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Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Parliaments united combating domestic violence against women

Information note on the preparation of the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence

Following the Action Plan adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the member states at their Third Summit (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005), the Council of Europe has decided to conduct a pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence in 2006/2007, which will be prepared by the Council of Europe Task Force set up in 2006.

Pursuant to its commitment, the Parliamentary Assembly will organise the parliamentary dimension of this Council of Europe pan-European campaign, which will be focused on the issue of domestic violence against women and run under the slogan "Parliaments united combating domestic violence against women".

Why an Assembly campaign of "Parliaments united combating domestic violence against women"?

Domestic violence against women is on the rise again and occurs in every single Council of Europe member state. It 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. Domestic violence is characterised by violent conduct in various forms, physical, sexual or psychological, or it may be based on financial dependence. Domestic violence is one of the most widespread violations of human rights in the world and must be combated in all Council of Europe member states.

The campaign seeks to:

1. denounce domestic violence as a human rights violation which is not acceptable in democracies committed to the fundamental values of the Council of Europe;
2. elicit public debate to encourage the fight against domestic violence against women in the 46 members states of the Council of Europe;
3. encourage national parliaments to become actively involved in combating domestic violence through the implementation of the pan-European campaign in 2007.

How can national parliaments take action to contribute to the Assembly campaign?

National parliaments can play a key role in promoting prevention, assistance to victims and/or survivors and providing information to the general public. Political will is a pre-condition to outlaw domestic violence and change the prevailing mentalities. The Assembly is therefore promoting an active role of national parliaments in denouncing domestic violence and adopting appropriate measures to combat this human rights violation.

National parliaments contributing to the campaign could, for example:

1. organise public and parliamentary debates denouncing domestic violence;
2. adopt a solemn declaration affirming the national parliament's commitment to combating domestic violence;
3. ensure the adoption of appropriate legislative, judicial and financial measures and national plans to eradicate domestic violence against women;
4. encourage public authorities to take action against domestic violence;
5. conduct awareness-raising campaigns to denounce domestic violence;
6. support the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign notably by :
 - funding specific projects at national and European level;
 - providing support to local NGOs combating domestic violence;
 - proposing study visits to parliamentarians 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 against domestic violence
7. appoint a contact person who will act as contact and liaison officer between the national parliament and the Assembly and play a leading role in promoting the implementation of the Assembly campaign at national level.

How can the Parliamentary Assembly support action launched by national parliaments?

The Assembly Campaign will involve the national parliaments of the 46 member states, Observer parliaments (Mexico, Canada (tbc), Israel (tbc)), the European Parliament (tbc) and regional parliamentary networks (Nordic Council, Gender Task force of the Stability Pact), in co-operation with main European NGOs active in combating domestic violence (Amnesty international, the European Women's Lobby, Women against violence in Europe).

The Parliamentary Assembly will back initiatives launched by national parliaments

- the Parliamentary Assembly will put information packages at the disposal of parliaments suggesting practical ways in which national parliaments can conduct the campaign;
- the Parliamentary Assembly will in particular put at disposal a logo, a poster and an information booklet that can be downloaded, translated by national parliaments into the local language(s) and disseminated in the country;
- members of the Assembly can provide assistance and can present the Assembly's activities and good practices in Europe;

- the Parliamentary Assembly can give its patronage to national and regional initiatives launched by national parliaments;
- the Parliamentary Assembly will - in close co-operation with its national delegations - foster a network of contact persons to identify and highlight the initiatives taken by various national parliaments during the campaign and thus encourage the exchange of examples of good practice between parliaments.

Upcoming events

Stockholm, 30 March 2006:	Hearing on the preparation of the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence
Strasbourg, Assembly part-Session (26-30 June 2006):	Submission of Mrs Cliveti's report on the Assembly campaign to the Parliamentary Assembly Keynote address of Mrs Yakin Ertürk, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, at the Third meeting of meeting of women members of the Parliamentary Assembly (to be confirmed)
(Place to be confirmed) 24 November 2006:	Launch event of the Assembly Campaign "Parliaments united combating domestic violence against women"

Background information

PACE Recommendation 1681 (2004)	Campaign to combat domestic violence against women in Europe.
PACE Recommendation 1693 (2005)	Parliamentary Assembly's contribution to the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe
More information on the Council of Europe action to combat violence against women: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Equality/05_Violence_against_women/	

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