

# Press Release

## Parliamentary Assembly Communication Unit

Ref: 726a06

Tel: +33 3 88 41 31 93

Fax :+33 3 90 21 41 34

pace.com@coe.int

internet: www.coe.int/press



46 members

Albania  
Andorra  
Armenia  
Austria  
Azerbaijan  
Belgium  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Georgia  
Germany  
Greece  
Hungary  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Italy  
Latvia  
Liechtenstein  
Lithuania  
Luxembourg  
Malta  
Moldova  
Monaco  
Netherlands  
Norway  
Poland  
Portugal  
Romania  
Russia  
San Marino  
Serbia  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
"The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"  
Turkey  
Ukraine  
United Kingdom

### **Domestic violence: "It is our individual and collective responsibility to break the silence and take action", says PACE President**

Strasbourg, 27.11.2006 - "Whether we are national, regional or local elected representatives or simple citizens, domestic violence against women is a problem that concerns us all. It is our individual and collective responsibility to break the silence and take action", Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) President René van der Linden said in Madrid today at the launching of the Council of Europe Campaign to combat domestic violence.

"All actors – governments, parliamentarians, local and regional authorities and representatives of the civil society need to act in unison. A full range of measures needs to be taken, including legislation, to combat domestic violence. But above all, given the scale of domestic abuse in Europe, we need to change people's attitude by making better use of the education system and by promoting good practice in the media", the President added.

"I am convinced, that the first project ever launched by the Parliamentary Assembly in this context, [[Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women](#)], will encourage parliaments to adopt laws, and take other measures that can improve women's right to live in a society that is safe and free from violence", Mr van der Linden underlined.

Parliaments, he said, "can play a vital role by adopting legislation to establish domestic violence as a serious and unacceptable assault on human dignity and a violation of human rights. Mr van der Linden called for "legislation that prosecutes and punishes the perpetrators, protects the most vulnerable individuals, even in the private sphere, and reinforce the rights of victims."

"We must ensure that our States respect the international norms and standards, in particular those deriving from the European Convention of Human Rights. As parliamentarians, we have the capacity, and the duty, to lead public opinion, raise awareness and denounce publicly and explicitly domestic violence as something that has no place in civilised societies", he concluded.

The launch ceremony also included Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and Senate President Francisco Javier Rojo García and, from the Council of Europe, Secretary General Terry Davis, Committee of Ministers Chair Fiorenzo Stolfi, President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Ian Micallef and Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg.

PACE President invited Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero to address the Assembly at a forth-coming part Session.

[Speech](#)

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 315 members from the national parliaments of the 46 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political Groups: 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).