Joint statement by the PACE general rapporteurs on children (Ms Rupprecht) and combating violence against women (Mr Mendes Bota)

1st International Day of the Girl Child:
Members of parliament of all countries, let us join forces to combat sexual violence against girls

The general rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly welcome the designation by the United Nations of the International Day of the Girl Child on 11 October of each year with effect from 2012.

On this occasion, they draw attention to the discrimination and violence, including sexual violence, of which many young girls around the world are victims. Sexual violence is one of the worst forms of violence. Its victims often take refuge in silence because not only are they afraid, they are also engulfed by a sense of shame and guilt. All too frequently, the perpetrators go unpunished.

Too many girls around the world continue to suffer from violence in various forms – harassment, female genital mutilation, incest, trafficking, forced marriage and others – without any real support.

The general rapporteurs call on members of parliament of the Council of Europe member states to co-operate with all public authorities and non-governmental organisations, in Europe and throughout the world, to enable girls to live free from violence and to facilitate the reporting of the horrors they suffer, so as to ensure effective prevention of the violation of their fundamental rights and to prosecute the perpetrators.

They urge the countries of Europe and beyond to accede to and implement the Council of Europe conventions on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Lanzarote Convention) and on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), the two most comprehensive legally binding international instruments in this field.

They call on members of parliament to take action and make a resolute commitment to the fight for equality and defending the rights of girls.

Let us join forces to ensure that discrimination and sexual violence against girls become a thing of the past.

Link to www.assembly.coe.int/oneinfive
Link to www.assembly.coe.int/stopviolence