



Kosova Women's Network

Serving, Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Women and Girls

KWN is concerned over comments made by Minister of Economic Development, Blerand Stavileci

The Kosovo Women's Network reacts to recent offensive comments made by Minister of Economic Development, Blerand Stavileci. KWN believes that Minister Stavileci made inappropriate comments regarding the unemployed, the poor, and particularly women. These comments were made in two instances: the launching event of the Democracy for Development research report titled "The cost of Patriarchy", and an interview on the KTV program "Interaktiv".

Comments made at the launch of the D4D report on Feb 25. Included statements referring to the unemployed in Kosovo that receive remittances as "parasites", whose reliance on remittances has rendered them lazy. KWN would like to remind Minister Stavileci that according to a research report launched by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics and UNDP, the total of remittances received in Kosovo composes only 9.3% of Kosovo's GDP. Further, in 2012 a total of 22.4% of families in Kosovo have obtained remittances. This study also concludes that the largest part of remittances is spent on clothing and food.

KWN would like to remind Minister Stavileci that reliance on remittances results from high levels of poverty and unemployment, due to 30% of Kosovars living under poverty level and 10% under extreme poverty, especially women headed households (38%). KWN considers Minister Stavileci's comments as inappropriate and that he should instead tackle the problem itself that is poverty and unemployment, rather than tackling the symptom of the problem, reliance on remittances.

Further problematic comments were made by Minister Stavileci in the KTV programme "Interaktiv". There, Minister Stavileci stated that one of the main social problems in Kosovo is a high birth rate, and the lack of family planning. He stated that it is insufficient for the state to fulfill its duties, because someone who earns 300 E monthly should not be giving birth to 7 children, "that person should be aware of their capacities", he added. In addition, he also stated that people who have not invested in their future and have children, should not expect someone to continuously help them, with this he referred to the state.

Once more, KWN would like to remind Minister Stavileci that high birth rates are strictly tied to high poverty levels, high unemployment, and low levels of education. The latter are caused by the former, and not vice versa. Especially in Kosovo where levels of poverty, unemployment, and lack of education are very high, especially among women, and minorities. Women's participation in the Labour Force for 2012 was only 17.8%, and only 8% of women own property.

What should not be happening under any circumstance, however, is for the state to blame the citizens for receiving remittances and having high birth rates, which are only symptoms of real problems such as high unemployment, high poverty rates, and low education levels.

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