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**Press Release 30/11/2024**

 **Opening Ceremony**

**6th International Festival “Reflection of Disability in Art” of University of Macedonia**

The opening ceremony of the 6th International Festival "The Reflection of Disability in Art" was held successfully, despite the difficult weather conditions prevailing throughout Greece. The Vice-Rector of Extroversion and International Relations, Professor Alexandros Chatzigeorgiou, addressed a greeting. In his speech, Mr Chatzigeorgiou congratulated the Head of the Festival, Mrs. Lefkothea Kartasidou, the organizing committee, the volunteers and all the participants for the implementation of this unique artistic meeting of people with and without disabilities. Furthermore, the opening ceremony was welcomed by the President of the Department of Educational and Social Policy, Professor Nikolaos Fachantidis, who emphasized that art is the means and the bridge for the creation of an inclusive society.

Afterwards, the Head of the Festival, Professor of the Department of Educational and Social Policy, Mrs. Lefkothea Kartasidou, welcomed the spectators and announced the festival’s opening. In her speech, Mrs. Kartasidou referred to "memory" as a shared inspiration for organizing the unique festival for disability in Greece, which focuses on the seventh art and relies entirely on volunteerism.

The event began artistically with the inclusive dance group of the Festival, RoDance. The members of the group impressed the spectators with their harmony, creative expression, and synchronization of movements to the song "You don’t own me" and the musicalized poem by Cavafy, "Remember Body." The group RoDance is coordinated by Mrs. Alexandra Lailoglou, Special Educational Personnel at the Physical Education Office of the University of Macedonia.

The program continued with the dance performance "Senza Maschera" by Felix Röper which refers to the short film "The way we are". The central message of the film is the expression of inclusion through the language of dance. Art is not only an expression, but also an artistic and political position. As the film's title suggests, Felix Röper presented his own, very personal view of the interplay between dance and inclusion in the performance 'Senza maschera', an improvisational performance by Felix directed by Monica Artino.

The ceremony continued with the screening of the movies “The way we are”, “Arghavan”, “IMPROVISIONE” and “Além do Espectro / Beyond the Spectrum”. The evening ended with the comments of Daria Tchapanova, who is the director of the film "The way we are" and Felix Röper, dancer of the show "Senza Maschera".