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5 July 2006

## The role of women in modern societies, including in intercultural and interreligious dialogue

Motion for a resolution  
presented by Mrs Circene and others

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

1. The role of women in society has evolved differently under different cultural, ethnic and religious conditions. If the strengthening of the democratic rights of women and a tendency to gender equality are historically recent (100 years) in even the most prosperous of our societies, there remains much to be achieved in emerging and developing economies.
2. Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey are the members states of the Council of Europe in which a large proportion of the indigenous population are muslim. Each of these countries takes a secular approach to its religion and thereby to the way in which women are required to behave in public life. Nevertheless, the role of women in Islam, their segregation in the religious ceremony from men, their relatively subservient position within the family and society are present as they are for stricter islamic countries.
3. In the cultural integration process which we are experiencing, understanding the essence of these differences, while respecting existing traditions and norms, will be a vital component of the ultimate success of the integration process, both within the Council of Europe and within the European Union.
4. The Assembly thus decides to launch an initiative on the role of women in modern societies, in order to address this cultural integration process at this critical point in time. Dialogue and co-operation need to be the cornerstones of the activities linked to this initiative, as such a deep societal evolution will need time to achieve true acceptance.
5. The Assembly recommends that a policy be developed within the Council of Europe with respect to the special situation which the women of our society encounter, as the Christian, Jewish, Islamic and other religious denomination communities of Council of Europe member states progressively integrate. This policy should be based upon the basic principles of gender equality, religious tolerance and cultural openness, and should be underpinned with an action plan involving all states and societal actors with an interest in taking part.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed <sup>1</sup>:

CIRCENE, Ingrīda, Latvia, EPP/CD  
AHLQVIST, Birgitta, Sweden, SOC  
ATEŞ, Abdülkadir, Turkey, SOC  
BADRÉ, Denis, France, ALDE  
CILEVIČS, Boriss, Latvia, SOC  
CLIVETI, Minodora, Romania, SOC  
DROMBERG, Kaarina, Finland, EPP/CD  
FRUNDA, György, Romania, EPP/CD  
OSKINA, Vera, Russian Federation, EDG  
Van den BRANDE, Luc, Belgium, EPP/CD

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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