

# PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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## **Recommendation 1681 (2004)<sup>1</sup> Campaign to combat domestic violence against women in Europe**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly is extremely concerned about the extent and escalation of domestic violence against women and notes that this serious problem extends to all Council of Europe member states.

2. The acute nature of this problem must force Council of Europe member states to regard domestic violence as a national political priority and to deal with it in a broader political framework, with government, parliament and civil society involvement. Member states have an obligation under international law to act with due diligence to take effective steps to end violence against women, including domestic violence, and to protect its victims/survivors. If they do not themselves want to be held responsible, states must take effective measures to prevent and punish such acts by individuals and to protect the victims/survivors.

3. In Recommendation 1582 (2002) on domestic violence against women, the Assembly proposed various measures to combat such violence. It advocated that acts of domestic violence be made a criminal offence, that victims be afforded better judicial, psychological and financial protection and that a European year against domestic violence be held to ensure that such violence is no longer a taboo subject.

4. The Assembly notes that, when states conduct national awareness-raising campaigns and adopt appropriate legislative, judicial and financial measures, progress is achieved in the fight against domestic violence, for victims are better informed of their rights and members of the public are more aware of the seriousness of the problem. Hence it can but regret the failure of the Committee of Ministers, in its reply to Recommendation 1582 (2002), to take action on the call for a European campaign to be launched against domestic violence.

5. It remains convinced that the organisation of a pan-European campaign against domestic violence will encourage member states to take the urgent measures which are needed. Such a campaign, which could be conducted in close co-operation with the European Commission, the European Parliament and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), should centre on three main lines: prevention, assistance for victims and the provision of information to the public.

6. The Assembly welcomes the various current initiatives in several national parliaments and declares that it is ready to take the necessary measures to contribute to their success. It also resolves to engage itself in the organisation

and implementation of a pan-European campaign against domestic violence in 2006.

7. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

i. deal with the issue of domestic violence at the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe;

ii. undertake to conduct a pan-European campaign against domestic violence in 2006, in co-operation with European and national players such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, associations and NGOs;

iii. set up at the Council of Europe an ad hoc group with the following tasks:

a. to define and harmonise the various parameters for this pan-European campaign;

b. to set up follow-up machinery to evaluate states' progress;

c. to establish instruments for quantifying developments in domestic violence at pan-European level;

d. to draw up proposals for action for each member state, at national level, by:

– running a national awareness-raising campaign at the level of ministries and the general public, in close co-operation with national parliaments, local players, associations and NGOs;

– stepping up protection and victim assistance measures, *inter alia*, offering victims emergency assistance in the legal, medical, psychological and financial spheres, and providing appropriate training to the police and members of the justice system, and support to NGOs working with victims of domestic violence;

– adopting criminal penalties for the perpetrators of acts of domestic violence, including marital rape, and provide for psychological support to prevent reoffending;

– drawing on the good practice of other member states, such as Austria, where the federal law of 1997, *inter alia*, allows the police to prohibit the perpetrator of an act of violence from entering the family home and automatically provides protection and support for victims;

– developing instruments for measuring, in quantitative and qualitative terms, developments in such violence and the effectiveness of measures to prevent and combat it;

– reporting regularly to international human rights bodies on developments in domestic violence against women and measures taken to prevent and combat it.

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1. *Assembly debate* on 8 October 2004 (32nd Sitting) (see Doc. 10273, report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Mr Branger).

*Text adopted by the Assembly* on 8 October 2004 (32nd Sitting).