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Burqa – is action needed?

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Krista KIURU and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The burqa is intended to conceal women's hair, eyes and bodies. It hides the entire body under a long piece of cloth lying heavily on the head. In practice, it prevents the person wearing it from moving with ease.

The burqa, or full veil, does not leave people indifferent and, although it is generally not widespread in Europe, raises controversy and questions.

What does it signify: control over women's bodies or conspicuous assertion of one's difference? Is it a matter of showing one's special allegiance to a religion? It is true that, although not prescribed by the Koran, the burqa is synonymous with radical, fundamentalist practice of the Muslim faith.

Some people consider that it contravenes the principles of secularity and of neutrality of public space, while others regard it as a denial of gender equality. Yet others see it as a sign of belonging to a culture and a religion that everyone should respect. The question that springs to mind is whether women who wear the burqa have chosen or been forced to do so and how much real freedom women enjoy when they have been taught they must wear it.

The burqa undoubtedly stigmatises women, setting them apart from society at large and infringing their dignity. Questions can therefore be asked about the impact of wearing the burqa on their rights as fully fledged citizens. A debate is currently taking place in France and in the Scandinavian countries.

Consequently the Parliamentary Assembly decides to study this issue from the standpoint of discrimination against women. It should also consider the advisability of legislating on wearing of the burqa in public places.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
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