Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 1838 (2008)[1]

Empowering women in a modern, multicultural society

Parliamentary Assembly

1. On the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the Parliamentary Assembly reiterates how much importance it attaches to:

1.1. promoting equality between women and men in all areas of life;

1.2. furthering women's rights – particularly access for women to public, political and economic decision-making posts through the introduction of positive measures (quotas and other mechanisms);

1.3. combating gender-based discrimination (particularly in the areas of employment, pensions, narrowing the wage gap between women and men and breaking through the "glass ceiling");

1.4. combating violence against women (domestic violence, trafficking, so-called honour crimes and new forms of violence against women).

2. The Assembly considers that the Council of Europe must continue to play a pioneering role in promoting equality between women and men in all the member states. Progress has been made in recent years, but there are still many inequalities in Europe and these call for active policies to empower women and help them to make an active contribution to intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

3. In this context, the Assembly reiterates the recommendation it made to the Committee of Ministers in Recommendation 1798 (2007) to draw up a new protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights establishing the principle of equality between women and men as a fundamental human right and asks the Committee of Ministers to begin the work of drafting this without further delay.

4. The Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to appoint a Council of Europe special rapporteur on women's rights (modelled on the United Nations special rapporteurs), to be responsible, in close collaboration with the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, for monitoring the progress of women's rights in fields including that of action to combat violence against women.

5. The Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to take specific action to empower women in society and, in particular, to promote the holding of a 5th United Nations World Conference on Women in accordance with Recommendation 1716 (2005), and to organise a preparatory European regional conference, which could have the theme of empowering women in a modern, multicultural society, with the aim of:

5.1. bringing together all the stakeholders in the promotion of women's rights and in the active contribution of women to intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in Europe (representatives of governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society, as well as religious leaders);

5.2. making a review of possible measures (best practice and new suggestions) aimed at empowering women in modern societies, including in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue;

5.3. setting a progressive agenda based on common values aimed at empowering women in society;

5.4. devising a mechanism for the periodic monitoring of the progress achieved on this agenda.

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1. Assembly debate on 24 June 2008 (21st Sitting) (see Doc. 11612, report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Mrs Circene, and Doc. 11621, opinion of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Mr Pollozhani). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 June 2008 (21st Sitting).

6. Furthermore, in the area of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, the Assembly invites the Committee of Ministers to mainstream gender equality aspects urgently into the Council of Europe's intercultural dialogue, including its religious dimension activities and, in particular, to:

6.1. take action to raise awareness among representatives of religions and civil society in this field while rejecting all cultural and/or religious relativism which undermines women's fundamental rights;

6.2. develop programmes aimed at promoting active participation by women in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, including in events held by the Council of Europe on the subject.