

Press Release

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Violence against women: we broke the silence, but we have not yet stopped the screams, says Council of Europe Secretary General

Strasbourg, 10.06.2008 – Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis today warned that there is still a long way to go before Europe puts an end to violence to women. "Changing attitudes and discriminatory cultural norms takes years before results can be seen through decreasing rates of violence", he said.

Mr. Davis was opening the final conference of the Council of Europe **Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence**, being held in Strasbourg on June 10 and 11.

A Council of Europe report shows that eight out of ten of its member states have national plans to fight violence against women, although they often lack a budget line. Nine out of ten have shelters for victims, although only in half there is adequate geographical distribution and one out of four are not free of charge. Programmes for perpetrators exist only in half of the countries.

The final activity report of the campaign points out that, despite progress in law and practice, measures to protect women and punish perpetrators have had limited effect and services for victims remain "insufficient".

The report proposes:

- a new European convention to protect girls and women against violence from partners or former partners, rape, sexual harassment, genital mutilation, forced marriages and honour killings, monitored by an independent body.
- a European Special Rapporteur on violence against women to carry out country visits and push the issue up the political agenda.
- Creation of a "Violence against women watch", to collect data on murders of women and improve protection and preventive measures.
- Creation of national action plans supported by specific budgets and stricter legal measures - for example for repeat offenders-, provision of at least one free full time national helpline and shelters ensuring one place per 10.000 people.

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