Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 13504
23 April 2014

Violence against women in Europe

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 2030 (2013)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has taken note with interest of Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2030 (2013) on "Violence against women in Europe".

2. The Committee of Ministers attaches great importance to this issue and devoted its most recent thematic debate to "Violence against women (co-operation, particularly in the context of the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence)". On that occasion, the General Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly on Violence against Women, as well as representatives of an INGO and of the European Court of Human Rights were invited to take part in the debate.

3. Like the Assembly, the Committee of Ministers would like to see the prompt entry into force of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention, CETS No. 210). It welcomes the Assembly's efforts in this respect and emphasises that parliamentarians can make a major contribution to promoting ratification of the convention by the member States and, subsequently, to its implementation at national level and the monitoring of its application.

4. With regard to the Assembly's specific recommendations, the Committee of Ministers would point out that the Council of Europe has played a pioneering role in the collection of data on violence against women, initially through the provisions of Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence, then by including legally binding rules which call specifically for action to this effect in Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention. As a result, once the Istanbul Convention has entered into force, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) and the Committee of the Parties will base their follow-up on data collected from the States Parties, which will add to the knowledge about national responses to violence against women.

5. Furthermore, in the area of data collection on violence against women, the Council of Europe is already co-operating with other regional and international organisations, particularly the United Nations, including the World Health Organisation, the European Union and its agencies, such as the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

6. As to the Assembly's recommendations that the Committee of Ministers should contribute to strengthening the national legal and policy framework in the area of violence against women by conducting a series of specific activities, the Committee of Ministers points out that these activities already form part of the Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017.

7. In this context, the Council of Europe provides, at the member States' request and as appropriate, legal advice and expertise on draft legislation to combat violence against women, together with support for the organisation of training for relevant professionals. It has, in particular, provided targeted support for strategies and policies in the southern Mediterranean countries in the framework of the Council of Europe's policy

1. Adopted at the 1197th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (16 April 2014).

towards its immediate neighbourhood and under the project “Combating violence against women and domestic violence, including against children, in the South Mediterranean Region by ensuring respect for human rights and by implementing international standards”, financed by the Norwegian Government.

8. As to the Assembly’s recommendation to ensure that the Assembly itself is represented on GREVIO as an observer and invited to attend the meetings of the Committee of the Parties, the Committee of Ministers would point out that, under Article 70, paragraph 3, of the Istanbul Convention, “the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe shall be invited to regularly take stock of the implementation of this convention”. This provision will enable the Assembly to play an active part in the implementation of the convention, in accordance with arrangements to be determined by the Assembly itself in agreement with the two bodies concerned, such as regular exchanges of information with GREVIO on its evaluation reports and on the action taken on the Committee of the Parties’ recommendations.