

A Trip in Transgender Escorting in Europe

Antonella Lerca*

Presented by Simona Dumitru:

A Roma trans woman cannot be happy in Romania

Antonella: I was born in Roma family with seven other brothers. When I was child I found that I belong to the world femininity. But my family did not accept this easily because I was supposed to get married at 14 years as many as youngsters from our community. I was very close to getting married but on the wedding night I have a big scandal. I did not perform as a husband. I was not attractive in any way to the girl who was supposed to be my wife. The following day my parents took me to an endocrinologist and a psychologist hoping they could find a good way to fix me. Later my family felt ashamed about when knew what ia all about.

I started hormone therapy at 14 years old. Having my family's support but my parent did not know much about my gender diagnostic. When I finished my first year in high school, I found a lot of discrimination in high school and it transported me to leave my country when I was only 17. A Roma trans woman cannot be happy in Romania. Being Roma and trans forced me to leave my country. A lot of LGBT people like me have had to do the same thing. We had to leave our family behind, to leave our home and end up in a foreign country and find yourself in a different country; not knowing the language, not knowing anyone, not having a feeling of belonging but having to survive. In Italy no one will hire a transformer woman coming from Romania so I become a sex worker. Someone like me a trans Roma woman was killed last year in Italy. Her name was Lola. She was 27 years. She was exactly like me. She came from Romania in order to work and send money back to home to support her family.

My clients are very different. Some sometimes you are their therapies, other times you stand there on the streets, next to be killed like my other friend.

My country is very corrupted and not democratic. On Aug 10th in 2018 there was a massive diaspora protest in front of the government that was brutally stopped with tear gas and violence. My country is very corrupt. That moment when your country is rejecting you, you feel worse than being an immigrant, having to survive in abroad but we continue the fight for democracy and legal rights. They will continue to fight against women's and LGBT's right. LGBT's communities in Romanian have seen as taboo. We are the enemy. We have a long way to go and we will not stop until the Romanian state offer equal rights to all regardless of their identity.

It's very difficult to find a job so you have to go find your lucky in another country so yeah it is difficult but after years you can be part of that.

Antonella Lerca*: During the last years, Antonella Lerca has been one of the most vocal activists in the LGBTQ+ community in Romania. As a transgender woman and Roma activist based in Romania and Italy, she has been actively involved in discussions and projects concerning the LGBTQ+ community. Her experience as a migrant in Italy also shaped her positions in the activist circles, nuancing the interconnected layers of discrimination.