

αλληλεγγύη

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This is our common ground

## PRESS RELEASE

### The Shelter that hosts Youth's dreams

***SolidarityNow embraces young refugees,  
supporting their way towards their independent adult life***

Athens, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018

They are young, different and ready to pursuit their dreams! **They are the 25 young men, aged 18-22, who live at the Youth Shelter operated by [SolidarityNow](#) and the [Society for the Care of Minors](#), in the center of Athens.**

A diverse group of people from many countries around the world, whose members live together under the same roof, share the same space, participate in common as well as in different activities and **their bond is their shared dream**: to become capable and claim a better future for themselves.

The Youth Shelter is now home for young male refugees and asylum seekers who, as adults, are deprived of a living environment, while they previously lived in accommodation facilities for unaccompanied minors; the Shelter offers them hospitality and support during this transition period of their lives - the one that starts with adulthood.

***"Until yesterday they were the 'unaccompanied minors' hosted in accommodation facilities that operate especially for them. But when they became adults, and in compliance with the current law, these children were obliged to leave their place of residence and make it on their own; either they were ready for that step or not", says Antigone Lyberaki, the General Manager of SolidarityNow and continues: "In SolidarityNow, with this program for young adults, aged 18-22, we primarily create a safety net by offering them a safe place to stay; a place where they will feel like home. Then, we empower them with all the necessary skills, including educational and professional training actions, to stand on their feet and start their own independent life".***

***"I feel that this is my home. I have friends, I go to school, I cook, all these are my home"***. This is how the 18-year-old Hamid from Afghanistan describes his stay at the Youth Shelter, while talking to the organization's Head in the structure about his school achievements. Hamid lives in his new home -the Youth Shelter- since March 2018, when he turned 18.

**SolidarityNow undertook the management of the Youth Shelter from the beginning of 2018. Apart from accommodation and food provision, a variety of *pro bono* services are provided to the Shelter's beneficiaries:**

- Psychosocial support
- Educational activities, with a focus on Greek language courses through the SolidarityNow implementing programs and relevant referrals to community centers
- Employability counselling through the corresponding service operated in the organization's Solidarity Center in Athens
- Medical escorting when necessary and legal support through the respective service operated in the organization's Solidarity Center in Athens.

**Furthermore, and in order to accomplish the above, as well as to enhance the interaction with the local community, many group recreational and cultural activities are organized in the Youth Shelter supporting social inclusion, community sense and self-reliance.**

*\*The Youth Shelter operated by SolidarityNow in partnership with the Society for the Care of Minors and Youth in the framework of the organization's Accommodation program, is part of the [ESTIA- Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation of the UNHCR](#) and funding by the [European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid \(ECHO\)](#).*

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[SolidarityNow](#) was founded in Greece in 2013 with the initiative of the [Open Society Foundations](#), with its main goal to help those populations that are hurt most from the economic and humanitarian crises. SolidarityNow works with over 70 organizations and supports civil society organizations and public bodies that work in Greece to implement programs. It operates two Solidarity Centers in Athens and Thessaloniki, where vulnerable population groups can go to receive free medical, legal, and other services. Strategic partners of the organization include: UNHCR, UNICEF, EEA GRANTS, Embassy of Norway in Greece, etc. Currently, 15 million euros have been granted to projects addressing the economic and humanitarian crises in Greece.