

Press Release

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

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Congress support for draft international convention to combat violence against women

Strasbourg, 03.03.2009 - At its plenary session on 3 March, the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities called on governments to draft a binding international legal instrument to strengthen the prevention of violence against women, including domestic violence, the protection of victims and the prosecution of those perpetrating such violence. In so doing, it expressed its full support for the initiative taken by the Council of Europe in setting up, in December 2008, an ad hoc committee, in which the Congress would be taking part, with the task of drafting a legal instrument.

"Just a few days prior to International Women's Day, the Congress has once again confirmed its solemn commitment to combating violence against women," said Ian Micallef, Congress President a.i. "The texts adopted today reflect our tangible contribution to upholding and defending women's rights".

Presenting her report at the debate on combating domestic violence against women, Sandra Barnes, the Congress rapporteur (United Kingdom, EPP/CD), said, "We, local and regional elected representatives, must be at the forefront of the fight against domestic violence. Domestic violence is a matter of concern to all of us. It is not a private but a public issue."

The Council of Europe campaign, which ran from 2006 to 2008, highlighted the crucial role played by local and regional authorities in prevention and victim support.

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 Milden (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).