

Embarrassing #FertilityDay Campaign in Italy

Federico Ghelli (September 02, 2016)



Several people didn't appreciate the initiative of the Italian Ministry of Health, which approved and promoted a campaign to educate the Italian population on the importance of procreating.

"Fertility is a common good." With this debatable slogan Italy's Health Minister Beatrice Lorenzin is trying to convince Italians to have more children and at a younger age.

According to the circular issued by the Ministry of Health, the campaign plans to change the outlook of fertility from personal need to an essential good for the entire community. It also aims to teach people the "prestige of maternity."

Fertility Day, scheduled for September 22nd, has been promoted through slogans that caused a heated reaction on the web. Some even compared the campaign to the fascist propaganda of the 1930s.

"Fertility Day is an insult to everyone: to those who cannot procreate and to those who would like to don't have a job, said famous writer Roberto Saviano on Twitter.

The website of the initiative offers even more debatable articles, such as the argument that Italian



couples don't have children because of men's fear of having small genitalia. Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi claimed that he was unaware of the campaign. However, he openly rejected the idea, claiming the need for structural changes.

"We must create the conditions to ensure that people can choose how and when to have children," he said. "And I don't know anyone who decided to have a child because he saw a billboard."

According to Lorenzin, the only purpose of Fertility Day was to inform about health issues that can impair fertility. Also, the campaign comes after an alarming statistic from the Italian National Statistical Institute (ISTAT) According to it, for the fifth year in a row the number of births dropped and the average age of new mothers rose. In addition, Italy has 1.3 children per female and the average age of first birth rose to 31.6.

Yet, the main controversy was raised by the poor selection of slogan and visuals. Oliviero Toscani, prominent photographer and designer, argued that everything about the campaign is wrong.

"This is the result when politicians decide to become advertisers. I'm afraid of their ignorance, their lack of culture," Toscani said.

Fertility Day campaign costed 28 thousand euros, but it will be revised. Lorenzin called for Toscani's help as well to make it more efficient.

"The campaign day wasn't liked? We'll make a new one. Fertility Day is more than two postcards, is prevention." she wrote on Twitter.

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