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Migrant women: at particular risk of domestic violence

Motion for a recommendation

tabled by Ms Nursuna MEMECAN and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has been actively involved in the two-year Council of Europe campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, which is due to come to an end in June 2008.

At the final conference of the parliamentary dimension of the campaign, held in Vienna on 30 April 2008, the parliamentarians present expressed their wish to continue working on certain subjects connected with the campaign which could not be dealt with in depth before.

One of those subjects which need closer attention is the particular risk of domestic violence which migrant women face.

Many migrant women come to Europe in the framework of family reunification. This means that their residency permits are often secondary residency permits, dependent on the residency permits of their husbands.

This gives them a particular power over their wives. Should their wives flee domestic violence, they may have to return to their countries of origin, as their residency permits may not be renewed.

In addition, the barriers for migrant women to report domestic violence are particularly high: many of them are isolated, do not speak the language of the host country well, have young children and no support network outside their own migrant community. They often come from a culture in which domestic violence is shrouded in secrecy and where victims of domestic violence who denounce the abuse are frowned upon.

Some countries have already taken steps to make it easier for migrant women to report domestic abuse by, for example, installing telephone "hotlines". However, the problems are still massive.

The Parliamentary Assembly thus recommends that the Committee of Ministers take appropriate action to make member states aware of the particular risk of domestic violence faced by migrant women, and to take effective measures to combat the problem.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
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