



Recommendation 1450 (2000)¹

Violence against women in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly deplores the great increase in the number of women subjected to violence in Council of Europe member states. Every day in Europe one woman in five is a victim of violence.
2. Hundreds of thousands of women thus face physical and mental violence at home or outside, violence which is sometimes inflicted by the public authorities or by coercive institutions. Oppression of women as manifested in domestic violence, rape and sexual mutilation is a reality known, and denounced, in many countries.
3. The Assembly reaffirms the support it gave to the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women, when the different forms of violation of women's rights were clearly defined and forthrightly condemned.
4. The Assembly notes that although domestic violence is one of the commonest forms of violence against women, it remains the least visible. And yet it is estimated that more women in Europe die or are seriously injured every year through domestic violence than through cancer or road accidents. The costs, in terms of human and other resources, are as great to the medical and health services as they are to employers, the courts and the police.
5. The Assembly accordingly condemns violence against women as being a general violation of their rights as human beings - the right to life, safety, dignity and physical and psychological well-being.
6. It utterly deplores that in some member countries there are still murders committed allegedly to preserve honour, forced marriages and other forms of sacrifice, and it underlines the urgency of taking action to punish all criminal acts committed in the name of tradition or religion.
7. The Assembly condemns with equal strength genital mutilation, still too often practised in the name of custom or cultural and religious tradition, which amounts to barbaric torture inflicted on young women. It therefore invites member states to implement the measures proposed in [Recommendation 1371 \(1998\)](#).
8. It likewise condemns the growing scale of prostitution and traffic in women in Council of Europe member states, brought about by international networks whose activities have made this one of the largest areas of organised crime.
9. The Assembly recognises the important role played by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the defence of women's rights and in the stand taken against violence towards women in its various forms. It invites member states to fully support such NGOs in their national and international activities.
10. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
 - 10.1. draw up a European programme to combat violence against women, with the aim of:
 - a. harmonising law and procedure so as to establish a proper system of European positive law;
 - b. bringing in legislation outlawing all forms of domestic violence;

1. Assembly debate on 3 April 2000 (9th Sitting) (see [Doc. 8667](#), report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Mrs Vermot-Mangold). Text adopted by the Assembly on 3 April 2000 (9th Sitting).



- c. establishing legal recognition of marital rape and making it a criminal offence;
 - d. ensuring greater protection for women, for example by means of orders restraining violent husbands from entering the marital home and measures to properly enforce penalties and sentences;
 - e. ensuring greater flexibility as regards both access to justice and the availability of various procedures, with provision for ex officio action by the authorities, in camera hearings and court benches made up equally of female and male judges;
- 10.2. draw up a European charter of domestic work;
- 10.3. invite member states to:
 - a. ratify, if they have not yet done so, and implement the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its protocol;
 - b. step up the role of the European Union Observatory on Violence against Women;
 - c. implement the measures advocated in [Recommendation 1325 \(1997\)](#) on trafficking in women and forced prostitution in Council of Europe member states and speedily make substantial funding available for programmes of support and assistance to victims of traffic in human beings;
 - d. step up international co-operation between state institutions and NGOs in order to improve protection for the victims of trafficking in women, something which requires, inter alia, increased awareness-raising and training for those in primary contact with potential victims of trafficking in women;
 - e. introduce training programmes for police officers and judges dealing with women victims of violence;
 - f. encourage recruitment of female police officers;
 - g. set up centres for women victims of violence;
 - h. run information and awareness-raising campaigns to educate the public about the unacceptability of violence towards women and set up preventive initiatives to promote equal relations.