Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Child abuse in institutions: ensure full protection of the victims

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Pieter OMTZIGT and other members of the Assembly

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

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Many countries, including Council of Europe member and observer states, have recently been faced with accounts of physical and sexual child abuse occurring within residential facilities, boarding schools, churches and other institutional settings.

The Parliamentary Assembly notes with regret that the needs of the victims of this abuse have often been disregarded – both in the past, when the offences occurred, and in the present, connected to the way they have been handled by the institutions concerned, the state and the media. The extent and duration of abuse situations is shocking and questions arise why they were not uncovered earlier.

In this respect, the Assembly asks itself whether appropriate control mechanisms – both internal and external - were lacking and why the control mechanisms in place have not been sufficient to ensure full protection of all children.

The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201) stipulates that each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that any intentional abuse of a child made by a person being "in a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the child" be criminalised. This Convention will enter into force on 1 July 2010.

The Assembly recommends that member states ensure that any case of child abuse is subject to their criminal law system, and that perpetrators are prosecuted and all victims (and also whistleblowers) receive the same protection regardless of the institutional setting in which the crime was committed.

The Assembly also urges member states to sign, ratify and implement the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse without further delay, if they have not done so already.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left