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Recent attacks against women in European cities – the need for a comprehensive response

Report[1]
Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination
Rapporteur: Mr Jonas GUNNARSSON, Sweden, Socialist Group

Summary

Recent attacks against women in several European cities shocked public opinion and triggered debates on migration and integration policies. They also shed light on sexual violence, sexism and gender inequality experienced in our societies.

Violence against women is one of the most pervasive human rights violations and is rooted in a profound gender inequality. With one woman in three victim of violence in Europe, it cannot be considered a cultural problem. There should be no impunity for violence and perpetrators of any form of violence against women should be brought to justice.

Media hold an important responsibility to report on objective facts without stigmatisation. Partial, late or dishonest media reporting on crimes can feed in conspiracy theories and fuel hatred against a part of the population. It can also contribute to mistrust in the authorities and the media.

These attacks against women call for a comprehensive response including an official investigation into the facts and reactions as well as specific actions to protect women from violence. These include the ratification and full implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).

1. Reference to committee: Reference 4175 of 25 January 2016 (debate under urgent procedure).

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A. Draft resolution[2]

1. The Parliamentary Assembly condemns unreservedly all forms of violence against women. Recent attacks against women in several European cities have highlighted the urgent need to protect women from sexual violence. Their simultaneous occurrence, their scale, the late reporting by the media and the slow response of the authorities are of great concern.

2. Violence against women finds its origin in a profound inequality between women and men and will not be brought to an end unless there is a change of mindsets. In Europe, one woman in three is a victim of gender-based violence, most of the time behind closed doors, but harassment in the street is also common. Violence within crowds represents another dimension of violence against women.

3. According to witness accounts, the majority of perpetrators of the recent attacks were allegedly of foreign origin. These attacks triggered debates on reception policies and integration in Europe. The Assembly stresses that violence against women is one of the most pervasive and widespread human rights violations and should not be instrumentalised for other purposes.

4. There can be no impunity for violence and perpetrators of any form of violence against women must be brought to justice. The Assembly recalls that the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CETS No. 210) is a major milestone for the protection of women and calls for its full implementation.

5. The media also hold an important responsibility to report objectively and truthfully on facts, without stigmatising a part of the population. They should not, in order to ensure political correctness, hide the truth from the general public. Partial, late or biased reporting on crimes can feed conspiracy theories, fuel hatred against a part of the population and contribute to mistrust in the authorities and the media.

6. These attacks against women call for a comprehensive response, since they require an official investigation into the facts and into the reasons for delaying official reporting to the public, as well as specific actions to protect women from violence.

7. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States to:

7.1. engage in awareness-raising activities and launch information campaigns on the need to prevent and combat violence against women and on gender equality;

7.2. sign and ratify, if they have not already done so, and fully implement the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence;

7.3. protect women's right to physical integrity and the right not to be harassed in the public space and private sphere;

7.4. ensure, by prosecuting perpetrators, there will be no impunity for violence against women;

7.5. take measures to encourage women to report violence to the police and train officers on how best to assist women victims of violence;

7.6. allocate sufficient financial resources to organisations providing assistance to victims of violence;

7.7. engage in a dialogue with the media about their responsibility to ensure timely and objective reporting on events, including crimes, and to combat hate speech;

8. The Assembly calls on the relevant authorities to conduct an investigation into the attacks against women and to publish its results.

9. The Assembly urges parliamentarians to condemn all forms of violence against women, including harassment and sexism, as well as hate speech, and to contribute actively to awareness-raising efforts.

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 26 January 2016.

B. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Gunnarsson, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. The attacks against women in Cologne, Hamburg and other cities in Europe on the night of 31 December 2015 – 1 January 2016 created a wave of shock in public opinion. These attacks will have long-term consequences on the victims, and the perpetrators must be brought to justice. It is crucial to understand what has happened and what could have been done to prevent them.

2. The simultaneous occurrence of such mob assaults in several cities, their scale and the slow response of the authorities are of great concern. According to witness accounts, the majority of perpetrators were allegedly of foreign origin. This has triggered debates in Germany and beyond on reception policies, integration and so-called cultural differences, as well as on sexism and gender inequality experienced in general in our societies.

3. Violence against women is one of the most pervasive and widespread human rights violations. It affects one woman in three in Europe and occurs most of the time behind closed doors, in the intimacy of a family or of a private relationship. Harassment in the street is, however, also common in most European cities. Nevertheless, the particularity of the 31 December attacks is that they occurred in open places, in the midst of big crowds, in a setting which might suggest that they were planned in advance or at least coordinated.

4. Conflicting and delayed media reports, variations in figures, reports that victims were discouraged from filing complaints and late official reactions indicate several grey zones with regard to these attacks and raise a number of concerns. An investigation by the competent authorities should however shed light on what precisely happened.

5. The Assembly has relentlessly condemned violence against women and presented proposals for action. It called for the adoption of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CETS No. 210, “Istanbul Convention”) and has advocated for its ratification and implementation. Violence against women cannot be minimised – but it also should not be instrumentalised for other purposes. This report is an opportunity to reiterate our strong commitment to preventing and combating violence against women in any form and to urge Council of Europe member States to do their utmost to ratify and implement without delay or reservations the Istanbul Convention.

6. The Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination was seized for report following the request for an urgent debate by Sir Roger Gale (United Kingdom, EC) and other members of the Assembly, in accordance with Rule 51 of the Rules of Procedure, confirmed by a vote of the Assembly on 25 January 2016.[3]

2. Facts as currently known

7. Sexual violence against women made the media headlines following the attacks in Cologne and other cities, mostly in Germany, but also in Austria, Finland and Switzerland on the night of 31 December 2015 to 1 January 2016. Attacks which occurred in Sweden earlier last year were also reported by the media on this occasion.

8. This report will not present in detail what happened in every city but will focus on the attacks in Cologne, which have led to the highest number of complaints to the police so far. It is not possible at this early stage of investigation to draw conclusions but we can try to put forward questions and raise our concerns. The information presented in this report is based on media reports and the accounts of victims and witnesses published in the press.

9. On 31 December 2015, outside the Cologne train station and in front of the cathedral, hundreds of men gathered about two hours before the beginning of fireworks. Media report that about a thousand men were present.[4] Victims and police officers present reported that most of these men were allegedly of foreign origin, most of the time under the influence of alcohol. Handwritten notes with sexual insults translated from Arabic to German were allegedly also found.

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3. Change of title approved unanimously by the committee. Former title: “The protection of women and the honest reporting of unpalatable truths”.
4. Cologne’s aftershock, *The Economist*, 16 January 2016.

10. The men harassed, insulted and grabbed women both outside the cathedral and inside the train station, where there was reportedly a dense crowd. They stripped some women of their clothing and robbed them. Some victims reported fearing for their lives. Jessica P. told a journalist of *Le Monde* that "We were shaken about, felt up. I could see in their eyes that I was nothing more than an object with which they could do as they pleased. They enjoyed feeling my panic. The station belonged to them. I thought we were going to die".[5]

11. Victims spoke about an overall aggressive atmosphere and reported their difficulties in extracting themselves from the crowd. Some women were accompanied by their partners who could not protect them under the pressure of the crowd. Others stayed in groups while going through the crowd.

12. Eyewitness accounts are rare and most of the time anonymous. Victims told the press that they did not want to give their full name, afraid of being found in social media and harassed for contributing to hatred against migrants and asylum seekers.[6]

13. Witnesses mentioned to the press that most men composing the crowd had an Arab or North African appearance. The precise number of asylum seekers among the crowd is not known.

14. In Cologne, to date, 766 complaints have been officially made to the police, including 497 complaints for sexual assaults and at least three for rape. Some victims reported to the press that they had been discouraged from filing official complaints to the police since they had not been robbed.

15. The Cologne police have been blamed for not foreseeing the risk and for not reacting proportionately by sending sufficient support to the officers present. Rainer Wendt, who heads the national police union, said the police had made several errors.[7]

16. Some women told the press that they had asked the police for help and that they were told that there were not enough police officers to help. On 1 January 2016, the Cologne police reported that the festivities had been "relaxed". On 8 January, the local police chief was suspended for his failure to prevent and react to the events described above, among other reasons.

17. The German authorities and media were accused of hiding the truth from the public for four days.[8] One of the first official reactions was the recommendation made by the Mayor of Cologne to women to stay "an arm's length" away from men, which triggered a wave of criticism, since it put the responsibility of the attacks on the victims and not on the perpetrators.

18. These delays in the release of the information have been used by PEGIDA and Alternative für Deutschland as an opportunity to argue that the government had tried to prevent criticism of the behaviour of migrants and refugees and of the policy adopted a few months earlier, which led Germany to accept about a million refugees in 2015, mostly from Syria. The attacks have also been used by these movements to portray immigrants as criminals and potentially dangerous.

19. Following the attacks, pictures circulated in the social media. At times, pictures were presented as taken on that night in Cologne but they had in fact been taken long before, often even in another country.[9] It is difficult if not impossible to find photographs and videos online of what happened in Cologne. The lack of readily available images or footage of the events gave even more room for fake pictures to be widely circulated, falsely associated with the attacks and published by the press.

20. Since the attacks, a shift in the German public opinion has been reported. At the initiative of PEGIDA, an anti-migrant demonstration took place in Cologne a few days later.[10] Hate speech against migrants and asylum seekers also increased in the social media. Physical attacks have also been reported.

21. Some feminist activists explain their delayed reaction to the attacks by the fear of being called "racist". Violence, sexism and racism are however not necessarily linked. One can condemn attacks on women perpetrated by foreigners without being racist and, in general, movements for the protection of women's rights are for the protection of human rights. I therefore welcome the fact that there have been demonstrations jointly

5. La nuit des chasseurs, *Le Monde*, 20 January 2016.
6. As Germany Welcomes Migrants, Sexual Attacks in Cologne Point to a New Reality, *The New York Times*, 14 January 2016.
7. Ibid.
8. Cologne's aftershock, *The Economist,* 16 January 2016.
9. Cologne, de vraies agressions qui suscitent de fausses images, *Le Monde*, 11 January 2016.
10. Cologne protests over sex attacks: 'I am full of sorrow for Germany', *The Guardia*n, 9 January 2016.

condemning violence against women, sexism and racism in Cologne, making clear that preventing and combating violence against women should not result in more racism or mistrust against a part of the population.[11]

3. Media reporting

22. German and international media reported on the Cologne attacks a few days later, which triggered debates on their role and what they wanted supposedly to hide from public opinion. In my view, a crime is a crime and the media should not, in order to ensure political correctness, hide the truth from the general public. Honest crime reporting is very important, irrespective of who might be the perpetrator. This helps building trust between the public and the media, and ultimately with the authorities, and can contribute to a harmonious living together.

23. Media hold a responsibility to report on objective facts, without stigmatising a part of the population. Partial, late or dishonest media reporting on crimes can feed in conspiracy theories and fuel hatred against a part of the population.

24. The television channel ZDF presented apologies for waiting four days to report on the attacks. Since the delay in official and media reporting raises many questions, I would like to encourage the holding of an investigation into the reasons behind this delay.

4. Sexual violence against women

4.1. Available data on sexual violence against women in Europe

25. Violence against women, including sexual violence and harassment, is widespread in Europe. It is not linked to a specific social category or to an age group. It is also not related to a geographic location. According to the survey on violence against women by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union,[12] 33% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner in the European Union since the age of 15, 20% of women have experienced physical violence by a non-partner since the age of 15 and 6% have experienced sexual violence by a non-partner since the age of 15. 55% of women have experienced some form of sexual harassment since the age of 15. 13% of women indicated they had contacted the police as a result of the most serious incident of violence by a non-partner since the age of 15.

26. The results of the FRA survey are rather similar for Germany. They indicate that 35% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner since the age of 15, 21% of women have experienced physical violence by a non-partner since the age of 15 and 7% have experienced sexual violence by a non-partner since the age of 15. 60% of women interviewed in Germany have experienced some form of sexual harassment since the age of 15. 10% of women indicated they had contacted the police as a result of the most serious incident of violence by a non-partner since the age of 15.

27. According to Monika Hauser, President of Medica Mondiale, “sexual violence is not a new phenomenon in Germany. 8 000 cases are registered every year, which means 100 000 in reality. It is time for the denial to end”.[13] The Cologne attacks shed light on this phenomenon and triggered debates in German society and beyond on violence against women. It happens everywhere and perpetrators come from a variety of backgrounds. While the Cologne attacks were allegedly mostly perpetrated by men from an immigrant background, we should not pay more attention to the country of origin of perpetrators than to the gravity of the acts committed.

28. Festivities involving high alcohol consumption are an environment where sexual violence and harassment is more likely to happen. At the Oktoberfest in Munich, every year, dozens of sexual attacks are perpetrated despite a significant police presence and video surveillance. Women who feel in danger can go to a “security point” to receive assistance. According to data released by the Munich police, two complaints for rape during the Oktoberfest are made to the police every year. According to Maike Bublitz, Frauennotruf München, there have already been cases of group violence and harassment against women at the Oktoberfest. Sexual jokes and harassment are common and too often go unnoticed.[14]

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11. Germans and refugees protest sexism and racism in wake of Cologne attacks, *Deutsche Welle,* 16 January 2016.
12. The FRA survey on violence against women is based on face-to-face interviews with 42 000 women across the European Union. The survey was carried out between March and September 2012 and made public in March 2014.
13. La nuit des chasseurs, *Le Monde*, 20 January 2016.
14. À la fête de la bière à Munich, on boit, on chante, on viole, *Slate.fr*, 19 January 2016.

29. There were discussions in Germany about a possible updating of the law on rape even before the Cologne attacks. Currently, rape is not prosecuted in Germany if the victim failed to fight back. The current legal definition of rape does not include the notion of consent, which has been criticised for many years by women's rights advocates. The revision of this definition would remove the requirement to prove that the victim fought back. In the circumstances of the Cologne attacks, it could be difficult to prove that victims fought back and therefore to prosecute the perpetrators under the current legislation.[15]

30. Violence against women, including sexual violence, is a despicable act, and should not be excused under any circumstances. It cannot be considered more acceptable if it occurs within a family or if the perpetrators are Europeans. With this report, I would like the Assembly to take a strong stance and denounce all violence against women, wherever it occurs and whoever the perpetrators might be. To this end, we have at our disposal the most advanced international treaty on preventing and combating violence against women, the Istanbul Convention.

4.2. Underreporting of violence against women

31. Although violence against women is widespread in Europe and beyond, victims feel often too ashamed to file a complaint to the police. Some took more than a week to turn to the police following the attacks in Cologne. They may be discouraged from lodging a complaint, believe it will not be useful or be afraid of possible consequences including reprisals. In cases of domestic violence, victims fear for their future, afraid that they will not to be able to provide for their families and that they will not receive sufficient support.

32. Lack of trust in the police and judiciary can also explain the underreporting of violence. Training of police officers on how to best support victims of violence should be generalised.

33. The Cologne attacks demonstrate once again the importance of filing a complaint, the possible impact of underreporting and the relevance of systematic data collection on violence against women in order to prevent future violence. I would like to make a reference to the upcoming report by Ms Maria Edera Spadoni (Italy, NR) on "Systematic collection of data on violence against women" which will present precise recommendations in this specific area. Data collected on violence against women provides an indicator of the scale of violence and the profile of perpetrators, and therefore help to design targeted policies for more efficient action.

4.3. The Istanbul Convention

34. The Istanbul Convention offers a comprehensive approach to preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. It is based on the "4 Ps": prevention, protection and support of victims, prosecution of perpetrators and integrated policies. It covers all forms of violence and does not accept culture or religion as excuses for violence against women. The focus of the convention is on the victims and on what can be done to support them.

35. I would like to reiterate that violence against women, including sexual violence and harassment, cannot be considered as a cultural problem. Article 42 of the Istanbul Convention clearly states that "culture, custom, religion, tradition or so-called "honour" shall not be regarded as justification". Violence against women is present everywhere and it would be misguided at best to say that it is more related to one culture or another.

36. Sexual insults, hands grabbing parts of a body, forced hugs or kisses are most probably not currently classified as criminal offences in most Council of Europe member States; this is why the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention is of the utmost importance. Harassment and the so-called invisible forms of violence should be criminalised in order to achieve a tangible change in attitudes.

37. The Istanbul Convention provides standards for efficient actions to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. The convention has been ratified by 19 States to date and with this report I call on Council of Europe member States which have not yet ratified it to do so, in order to contribute to protecting millions of women.

15. Germany set to finally update rape law, *Deutsche Welle*, 8 January 2016.

4.4. Prevention of violence against women

38. Following the attacks, we have heard that the women were assaulted because of their clothing or lifestyle. I strongly condemn the words of religious leaders or other public figures who have stated that women in some way or another, because of their clothing, perfume or attitude, deserved the violence they experienced, in Cologne or elsewhere in other contexts. A victim should never be blamed for violence.

39. Protecting women from violence does not mean having a patronising attitude towards them. Calls for women to dress or not dress in a specific way do not address the roots of the problem. They make women feel responsible for the violence.

40. Prevention efforts should target possible perpetrators of violence and not incite women to change their behaviour. In the recent report on "Promoting best practices in tackling violence against women" by Ms Sahiba Gafarova (Azerbaijan, EC), several awareness-raising initiatives which had had positive results were presented.[16] The involvement of men in prevention campaigns should be further encouraged.

5. Migrants

41. All media reports on the 31 December attacks highlighted the fact that the perpetrators were often Arab speakers and came either from North Africa or from the Middle East. Some media outlets seized the opportunity to associate them with the 1 million refugees received by Germany in 2015 and to criticise this policy, stressing cultural differences and incompatibilities. Articles on a possible clash of civilisations have published in the press, contributing to exacerbating tensions. "After Cologne, when Europeans think of refugees, many no longer picture persecuted families or toddlers. Instead they see menacing young men imbued with the sexism that is all too common across the Middle East and North Africa", reports *The Economist*.[17]

42. The request for an urgent debate referred to a supposed practice of *"taharrush gamea"* (used here to mean group harassment of women) in the Arab world to describe the Cologne attacks. However, the ordinary meaning of the word "taharrush" is simply "harassment", and there is little evidence of widespread practices of mob sexual assault across the Arab world.[18] Much attention has been paid in recent years to mob harassment of and assaults against women in public spaces in Egypt, something that came to international attention following the sexual assault perpetrated against journalist Lara Logan in Tahrir Square, Cairo, in 2011.[19] While all such attacks must be condemned in the strongest terms, caution should be used before suggestion that a "culture" of such attacks exists or that they stem from any religious practices. Anti-sexual harassment activists in Egypt appear to have expressed some frustration at the focalisation of attention on extreme meanings of the term "taharrush", such as mob sexual assaults, to the detriment of the fight against everyday sexual harassment of kinds familiar to women throughout the world.[20]

43. Further to the attacks in Cologne and other European cities, several commentators have pointed out that migrants are mostly young men, which could generate sex-ratio changes in a number of European countries. According to the available data, 73% of asylum seekers in Europe in 2015 were men, among whom 40% were aged 18 to 34. It has been observed that in a country like Sweden the gender ratio could reach 116 men for 100 women if all asylum applications were granted. However, this risk does not affect all European countries but in the first place the least populated European States, receiving higher numbers of refugees. In Germany, the ratio would be 106 men for 100 women for 18 to 34 year olds if all asylum applications were granted.

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16. Doc. 13914 of 26 October 2015 (rapporteur: Ms Sahiba Gafarova, Azerbaijan, EC).
17. Migrant men and European women, *The Economist*, 16 January 2016.
18. A recent analysis of the use of the term "*el-taharrush el-ginsy*" in Internet postings across northern Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf region from 2000 to 2012 showed that its use was almost non-existent in Algeria, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Syria, and largely concentrated in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. See Angie Abdelmonem, "Reconceptualizing Sexual Harassment in Egypt: A Longitudinal Assessment of *el-Taharrush el-Ginsy* in Arabic Online Forums and Anti-Sexual Harassment Activism", Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Summer 2015).
19. For her own account of this assault, see http://www.cbsnews.com/news/lara-logan-breaks-silence-on-cairo-assault/.
20. See Angie Abdelmonem, "Reconceptualizing Sexual Harassment in Egypt: A Longitudinal Assessment of *el-Taharrush el-Ginsy* in Arabic Online Forums and Anti-Sexual Harassment Activism", Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Summer 2015).

44. Gender imbalance may have serious social consequences in the long term. A link has, for instance, been found between imbalanced sex ratios and the emergence of both violent criminal gangs and anti-government movements. One explanation was that "when young adult males fail to make the transition to starting a household – particularly those young males who are already at risk for sociopathic behaviour due to marginalization, a common concern among immigrants – their grievances are aggravated."[21]

45. Consequences for women have also been established: "crimes such as rape and sexual harassment become more common in highly masculinized societies, and women's ability to move about freely and without fear within society is curtailed."[22] In Resolution 1829 (2011) on prenatal sex selection, the Assembly already warned member States against population imbalances which are likely to create difficulties for men to find spouses, lead to serious human rights violations such as forced prostitution, trafficking for the purposes of marriage or sexual exploitation, and contribute to a rise in criminality and social unrest.

46. Responses to this risk vary from one State from another. For instance, Canada decided in November 2015 to welcome only women, children, families and LGBT men. This measure could however be seen as in conflict with refugee rights which should apply with no discrimination on the ground of sex. Other countries like Germany or Norway have set up voluntary classes for migrants to raise awareness about social behaviours towards women and women's rights. Further research could be carried out in order to identify how the potential social impact linked to gender imbalance could be minimised. Recent proposals to refuse family reunification to asylum seekers having lived in Denmark for less than three years – which have already been criticised on other grounds – may also deserve to be reassessed against this background.

6. Equality between women and men

47. These deeply troubling events oblige us to think about the roots of violence. Violence against women is rooted in a profound inequality between women and men and an alleged different status of women and men in society. It will not be brought to an end as long as men think that they have more power than women and can coerce them into doing what they would like them to do.

48. This inequality is unfortunately still widely present. Current debates on the attitude of migrant men towards European women may even be intended to dilute or distract attention from this problem.

49. Violence against women and gender inequality did not appear in Europe with the migration wave of 2015. They have existed for centuries and progress has been slow. One should not minimise the level of violence in countries of origin of migrants and asylum seekers but the eradication of violence against women will not become a reality unless we step up efforts to promote gender equality from an early age throughout the world – including in Europe.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

50. The Cologne attacks appear to have marked a shift in Europe's attitude towards migrants and asylum seekers. Some have used this opportunity to label migrants and asylum seekers as a threat to women's rights and their freedom of movement, using this as an argument for further limiting immigration. Limiting women's access to public space cannot be considered a solution. We cannot allow women's rights and their protection to be used as an instrument for racist propaganda.

51. These attacks also contribute to a climate of fear which may endanger the democratic pillars of our societies and encourage some to look for other alternatives.

52. I consider this report an opportunity to reiterate our firm commitment to preventing and combating all forms of violence against women in Council of Europe member States and beyond, and to call once again for the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention. The provisions of the Convention are more relevant than ever. States should take all necessary steps to promote gender equality, raise awareness on the need for full equality between women and men, implement prevention programmes, provide assistance to victims of gender violence and prosecute perpetrators.

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21. V. Hudson, Europe's Man Problem – Migrants to Europe skew heavily male – and that's dangerous, *Politico Magazine*, 5 January 2016.
22. Ibid.

53. Perpetrators of any form of violence against women should be brought to justice, wherever they come from and whatever the motivations underlying their acts of violence. I welcome the call by the German authorities for zero impunity and urge them to conduct full investigations and shed light on what happened, analyse whether it was planned in advance and if so how, and what could have been done to prevent it.

54. The public authorities and the media hold an important responsibility to report on events in an honest manner, without stigmatisation. The response of the authorities, including the police, also deserves attention and the investigation should help us understand what has happened.

55. The attacks stunned observers with their scale and simultaneous nature. But throughout Europe, on a daily basis, thousands of women experience sexual harassment merely when walking down the street or taking public transportation. I therefore recommend that a follow-up report on women in the public space be drawn up, and the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination could draw it up.