration.
- 3) We consider the news-presentation at the webpage of Södertörn University (sh.se) incorrect, since it, through the closing statement by Peter Dobers gives the false impression that the Dr Honoris-appointment was anchored among us who are working with Romani Studies at Södertörn University. We want that statement removed.
- 4) We suggest that the faculty board as a way to cope with this situation considers appointing an additional Dr Honoris, who would balance the conducted appointment. We would be happy to be part in a dialogue with you about that.

Södertörn University, 22 November 2019

The working group Forum for Romani Studies at Södertörn University

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