

European Family Values Award

Elder Kearon, Your Excellences’,

Distinguished guests, dear colleagues and friends of the family,

It is an honour to be nominated for the European Family Values Award. And I would like to thank Elder Kearon and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Days Saints for their tireless effort to promote the values of natural family in our societies not only in Europe and United States but globally.

Family as a basic human community can only be understood as an intersection of three planes: private, social, and divine. Family is at the same time a source of private happiness, social welfare, and divine blessing.

It is very important that people who are concerned with the fate of family in Europe closely follow all developments that concern both concept of family, and everyday life of millions of families in all EU member states.

As a response to the declining birth rate have we Europeans decided to increase the percentage of women in the labour force. The strategic plan called Europe 2020 set the target of participation for both women and men aged 20-64 on 75 per cent of the labour market. In order to do that, it was necessary to side-line or ignore the role of woman as mother. This is why the special status of marriage and family has been systematically undermined and its value neglected.

In 2014 before Christmas, the corporate giant IKEA released a documentary video about children who were asked to write two letters. In the first one, children wrote to Santa Claus what they wanted to get for Christmas. Some children made a long list of toys, others only

wanted one or two they really liked. After they finished they were asked to write a second letter addressed to their parents. In it, they should write what they wanted the most from them. Surprisingly, all 10 children in the video wished the same thing: more time spent with mom and dad. Finally, children were told to choose which of the two letters should be sent. All of them chose the second one - the letter to their parents.

This video confirms what our intuition tells us the whole time: that the full time employment of mothers is not in the best interest of their children. At the same time, this approach solves the problem of the missing children only temporarily. Then the women of today get old. In the meantime, their children will be raised mostly by strangers in nurseries and all-day schools. And I am afraid that when their time comes to take care of their parents they will feel little solidarity with them. The children will remember that their parents have never really been there for them.

It is only logical that once society decides to ignore the unique role of women as mothers, with special needs and responsibilities, there is no justification for the exclusive status of marriage. If the social roles of women and men are interchangeable, then the marriage becomes a civil bond between any two adult and consenting people.

Legislation is often so focused on men, women, workers, or children, that it often doesn't see family at all. Only by supporting the exclusivity of marriage and natural families based upon it, we stimulate the best environment for conception, birth, and upbringing of a child.

Our ability to understand family, and to understand why as people we need to be part of a family, is mirrored in our communities, in the society as a whole, in our culture. And vice versa: changes in our social life and culture are reflected in the life of our families. This is why politics matters. However, in the times of growing uncertainty, it is important to make sure that our constructive criticism will not be

misunderstood and misused by those who threaten to destroy not only the flaws but the very foundation of peace and prosperity in Europe.

Thank you once again very much for honouring my work with this award. But let me also thank all the churches, NGOs, civil society and activists who sacrifice their time and energy in support of the family and its values.

Thank you.

Anna Záborská, MEP