



North-South Centre of the Council of Europe



25 November 2011

Declaration by the Chair of the North-South Centre on the international day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

"There is a gap that is much more important than the value gap between the Italian financial bonds and the German bonds. It is the gap between human rights declarations and their implementation real life, the gap between universally recognised values which have been officially ratified and the daily practices that too often deny these values, even in the Western world, and especially with regard to women" said Deborah Bergamini, Chair of the North-South Centre and Secretary of the Italian Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

"Today, 25 November 2011, we celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Like every year, for an entire day, we will be overfled by the alarming figures of this dreadful reality which crosses national boundaries and social differences. Once more, we will find out that in Europe one woman out of five experienced violence. We will be reminded that the majority of violent acts are domestic, inflicted by an intimate partner or the relatives of the victim. Furthermore, violence against women keeps reaching new extents with the evolution, or regression of social practices.

However, once the lights are turned off, global priorities remain the same and the tragedies hidden behind this neutral mathematic appearance will persist.

Action is still to be taken to efficiently fight the scourge of violence against women. New policies and laws have to be developed and implemented by national states, but the role of international organisations is fundamental, too. I would like to highlight here the role of the Council of Europe, which opened for signature a specific Convention and launched a triennial communication plan on this issue.

Without a firm global will of taking concrete decision towards the elimination of these practices, the gap between rights declared on paper and rights safeguarded in reality will only continue to widen.