

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

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Famous Belgian lawyer does not hire women because of #MeToo

By Maïthé Chini

The Brussels Times (09.03.2020) – <https://bit.ly/2TQY9Rk> – A Belgian high profile lawyer, Sven Mary, recently stated in an interview with a Belgian newspaper that his law firm no longer hires women because of the #MeToo movement.

When a woman applies for a job at Sven Mary's law firm, she will be rejected out of fear for #MeToo, he said in an interview with Het Laatste Nieuws on Friday.

According to an analysis by the Harvard Business Review, men are less inclined to hire attractive women since #MeToo, a movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault, took off. Mary said that this was true, and that his firm no longer hires women in general since there had been “an incident with an intern,” he said.

“It’s a shame, because a lot of competent and intelligent ladies graduate. But I once had a problem with an intern who claimed that she owed her poor evaluation to the fact that she hadn’t accepted my advances,” Mary said, adding that the complaint was “based on nothing” but that “today, as a man, you are vulnerable” and that he did not want to expose himself to such risks.

“I understand that such accusations cut in. But basically, saying that no woman is going to be hired? I’m afraid he won’t get away with that,” labour market expert Jan Denys told De Morgen. “Women who are working in good faith are being punished here. I’m assuming, in time, Mary will come to understand that,” he added.

In addition, rejecting applications from a specific group of people is prohibited by law. “It does not differ a lot from employers who say they have a problem with Moroccans, for example,” Denys said, adding that in reality, an employer takes on whoever they want. “Those who effectively do not want to recruit women can still hide behind the fact that the woman in question is not competent enough,” he added. “However, by Mary’s saying it, he is not making it easy on himself,” Denys stressed.

On social media, Mary's remark has garnered a lot of attention, and many people on Twitter have called for an investigation by Unia, the Belgian centre for equal opportunities.

Assita Kanko, a Belgian MEP and human rights activist tweeted "Lawyer for serious criminals. Afraid of victims of sexual violence," pointing to several of Mary's clients, which include Salah Abdeslam, who is a suspect of the terror attacks in Paris, and Fouad Belkacem, who was an extremist member of the radical Islamic organisation Sharia4Belgium.

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Notice: Undefined index: et_template in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1269