

Press Release

Council of Europe Press Division

Ref: 166a08

Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 25 60 - Fax: +33 (0)3 88 41 39 11

pressunit@coe.int

internet: www.coe.int/press

47 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
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russia
San Marino
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom



Council of Europe leaders call for practical steps to fight gender violence on International Women's Day

Strasbourg, 07.03.2008 – Council of Europe leaders today called on European states and citizens to continue to fight violence against women, one of the most common human rights violations, on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Ján Kubiš, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, Lluís Maria de Puig, President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Terry Davis, Secretary General, and Halvdan Skard, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, declared:

"We are determined to end the silence and indifference which keeps so many women across Europe imprisoned in the horror of daily violence, isolation and despair. Our two-year campaign is succeeding in changing some laws and regulations, but this is not enough. We need to provide practical, effective, immediate and comprehensive assistance to the victims of violence, wherever they are and whenever they need it.

"This is why we call on all Council of Europe member states and their local and regional authorities to step up implementation of the standards to fight violence against women agreed by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in November 2007 and the measures called for by the Parliamentary Assembly in its 2004 and 2007 resolutions. These steps can make a real, positive and immediate difference to the lives of victims. This is also the objective of the Council campaign 'Stop Violence against Women', which will continue until June."

Violence against women takes place in every country in various forms and is one of the most serious violations of human rights of women. The aim of the Council of Europe **Stop Violence against Women** campaign is to make Europeans aware of gender violence and to encourage new laws and practices to stop it.

National studies show that 20% to 25% of all women have experienced physical violence at least once during their lives, and more than 10% have suffered sexual violence. Reports show that also most violent acts against women are carried out by men in the immediate social environment, most often partners and ex-partners, and that 12% to 15% of all women have been in a relationship of domestic abuse after the age of 16.

In November 2007 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms, which calls for specific standards on action against violence against women, such as :

- Legislation to prevent violence against women, protect victims and punish perpetrators, and protection against retaliation if they denounce their aggressors
- Preventive measures aimed at potential victims and potential perpetrators
- National action plans and information awareness-raising campaigns
- Services to support victims, such as women's shelters, and programmes for perpetrators
- Educational programmes and training for all professionals involved with victims

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2007\)17 of the Committee of Ministers](#)

[Assembly Resolution 1582 \(2007\)](#)

[Assembly Recommendation 1681\(2004\)](#)

[Campaign site](#)

A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 47 member states.