

FAD - Fathers Against Discrimination a.s.b.l.

“Both Parents for All Children™”

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November 26th 2019, Strassen

Minister Taina BOFFERDING

Ministère de l’Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes

Ministry of Equality between Women and Men

6A, boulevard Franklin D. Roosevelt

L-2450 Luxembourg

Luxembourg

Dear Minister BOFFERDING,

We hereby confirm receipt of an email from Ms. Valérie DEBOUCHE, Conseiller, Coordination générale / Affaires juridiques of the Ministry dated Nov. 21st, 2019 as a response to our letter sent on Nov. 13th, 2019.

We will allow ourselves not to comment on the choice of the form of the response nor the language used but we hope the approach taken is not a general reflection of the way the Ministry responds to inquiries presented by citizens and residents of Luxembourg. We also must inform you that we find continuous denial of the opportunity to meet with FAD’s representatives disappointing especially since our organization promotes gender equality of chance in all aspects of the Luxembourg society.

We learn from the email sent to us by Ms. DEBOUCHE “that unfortunately she (*the Minister*) cannot welcome your organization (*FAD*) to exchange on the subjects mentioned in your letters (*FAD’s letters*) due to a well filled agenda, and due to the fact that the subjects mentioned in your (*FAD’s*) letters do not underlie her (*the Minister’s*) competence, as you already told you (*FAD*) in previous written exchanges.”

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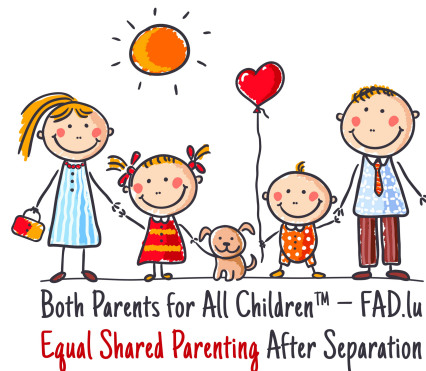


Indeed, we can confirm that you have mentioned in your letter dated April 26th, 2019 that you “will not be able to give us a satisfactory answer to our technical requests, as they do not fall under your jurisdiction.”

I would like to point out again that the questions you refer to and was unable to answer are all related to the activities of the Ministry you are in charge of therefore your advice to direct them to the Ministry of Justice is somewhat puzzling.

For convenience please find below once more the list of the questions. Although we understand you might consider them as complex in nature or rather uncomfortable, in fact, they are not technical as you described them. All questions but one can be answered Yes or No:

1. Has the Ministry ever initiated any discussion with the Ministry of Justice about the institutional gender inequality in Luxembourg courts? **Yes / No**
2. Has the Ministry ever taken any actions in raising awareness of an on-going problem and struggle Luxembourg families, men, women and children deal with following discriminatory treatment of fathers at custody hearings during separation and after divorce? **Yes / No**
3. Has the Ministry ever reached out to Luxembourg Parliament asking the Members of the Luxembourg Chambres de Deputes to vote on the European Council Resolution 2079, initiated in 2015 by Francois HETTO-GAASCH your predecessor and current member of the Luxembourg parliament (CSV)? The resolution calls all EU member states to introduce Equal Shared Parenting - Alternating Residence as a default rule all for children custody proceedings? It has been over 3 years and Luxembourg is still waiting for that vote. **Yes / No**
4. Has the Ministry ever initiated campaign promoting equality between women and men, fathers and mothers in private life? More specifically, has there ever been any media coverage or press release on behalf of the Ministry of Equality between Women and Men raising awareness that equality in the “professional life and at work” unless introduced by force is contingent on equality between men and women “in private life and at home”? **Yes / No**
5. Has there ever been any project introduced by the Ministry setting course of actions to stop parental and gender inequality in Luxembourg government institutions? If not, is there a plan to introduce such initiative? **Yes / No**
6. Unless the Ministry believes that 95% to 5% ratio in awarded children custodies in favor of mothers means equality what plans does the Ministry have to raise awareness among government officials and members of the Luxembourg legal system that the Luxembourg Family Law still does not reflect the changes our society has gone through in the last three decades educating the public that the roles of parents are no longer defined as they have been in the past with a general goal to promote Equal Shared Parenting - Alternating Residence as default rule after parents’ separation and/or divorce?

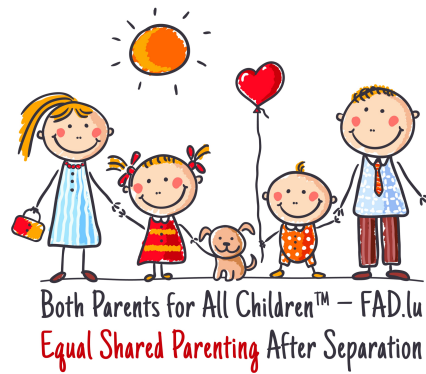


7. Has there ever been any conference or a discussion panel organized by the Ministry of Equality between Women and Men to promote Equal Shared Parenting- Alternating Residence in Luxembourg?
Yes / No
8. If not, is the Ministry willing to supporting International Conference on Shared Parenting, last year held in Strasburg, France and sponsor the event to be organized in Luxembourg in a view of raising awareness and need for parental-gender equality in family courts in Luxembourg? **Yes / No**
9. Is the Ministry in contact with Belgian colleagues exchanging information and experience about their successful introduction of the Equal Shared Parenting – Alternating Residence model in 2006? The law already in place for over 12 years. A legal frame not only looking after the best interest of the children but also reducing the gender gap and inequality between parents during separation and after divorce.
Yes/ No

As already mentioned before, the official website of the Ministry of Equality between Women and Men indicates that *“it is a priority for the government to promote equality between women and men in all aspects of life and society. The Ministry of Equality between Women and Men (French: “ministère de l’Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes”, abb.: MEGA) leads and supports these ambitions.”*, and that the goal of the Ministry is *“to reconcile work and private life as a fundamental element of a contemporary corporate culture. The concept of work-life balance is one of the three priority themes of the positive action program, which is a per se measure of the Ministry of Equal Opportunities, promoting equal treatment for men and women at all levels. of life in society and privacy. Better reconciliation of professional and private life is also a priority of the European Union.”*

In light of the above statements and considering that at least 1 out of 3 victims of domestic violence are men wouldn't you say that the narrative of the Ministry's recent campaign on domestic violence against women should focus on domestic violence in general and should include both men and women? The current shape and form of the campaign adds to the profound misrepresentation of facts as well as promotion of bias insinuation communicating to the public that men are the only cause of domestic violence and women and children are the only victims of it.

Furthermore, as mentioned in the beginning of this correspondence in your letter from April 26th, 2019 it is stated that the problem of gender and parental inequality in Luxembourg courts are within the competences of the Ministry of Justice only. If so, could you then explain why does the Ministry of Equality between Women and Men involves itself in the campaign for equality for women in the workplace and the pay gap, one of the most fraudulent arguments to date? Following the logic shouldn't that be adequately the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and the Social and Solidarity Economy? Judging by the name of the Ministry, Minister Dan KERSCH in charge of this government branch holds wide range of competences and responsibilities.



We also would like to ask you again to correct information on the Ministry's website under "Shelters for women, girls, women with children and men". The current title misleads the viewers that among 10 shelters in Luxembourg and listed on the Ministry's website there are shelters for men when in fact not a single shelter listed admits men and fathers with children. Information confirmed by each respective shelter and the Luxembourg Croix Rouge.

Please introduce appropriate measures to correct the error. Better yet we would like to ask you to initiate a project to create at least one proper shelter for men and fathers with children victims of domestic violence. We offer our help and support.

Please note that any answer from your side to our questions will help us better understand the Ministry's activity and when appropriate hopefully challenge the opinion often presented to us that the Ministry of Equality between Women and Men has been created and functions to look after the best interest of only one social group.

Should this be the case it would be only highly advisable for the Ministry to consider changing back its name to the original one and rename the Ministry to Ministry for Women's Promotion, a name which if the feedback was correct would better reflect the Ministry's goals and objectives.

Thank you in advance for your reply.

Most respectfully,

Patryk P. RYBIŃSKI
President
FAD - Fathers Against Discrimination a.s.b.l.



"Mir wëlle bleiwe wat mir sinn an mir kënnen e Beispill fir den Rescht vun Europa sinn." -

- "We want to remain what we are and we can be an example for the rest of Europe."