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## The spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic to women and girls in Europe

Motion for a recommendation  
presented by Mrs Hägg and others

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

1. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is of increasing importance to European countries. Even though the rates of infections have been relatively low in the past, there are alarming figures in some countries that need to be taken seriously.
2. Throughout the world, an increasing number of women are being infected with HIV/AIDS. It is often women with little or no income who are most at risk. Widespread inequalities including political, social, cultural and human security factors also exacerbate the risk for women and girls. Therefore it is of great importance to involve men and boys in HIV/AIDS prevention efforts for a long standing impact. Involving men is not only important because they often control women's and girls' degree of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS but also because of societal norms about masculinity and gender that may heighten men's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.
3. More than half a million people are living with HIV/AIDS in Western Europe. Of the more than 20000 newly diagnosed HIV infections in 2004 (excluding Italy, Norway and Spain), more than one third were women. In Central Europe, the epidemic has remained small with Poland and Turkey accounting for more than one half of annual new HIV diagnoses. In Poland the dominant factor of the epidemic used to be the injecting drug users, but has now been overtaken by unprotected sex -heterosexual and between men- as the main route of transmission. In Eastern Europe, it is Russia and Ukraine who have the greatest number of the people living with HIV. Ukraine, with its estimated adult HIV prevalence of 1.4%, is the worst affected country in Europe. The proportion of people infected through sexual transmission in Ukraine has increased from 14% in 1999-2003 to over 32% in 2004.
4. It is estimated that comprehensive HIV prevention, including education, promotion of condom use, implementation of harm reduction services and access to voluntary counselling and testing, could avert 63% of the 45 million new infections expected between 2002 and 2010 globally. Due to the increased incidence of transmission through heterosexual contact to women and girls, a gender-sensitive approach is needed, especially when implementing preventive measures.
5. The Assembly thus recommends that the Committee of Ministers encourage Council of Europe member states to:
  - i. take the European HIV/AIDS pandemic seriously and scale up prevention measures to halt the spread of the disease;
  - ii. take a gender-sensitive approach, especially when dealing with prevention and detection measures.

*Signed (see overleaf)*

Signed <sup>1</sup>:

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ANTUNOVIĆ, Željka, Croatia, SOC  
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<sup>1</sup> SOC: Socialist Group  
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party  
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
EDG: European Democratic Group  
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left  
NR: not registered in a group