

Press Release

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2006 World Cup: PACE asks FIFA to join the fight against trafficking in women

Strasbourg, 12.04.2006 – The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) today expressed its concern that between 30 000 and 60 000 women might be the object of trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation at the forthcoming Football World Cup in Germany and asked FIFA to firmly condemn trafficking in women.

"In its capacity as World Cup organiser, FIFA must also assume its responsibility to condemn the exploitation of women, which sometimes, highly regrettably, accompanies the holding of sports events, and therefore to denounce any activities that threaten human rights."

Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold (Switzerland, SOC), rapporteur on the subject, regretted that "FIFA considers trafficking in human beings to be a form of collateral damage which just has to be accepted. FIFA and its President Joseph Blatter have to accept their responsibilities."

The resolution adopted recalls the existence, since May 2005, of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which sets out measures for the prevention of trafficking, the protection of victims and the prosecution of traffickers, but also points out that no member state has to date ratified it. PACE therefore urges member states to sign and ratify this Convention "as soon as possible, so that it may come into force at the earliest opportunity and have the broadest possible impact".

With the World Cup imminent, the Assembly has asked governments to implement without delay the main provisions of the Convention, such as the victim identification process and the recovery and reflection period of thirty days for their benefit. They also called for further assistance to help victims by setting up, for example, multilingual information, reception and assistance centres.

They finally called on member states to ensure that "the police treat women victims of trafficking in human beings as victims and not as illegal immigrants", and to consider "the possibility of holding responsible those who use the services provided by victims of trafficking".

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: Mateo 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).