Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1512 (2006)[1]

Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly deplores the upsurge in domestic violence against women in Europe, a problem which affects every single Council of Europe member state, resulting in serious violations of human rights. It stresses that domestic violence knows no geographical boundaries, has no age limit, is not the preserve of any particular race and occurs in every kind of family relationship and in every sort of social milieu.

2. Domestic violence is characterised by violent conduct in various forms – physical, sexual, psychological, or through a situation based on financial dependence. It is one of the most widespread violations of human rights and must be combated in all Council of Europe member states. The Assembly rejects any arguments based on cultural or religious relativism, which would lead states to avoid their obligation to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

3. The Assembly welcomes the fact that the heads of state and government of Council of Europe member states responded favourably to the Assembly's recommendations and included the organisation of a pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, in the Action Plan adopted at the Warsaw Summit (16 and 17 May 2005), and that the Committee of Ministers decided that this campaign should be launched in late 2006. The Assembly resolves to play its part in this initiative, in particular by developing the parliamentary dimension.

4. In this context, convinced of the key role that national parliaments can play in preventing domestic violence, assisting victims and informing the public at large, the Parliamentary Assembly resolves to develop, in co-operation with the national parliaments of member states, parliaments having observer status with the Assembly, the European Parliament and the Nordic Council, an initiative entitled "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women", which will constitute parliamentary contribution to the Council of Europe's campaign. The Assembly takes this opportunity to welcome the July 2005 decision of the Mexican Congress to participate in this Parliamentary Assembly initiative.

5. Accordingly, the Assembly invites the national parliaments of Council of Europe member states and parliaments having observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly:

5.1. to organise a parliamentary day of action to combat domestic violence against women on 24 November 2006, to coincide with the launch of the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign in all Council of Europe member states and to make the issue of combating domestic violence against women a central theme of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in 2006;

5.2. to adopt, on 24 November 2006, a solemn declaration affirming the national parliaments' commitment to combating domestic violence against women;

5.3. to become actively involved in the preparation, launch and implementation of the parliamentary dimension of the pan-European campaign from 2006 to 2008 by drawing up in that framework a timetable of activities designed to combat domestic violence against women;

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1. Assembly debate on 28 June 2006 (20th Sitting) (see Doc. 10934, report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Ms Cliveti). Text adopted by the Assembly on 28 June 2006 (20th Sitting).

5.4. to encourage members of parliament to take an individual and public stand on combating domestic violence against women whenever they have the opportunity to do so;

5.5. to organise public and parliamentary debates condemning domestic violence, and parliamentary hearings to examine and assess the effectiveness of legislation and other measures relating to violence within the family;

5.6. to adopt appropriate legislative and budgetary measures and national plans to bring to an end domestic violence against women, including, where such measures do not already exist, making marital rape a punishable criminal offence in the same way as non-marital rape, and providing for the removal of the violent partner from the home;

5.7. to ensure that laws and measures already adopted are applied satisfactorily, where appropriate in co-operation with the public players and non-governmental organisations active on the ground;

5.8. to encourage the public authorities to take the necessary action to combat domestic violence effectively and publicly, in particular, by providing refuges for the victims of domestic violence and their children, setting up domestic violence victim support facilities in police stations, training the staff concerned (in the health care, police, justice, social and education services, etc.), ensuring that complaints made by women to the police are taken seriously, setting up treatment centres for those responsible for such violence and compiling statistics, broken down by sex, type of violence and relationship between perpetrator and victim;

5.9. to identify the obstacles to implementing the norms contained in Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2002)5 to member states on the protection of women against violence;

5.10. to launch at national level a domestic violence information and prevention campaign and, with the assistance of health service staff, a campaign to detect victims of domestic violence;

5.11. to make every effort to make known to the general public the legislative measures adopted and existing arrangements for assisting the victims of domestic violence;

5.12. to give special attention to groups of women who are particularly exposed to the risks and consequences of domestic violence, in particular women in and from immigrant communities, Roma women, women from other ethnic minority communities, pregnant women, disabled or vulnerable women, women in precarious situations or women confronted with alcohol or drug problems.

6. The Assembly calls on national parliaments of Council of Europe member states and parliaments having observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly to support the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence:

6.1. by financing specific national and European activities at intergovernmental, parliamentary, local and regional levels;

6.2. by instructing their governments to allocate funding for initiatives at national level to combat domestic violence and to assist victims, and to include in their international co-operation programmes support for the introduction or strengthening of arrangements to combat domestic violence in Council of Europe member and observer states;

6.3. by providing support to local NGOs combating domestic violence and ensuring that they are involved in parliamentary discussions on the drafting of legislation and regulatory measures;

6.4. by proposing study visits to members of the Council of Europe national and observer parliaments in order to exchange good practice and/or providing technical assistance to parliaments wishing to improve their legal framework with regard to combating domestic violence;

6.5. by appointing a member of parliament to act as point of contact between the national parliaments of each member state and the Assembly and to play a leading role in promoting the implementation of the Assembly campaign at national level, ensuring that he or she is given the appropriate secretarial assistance;

6.6. by encouraging local and regional authorities to implement the Council of Europe pan-European campaign at local and regional level and to organise seminars with staff members of the medical, paramedical and education sectors, members of the police, socio-professional groups working in particular with women, trade union representatives and non-governmental organisations on the issue of domestic violence;

6.7. by encouraging the media to support the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign and drawing their attention to the fact that the use of stereotypical images of women is a factor that can contribute to the trivialisation of domestic violence.

7. The Assembly welcomes the report on the "Current situation in combating violence against women and any future actions" adopted on 2 February 2006 by the European Parliament and invites it to join the Parliamentary Assembly's initiative "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women" in order to condemn domestic violence as an unacceptable violation of human rights and to raise the awareness of the public authorities and the general public in the European Union of the need to combat domestic violence against women.

8. The Assembly calls on international and regional interparliamentary organisations, especially the Interparliamentary Union, the Nordic Council, the Forum of Parliaments of European Small States and the network of female members of parliament of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, to participate in the Parliamentary Assembly's initiative "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women".