

# Press Release

## Parliamentary Assembly – Communication Division

Ref: 508a10

Tel. +33 (0)3 88 41 31 93

Fax +33 (0)3 90 21 41 34

Internet: <http://assembly.coe.int>

e-mail: [pace.com@coe.int](mailto:pace.com@coe.int)



### 47 member States

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

## PACE unanimously opposed to a general ban on wearing of the *burqa*

Strasbourg, 23.06.2010 – There should be no general prohibition on wearing the *burqa* and the *niqab* or other religious clothing, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has said – though it added that legal restrictions may be justified “for security purposes, or where the public or professional functions of individuals require their religious neutrality, or that their face can be seen”.

In a resolution unanimously adopted today, the Assembly – which brings together parliamentarians from the 47 Council of Europe member states – said the veiling of women is often perceived as “a symbol of the subjugation of women to men” but a general ban would deny women “who genuinely and freely desire to do so” their right to cover their face.

However, the parliamentarians added: “No woman should be compelled to wear religious apparel by her community or family. Any act of oppression, sequestration or violence constitutes a crime that must be punished by law.” European governments should also seek to educate Muslim women on their rights, as well as their families and communities, and encourage them to take part in public and professional life.

The Assembly, approving a report on Islam, Islamism and Islamophobia prepared by Mogens Jensen (Denmark, SOC), also called on Switzerland to repeal as soon as possible its general ban on the construction of minarets, which it described as discriminatory.

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (Turkey, EDG) – Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political groups: EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); SOC (Socialist Group); EDG (European Democrat Group); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).