

## Highlights of the January 2008 part-session

- ▶ **20 January 2008, 4 p.m:** Cinéma Odyssée (Strasbourg): screening and debate of the film *Mutluluk* (original version with French sub-titles).
- ▶ **21-25 January 2008:** PACE information stand and slide show on the Assembly action "parliaments united in combating domestic violence" near the hemicycle.

## On your agenda

- ▶ **Brussels, Madariaga European Foundation, 4 March 2008:** "L'Europe des Mardis" devoted to the PACE initiative "Men get involved to combat domestic violence".
- ▶ **Vienna, Austrian Parliament, 30 April 2008:** closing conference of the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe Campaign.

## PACE questionnaire: working together to evaluate the campaign

National delegations to the PACE are invited to complete the evaluation questionnaire, approved by the PACE Equality Committee on 7 December 2007, by 15 March 2008. "The contribution of all parliaments is essential to identify all the initiatives that have been undertaken by national parliaments and to prepare a successful evaluation of the action carried out in the framework of the campaign" said the rapporteur José Mendes Bota (Portugal, EPP/CD) who initiated this questionnaire. The first results will be published in April 2008.

## The network of contact parliamentarians gets stronger



Miet Smet for Belgium, Mirjana Malic for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jeffrey Pullicinio Orlando for Malta, Marleen de Pater-van der Meer for the Netherlands and Christine McCafferty for the United Kingdom joined the network of contact parliamentarians, which comprises today 50 members.

For further information on the activities carried out by the contact parliamentarians and the national parliaments, see [www.coe.int/stopviolence/assembly](http://www.coe.int/stopviolence/assembly).

## The "Handbook for parliamentarians" now available in Albanian and Slovenian

Albania and Slovenia joined the countries which undertook to translate the "Handbook for parliamentarians" and thus raise the parliamentary awareness at national level. This reflects the commitment shown by the parliaments of these two countries in the Council of Europe Campaign. The handbook is now available in eight languages and on the Campaign website. National parliaments are invited to prepare new linguistic versions of the Handbook.

### Contact

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## Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women

### Council of Europe Campaign "Stop domestic violence against women" (2006-2008)

*PACE Action Newsletter No. 5 – January 2008*



### With the PACE, men get involved to combat domestic violence

Men, especially male MPs, who account for some 80% of Europe's parliamentarians, have a crucial role to play in efforts to combat domestic violence against women, rectify imbalances in power relationships and bring about changes in mentalities.

On 25 November 2007, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the PACE launched a new pan-European activity entitled "Men Get Involved to Combat Domestic Violence". The PACE Standing Committee adopted a declaration on the subject in Bratislava on 23 November 2007.

Since November, several parliaments have responded favourably to this initiative.

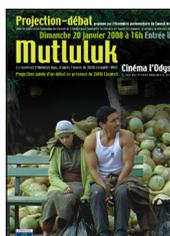
- ▶ In Albania, Austria and Portugal, petitions on the key role of male parliamentarians have been launched.
- ▶ Exhibitions have been staged in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Romania.
- ▶ Members of parliament in France, Moldova and Poland organised cultural events.
- ▶ In Albania, Bulgaria, Ireland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, meetings have been held with civil society organisations.
- ▶ In "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", a public hearing has been held.



Groups of male parliamentarians committed to combating domestic violence have already been set up in the Albanian, Andorran, Portuguese and Swedish Parliaments.

Discussions will continue on 4 March 2008 in Brussels (see page 3) and in the PACE, where Mr Mendes Bota (Portugal, EPP/CD) and several of his colleagues have tabled a motion for a resolution entitled "Involving men to achieve gender equality". More information on the campaign site at [www.coe.int/stopviolence/assembly](http://www.coe.int/stopviolence/assembly).

## Screening and debate of the film *Mutluluk*



Further to the hearing on domestic violence organised by the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Istanbul on 6 December 2007, the PACE proposed the screening of the film *Mutluluk* (Bliss) from Abdullah Oguz (Turkey, 2007) on 20 January 2008 at the Odyssee Cinema in Strasbourg. This screening was followed by a debate in the presence notably of Zülfü Livaneli, artist and author of the work and former PACE member and Gülsün Bilgehan, Chairperson of the PACE Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

The film *Mutluluk*, supported by the Council of Europe Eurimages Fund, received many awards, including the 2007 Odyssee-Council of Europe Award for Human Rights.

## Regional parliamentary seminars fostered co-operation between national parliaments



(In picture, left to right: Carmen Quintanilla, contact parliamentarian for Spain (Strasbourg, 05/10/2007); Sinikka Hurskainen, Chairperson of the Finnish delegation to the PACE (Helsinki, 10/10/2007); Barbara Prammer, Speaker of the Austrian Nationalrat (Vienna, 16/10/2007); Jean-Guy Branger, contact parliamentarian for France (Paris, 28/11/2007); Younal Loutfi, Chairperson of the Bulgarian delegation to the PACE (Sofia, 29/11/2007))

Contact parliamentarians met in the regional groupings set up by the PACE to develop the pooling of experience at parliamentary level and promote work on legislation. These meetings focused on analysing legislative deficiencies and the national parliaments' needs with a view to determining lines of work and improving national legislation.

These meetings brought together a total of more than one hundred participants, including 48 MPs, vice-ministers, experts and representatives of ministries and NGOs.

### Parliamentary Round Table in Slovakia

On the occasion of the accession of Slovakia to the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the PACE and the National Council of the Slovak Republic organised a round table on "Combating domestic violence against women: men get involved" in Bratislava on 22 November 2007, in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic and the Council of Europe Information Office in Bratislava. Gülsün Bilgehan (Turkey), Chairperson of the PACE Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Sinikka Hurskainen, Chairperson of the Finnish delegation to the PACE, and Martin Kuruc, contact MP for Slovakia took part in this exchange of views. The round table gathered members of the Slovak Parliament, representatives of ministries and NGOs.



## Tangible results all over Europe

Interview with Gülsün Bilgehan, Chairperson of the PACE Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men from January 2007 to January 2008 and contact parliamentarian for Turkey from November 2006 to January 2008.

### ► What has been the campaign's greatest success?

The campaign's greatest success has been to dispel taboos and get people talking openly about violence against women including domestic violence in the Council of Europe's 47 member countries. Assaults on women are affronts to human dignity.

Women are victims of silence, indifference and negligence. The campaign shows that breaking the silence is beneficial. Member states have a duty to prevent, prosecute and punish these offences but also to protect the victims. This is now something more than just an act of good will; it is a firm commitment on the part of states.

### ► What has the campaign achieved that you are most proud of? What do you see as its most noteworthy effects?

We have come a long way since the campaign launch in 2006. I was proud to see our posters all over Europe, to watch the TV advertisements translated into various languages, to inaugurate our photo exhibition in several capital cities, to attend parliamentary hearings and to meet members of NGOs.

In Turkey, awareness-raising among the general public has continued with the help of the media, which has been trying to alert people to the major legislative and judicial measures that have been adopted and the existing arrangements for assisting victims. Journalists are beginning to word things differently; for instance, the customary headline "Woman beaten" has now become "Man beats wife". Training for police officers, soldiers and health professionals continues, and municipalities are being encouraged to set up shelters for victims. I look forward to the conclusions of our campaign but the most important thing now is to ensure that the laws that are planned are actually put into practice.

### ► What will you remember about the campaign?

Our work will not be finished in June 2008. The seven key measures adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly are the minimum that need to be established for violence against women to be eradicated. There is a major structural problem with our societies, which derives from the fact that men exercise disproportionate power over women. It is vital therefore for political will to be shown and for men to be involved in the fight in order for domestic violence to be stamped out and for the necessary conditions for change to be created. Human rights violations must never be justified on the grounds of customs and traditions which have become archaic. This campaign will leave its mark on the Council of Europe's activities. I wish the new Chairperson of the Committee good heart and every success.

### The Campaign in the European Quarter of Brussels

The College of Europe's Madariaga European Foundation will devote l'Europe des Mardis, its debating forum, to the PACE pan-European initiative "Men get involved to combat domestic violence" on 4 March 2008, in the context of International Women's Day (12.30 p.m. to 2 p.m., Venue: Foundation Madariaga, Rue Royale 87 – Brussels, <http://www.madariaga.org>). Open to all.