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Sexual violence against women in armed conflict

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 1873 (2009)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers assures the Parliamentary Assembly that it is fully aware that the Council of Europe, together with its member states, has a duty to ensure that human rights are guaranteed in Europe. It agrees with the Assembly that it also has a moral obligation to help spread the values of human rights and the rule of law beyond its geographical borders. The Committee therefore welcomes Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1873 \(2009\)](#) on “Sexual violence against women in armed conflict”, which it has transmitted to the member states’ governments and to the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG) for comments.

2. The Committee of Ministers observes that the CDEG is presently finalising a draft recommendation to member states on the role of women and men in conflict prevention and resolution and in peace building, for adoption by the Committee of Ministers. As requested by the Assembly, this recommendation will pay due attention to prevention and to effective combating of sexual violence against women in armed conflict. The follow-up to the implementation of this recommendation could contribute, on the one hand, to the evaluation of the progress achieved in the preparation of national action plans in the application of Resolutions 1325 and 1820 of the United Nations Security Council and, on the other hand, to the efficiency of the measures taken to assist women victims of sexual violence in armed conflicts.

3. As regards the scope of application of the future Council of Europe Convention on domestic violence, the Committee of Ministers notes that, according to the interim report of the Ad hoc Committee for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CAHVIO), considered by the Ministers’ Deputies on 1 July 2009, the draft convention will meet the Assembly’s concerns as it will cover any act of gender-based violence, which results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in the public or private sphere.

1. adopted at the 1074th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (12-13 January 2010)



Appendix to the reply

Comments by the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG)

The CDEG took note with interest of Recommendations 1868, 1872 and 1873 (2009) of the Parliamentary Assembly on the following issues respectively: “Action to combat gender-based human rights violations, including abduction of women and girls”; “The rights of today’s girls: the rights of tomorrow’s women” and “Sexual violence against women in armed conflict”.

It notes that these three texts contain recommendations on the protection of women against violence and would like to make a general comment.

It supports these recommendations totally and recalls the action it has undertaken since the end of the 1970s and that it continues to undertake against all forms of violence against women, including forced marriages. The CDEG is pleased that its efforts together with those of the Parliamentary Assembly have led to the drafting of the first European human rights treaty in this field, a Council of Europe convention for combating all forms of violence against women.

As regards the scope of application of the convention, the Ad hoc Committee for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CAHVIO) decided that the convention should cover all forms of violence perpetrated against women, whether physical, psychological, sexual or economic in nature. The convention should cover any act of gender-based violence, which results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in the public or private sphere.

This would include, but not be limited to, the following:

- physical and psychological violence, including stalking;
- sexual violence, including sexual assault, rape and sexual harassment;
- other forms of violence against women, including forced marriage, deprivation of liberty, female genital mutilation, crimes committed in the name of honour.
- Specific comments of the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG) on [Recommendation 1873 \(2009\)](#) of the Parliamentary Assembly

Like the Parliamentary Assembly, the CDEG hopes that the Committee of Ministers will soon address the recommendation on the role of women and men in conflict prevention and resolution and in peace building to Council of Europe member states.

The follow-up to the implementation of this recommendation could contribute on the one hand to the evaluation of the progress achieved in the preparation of national action plans in the application of Resolutions 1325 and 1820 of the United Nations Security Council, and on the other hand to the efficiency of the measures taken to assist women victims of sexual violence in armed conflicts.