

Press Release

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International Women's Day

Red card to forced prostitution

Strasbourg, 07.03.2006 – With a view to tomorrow's International Women's Day, Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly President René van der Linden today urged the organisation's member states as well as the European Community to adhere to the Convention on action against trafficking in human beings. "Whilst fully supporting all current initiatives for a 'red card to forced prostitution', I hope we can avoid yellow cards for our member states for not having taken the necessary legal action to prevent trafficking in general, and forced prostitution in particular," he said.

Mr van der Linden stressed that after drugs and arms, trafficking in human beings represents the third most lucrative criminal business. Estimates of the number of victims vary from 120 000 to 500 000. "In Europe, trafficking in human beings is above all synonymous with forced prostitution. This form of modern-day slavery replaces chains by rape, psychological terror and complete dependence through the deprivation of the women's personal and civil identity. These are unbearable facts. Forced prostitution is a crime and a blatant violation of human rights," Mr van der Linden said.

"On the occasion of this year's World Cup in Germany, a strong temporary rise in the demand for sexual services is expected. This represents a considerable risk of an increase in forced prostitution," he added.

"The Council of Europe Convention on action against trafficking in human beings offers the necessary legal means to prosecute traffickers, to better protect victims, safeguard their rights and to fight trafficking. It was opened for signature on 16 May 2005, but has so far been signed by only 25 out of the 46 member states and not ratified by any member state. It is high time to take resolute action. As the organiser of the World Cup, Germany could take the lead and set an example by ratifying the Convention," René van der Linden concluded.

[Link to list of signatures and ratifications](#)

[Link to Council of Europe portal file on trafficking in human beings](#)

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 315 members from the national parliaments of the 46 member states.

President: René van der Linden (Netherlands, EPP/CD); Secretary General of the Assembly: Matteo Sorinas.

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