



BABAYLAN

Philippine Women's Network in Europe



Dear Kababaylanes,

Warm greetings! As we update you about Babaylan's bi-annual Congress in Athens...

First, we have been able to get the venue for our Congress already on Saturday, Nov.7th instead of Sunday, Nov.8th as previously announced. This is more convenient for us all.

Second as you already know, the GFMD (Global forum on Migration and Development) will be held in Athens prior to our Congress and holding our Congress there was to make possible the participation of our attendees in the NGO part of this meeting, under the PGA (Peoples Global Action) agenda, held in parallel to the Forum from Nov.3 - 6.

Dates and Topics

Although November 3 has been set as Women's Day, we realize that most of you will probably be first arriving Thursday at the earliest, so we will try to optimize our presence by holding our event as close as possible to the Congress, thus aiming for November 5th in the afternoon. The NGO segment of GFMD lasts till Friday, Nov.6th.

Babaylan has been given an opportunity to table an issue important to Filipina migrants in Europe –the issue of **Au Pairs** who are deployed across in Europe in increasing numbers, especially in the Nordic countries. We enjoin all of you to arrive in Athens already by Thursday to join the Babaylan ranks, show our capabilities, make our voices heard and contribute with significance to the migration and development debate...

Firm commitments needed

We would like to have firm commitments as soon as possible from you so arrangements can be made for accommodations. The Diwatas (Babaylan's Greek platform) have been able to arrange for accommodations for 21 women from Friday, Nov.5 to Sunday, Nov.8. This means 2 CRs (country representatives) per country. Plus the Execom, and depending on how many countries are represented at this crucial Congress where we shall focus on the Future of Babaylan, there might be room left for other attendees. Should the numbers exceed the magic number of 21, we will be looking for cheap hotel or other alternative accommodations to meet the demand. We shall also do this for observers who are coming for the first time.

It is therefore imperative that the Execom receive firm reservations as soon as possible. In this connection, may we reiterate that Babaylan EU can take care only of the board and lodging of 2 CRs per country and Congress materials. We hope that the national platforms have fundraised to cover travels to and from Athens as we suggested in our First Circular. There is still a whole month with which to book and the earlier you book, the cheaper! Please note that flying midweek (Tuesday –Thursday) and Saturdays is much cheaper than Fridays and Sundays. Trains have corresponding cheap fare offers when booking in advance and/or in groups.

For optimal organization, please send the names and contact details (addresses. E-mail addresses) of the Country Representatives who are coming plus their travel information (airline, arrival and departure times) ASAP to the Execom, contact person: Lina Ermert (lina.ermert@gmail.com) with copy to Pat Boneo (patria_boneo@yahoo.com). President of Diwata. By mid October, we shall send the program and logistical details to everyone.

At stake: the Future of Babaylan

The Execom takes this imperative to inform everyone in advance that unlike other Congresses in the past, the Athens congress will deal with what kind of Babaylan are we willing to have beyond 2009? During the Paris CR meeting last June, it was acknowledged that the present organizational form of **Babaylan** does not seem to fit our needs any longer.

Do we need a full revamp of the constitution and by-laws? Do we close the present Babaylan and form a new organization or a looser network? What shape should our organization have in the future? Shall national platforms be more independent of each other, eg. a la WIDE, a Europe wide feministic network focused on gender justice with a 3-person Executive Board and a Steering Group composed of representatives from each member country. There are many other models in existence –you are encouraged to send suggestions on this topic, if any, prior to coming to Athens or table it there!

If we adhere to **Babaylan** as it exists in the present, there are lingering questions posed such as accepting gay members, accepting individual unaffiliated members, to have or not to have an Execom? and how will the minimum of centralized functions of the network be done without an Execom? The issue of information - where calls for inputs from the national platforms never materialized inspite of repeated calls from the Execom- is crucial? What are the basics for a network to function?

This last question relates to the essential issue of **funding**: how do we access public funds for our advocacy and capacity building programmes when Filipino migrants are atypical, Philippine concerns no longer "the flavor of the month"? and our proposals are not appealing to the Funders? What alternatives can we come up with?

We have very limited time in Athens, there are many topics to discuss, at the same time it has been necessary to limit attendance. because of lack of funds. CRs as mandated by their constituents will be bringing the consensus from their membership to the Congress. We encourage you to come to Athens prepared to discuss and share your ideas.

In closing, we wish to ask you all for your Unwavering Support and Cooperation to make this Congress at all possible at this crucial time where a decision has to be made about the **Future of Babaylan Europe**.

In true Babaylan spirit,

Lina, Nitnit, Judy and Tess

P.S. We would also like to take this opportunity to announce the resignation of Adora Fischer from the execom for private reasons. We are saddened by this and will miss her dedication and expertise to the Execom, and Babaylan in general. We look forward to her continued support to the empowered Filipina, the women of Babaylan...

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