

Press Release

Communication Unit of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Ref:832a08

Tel: : +33 3 90 21 49 36

Fax : +33 3 88 41 27 51

congress.com@coe.int

www.coe.int/congress



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Yavuz Mildon: « Combating violence against women begins with action at local and regional level »

Strasbourg, 25.11.2008 - "It is at the level closest to the victims that we must break the silence and take concrete measures to combat violence against women," Yavuz Mildon, President of the Congress of Local and regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, stated on the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November. "The power of local and regional elected representatives is based on their close relationship with the citizens, which is a major asset where it comes to acting rapidly and effectively at grassroots level to raise awareness among inhabitants or take appropriate protection or prevention measures," he said.

However, action at national, local and regional level must also be based on a European legal instrument. "The Congress expresses its full support for the Council of Europe's initiative to elaborate an international convention which would be a truly binding legal instrument in combating all forms of violence against women," added President Mildon.

As part of its contribution to the Council of Europe's campaign "Stop domestic violence against women", the Congress has just published, jointly with the Parliamentary Assembly, a book of photographs offering testimonies of victims, local actors, parliamentarians and local and regional elected representatives. The book, entitled "Break the silence on domestic violence", is available from the Council of Europe Publishing – <http://books.coe.int>

The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions.

It brings together 318 full and 318 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities.

President of the Congress : Yavuz Mildon (Turkey, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Regions: Ludmila Sfirloaga (Romania, SOC),

President of the Chamber of Local Authorities : Ian Micallef (Malta, EPP/CD).

Political Groups : Socialist Group (**SOC**), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (**EPP/CD**), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (**ILDG**).