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23 March 2006

Combating trafficking in human beings: promoting the rapid entry into force of the Council of Europe Convention

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mrs Vermot-Mangold and others

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

1. Trafficking in human beings is one of the most horrific violations of human rights for its victims, most of them women and girls trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation. At the same time, it is one of the most lucrative criminal activities for the persons and networks who engage in it. Already in 1997, the Parliamentary Assembly correspondingly emphasized that “the Council of Europe, as a pan-European organisation with a clear human rights mandate grouping both countries of origin and countries of destination of trafficked women, is ideally placed to take the lead in combating traffic in women and forced prostitution, and should do so without further delay”, by drafting a convention on the subject (Recommendation 1325).
2. Eight years later, the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings was opened for signature in Warsaw on 16 May 2005, on the occasion of the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member States. This new Convention, the first European treaty in the field, is a comprehensive treaty focussing mainly on the protection of victims of trafficking and the safeguard of their rights. It also aims to prevent trafficking and to prosecute traffickers. In addition, the Convention provides for the setting up of an effective and independent monitoring mechanism capable of controlling the implementation of the obligations contained in the Convention.
3. To date, the Convention has been signed by 25 Council of Europe member States: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Sweden, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Ukraine. However, no member State has ratified the Convention so far, and the European Commission – which had forced the Council of Europe to lower some of the Convention’s standards to the lowest common denominator of Community law during the negotiations – has not even signed the treaty.
4. The Assembly is convinced that the Convention is an essential instrument in the fight against trafficking in human beings in Europe. It thus decides to join the Council of Europe campaign on action against trafficking in human beings launched in 2006, with the aim of promoting the widest possible signature and ratification of the Convention and its rapid entry into force.

5. The Parliamentary Assembly thus invites:
- i. the governments of all Council of Europe member states who have not yet signed the Convention to do so without further delay;
 - ii. the governments of all Council of Europe member states who have signed the Convention to start ratification procedures and present parliament with ratification bills as soon as possible;
 - iii. the European Community to accede to the Convention without further delay;
 - iv. parliaments of member States and the European parliament to promote the rapid entry into force of the Convention.

*Signed*¹:

VERMOT-MANGOLD, Ruth-Gaby, Switzerland, SOC
ATANASOVA, Aneliya, Bulgaria, ALDE
AUSTIN, John, United Kingdom, SOC
BİLGEHAN, Gülsün, Turkey, SOC
BOUSAKLA, Mimount, Belgium, SOC
BRANGER, Jean-Guy, France, EPP/CD
BROSBØL, Kirsten, Denmark, SOC
CIRCENE, Ingrīda, Latvia, EPP/CD
ČURDOVÁ, Anna, Czech Republic, SOC
DAMANAKI, Maria, Greece, SOC
FAUTRIER, Catherine, Monaco, EPP/CD
GABURRO, Giuseppe, Italy, EPP/CD
GAJDŮŠKOVÁ, Alena, Czech Republic, SOC
HÄGG, Carina, Sweden, SOC
ILASCU, Ilie, Romania, NR
JAZŁOWIECKA, Danuta, Poland, EPP/CD
LINTONEN, Minna, Finland, SOC
MORGANTI, Fausta, San Marino, SOC
MÜLLER-SÖNKSEN, Burkhardt, Germany, ADLE
PAPADIMITRIOU, Elsa, Greece, EPP/CD
PEHLIVAN, Fatma, Belgium, SOC
STĂNOIU, Rodica Mihaela, Romania, SOC
WILLIAMS, Betty, United Kingdom, SOC
ZAPFL-HELBLING, Rosmarie, Switzerland, EPP/CD

¹ 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