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Women earn up to €12,000 less than male counterparts

EU maternity/paternity leave proposals will cost Malta €12m

Kurt Sansone

Women in full-time employment on average earn €4,300 less than their male counterparts and in some industries the wage gap widens to almost €12,000, according to a study by the Malta Business Bureau.

The findings result from an economic impact assessment of the EU's proposals to extend paid maternity leave to 20 weeks and introduce two weeks paternity leave.

While saying the proposed measures will cost the economy €12 million, the report concludes they will translate in a new burden on businesses and warned that wage discrepancies will worsen as women become less competitive in the marketplace for jobs.

The findings pour cold water on EU proposals to increase parental leave to ensure a better work-life balance for parents and encourage more women to continue working after childbirth.

The assessment found that extending paid maternity leave to 20 weeks from the current 14 would

cost the economy €7.5 million of value-added in a year, equivalent to about 0.2 per cent of GDP. The cost on the private sector would amount to €5.3 million. Similarly, increasing paternity leave to two weeks from the current two days would cost the economy €4.8 million, or 0.1 per cent of GDP, of which the private sector would have to shoulder €3.7 million.

When presenting the findings to Parliamentary Secretary Chris Sald yesterday, MBB president John Huber described the proposals as a burden on businesses.

If implemented, they would undermine competitiveness, especially in the domestic context, he added, where 56 per cent of businesses were either micro or small enterprises employing fewer than 49 people.

Citing the dismal employment figure for women, at about 38 per cent, Mr Huber said the proposals would only hinder the employment of more women.

Malta lagged behind the EU where almost 59 per cent of working-age women were employed.

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Hogging all the attention



A dwarf pig stole the limelight in Republic Street, Valletta, yesterday posing for photos before taking a nap in his cage at a floral outlet. If you wanted to take this little piggy all the way home, it would set you back a squealing €500! Photo: Jason Borg

Britain finally apologises for Bloody Sunday killings

Katherine Haddon

The British government finally apologised yesterday for Bloody Sunday, one of Northern Ireland's darkest days in which 13 people died, calling the killings "unjustified and unjustifiable".

Prime Minister David Cameron made the admission as a long-awaited report into why British

troops opened fire on a civil rights march in Londonderry in 1972 was published, to joy from victims' families.

It concluded that none of the victims was armed, soldiers gave no warnings before opening fire and that the shootings were a "catastrophe" for Northern Ireland, leading to increased violence in subsequent years.

"There is no doubt... what happened on Bloody Sunday was both unjustified and unjustifiable. It was wrong," Mr Cameron told the House of Commons in London.

"The government is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the armed forces. And for that, on behalf of the government, indeed on behalf of our country, I am deeply sorry."

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