



Council of Europe
Parliamentary Assembly

The President

Strasbourg, 29 June 2006

Re: Implementation of the Assembly Resolution 1512 on "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women" (adopted on 28 June 2006)

Dear Speaker,

I am pleased to inform you of the launch of the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, following the adoption of Resolution 1512 (2006) "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women" by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 28 June 2006.

I should like each national parliament to be closely involved in the implementation of this campaign, which will take place from November 2006 to March 2008. In particular, the Assembly encourages you to organise a parliamentary day of action to combat domestic violence against women on 24 November 2006, the date of the launch of the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign in all the Council's member states, and to adopt, on that day, a solemn declaration affirming your parliament's commitment to combating domestic violence against women.

To prepare the parliamentary dimension of the campaign effectively, I invite you to appoint a member of parliament to liaise between your parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly (see appended form). The Assembly wishes to invite the liaison MPs to a parliamentary seminar in Strasbourg on 19 October 2006 to prepare the pan-European launch of the campaign on 24 November 2006. The seminar programme will be sent to the liaison MPs as soon as possible.

I am relying on the active participation and commitment of all national parliaments to make eradicating domestic violence against women a priority activity for our assemblies.

Yours sincerely,

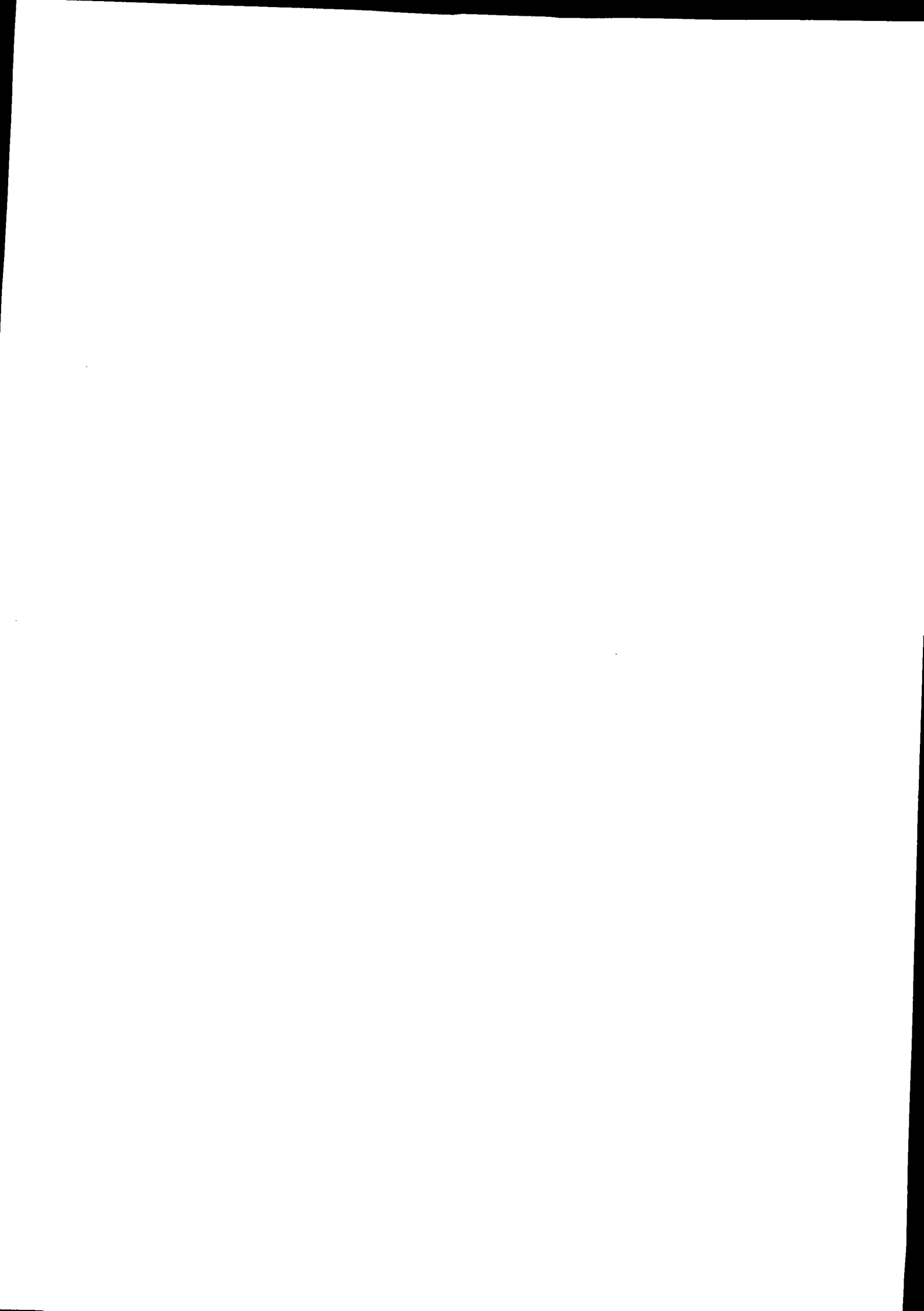
René van der Linden

Cc: Mrs Hanne SEVERINSEN, Head of the National Delegation of Denmark to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
Mrs Mette VESTERGAARD, Secretary of the National Delegation

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Provisional edition

Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women

Resolution 1512 (2006)¹

1. The Parliamentary Assembly deplores the upsurge in domestic violence against women in Europe, a problem which affects every single Council of Europe member state, resulting in serious violations of human rights. It stresses that domestic violence knows no geographical boundaries, has no age limit, is not the preserve of any particular race and occurs in every kind of family relationship and in every sort of social milieu.

2. Domestic violence is characterised by violent conduct in various forms, physical, sexual or psychological, or it may be based on financial dependence. It is one of the most widespread violations of human rights and must be combated in all Council of Europe member states. The Assembly rejects any arguments based on cultural or religious relativism, which would lead states to avoid their obligation to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

3. The Assembly welcomes the fact that the Heads of State of Government responded favourably to the Assembly's recommendations and included the organisation of a pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, in the Action Plan adopted at the Warsaw Summit (16 and 17 May 2005), and that the Committee of Ministers decided that this campaign should be launched in late 2006. The Assembly resolves to play its part in this initiative, in particular by developing the parliamentary dimension.

4. In this context, convinced of the key role that national parliaments can play in preventing domestic violence, assisting victims and informing the public at large, the Parliamentary Assembly resolves to develop, in co-operation with the national parliaments of member states, parliaments having observer status with the Assembly, the European Parliament and the Nordic Council, an initiative entitled "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women", which will constitute parliamentary contribution to the Council of Europe's campaign. The Assembly takes this opportunity of welcoming the July 2005 decision of the Mexican Congress to participate in this Parliamentary Assembly initiative.

5. Accordingly, the Assembly invites the national parliaments of Council of Europe member states and parliaments having observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly:

5.1 to organise a parliamentary day of action to combat domestic violence against women on 24 November 2006, to coincide with the launch of the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign in all member states and to make the issue of combating domestic violence against women a central theme of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in 2006 to;

5.2 adopt, on 24 November 2006, a solemn declaration affirming the national parliaments' commitment to combating domestic violence against women;

¹ *Assembly debate on 28 June 2006 (20th Sitting)* (see Doc.10934, report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Ms Cliveti). *Text adopted by the Assembly on 28 June 2006 (20th Sitting)*.

- 5.3 become actively involved in the preparation, launch and implementation of the parliamentary dimension of the pan-European campaign from 2006 to 2008 by drawing up in that framework a timetable of activities designed to combat domestic violence against women;
- 5.4 encourage members of parliaments to take an individual and public stand on combating domestic violence against women whenever they have the opportunity to do so;
- 5.5 organise public and parliamentary debates condemning domestic violence, and parliamentary hearings to examine and assess the effectiveness of legislation and other measures relating to violence within the family;
- 5.6 adopt appropriate legislative and budgetary measures and national plans to bring to an end domestic violence against women, including, where such measures do not already exist, making marital rape a punishable criminal offence in the same way as other cases of rape and providing for the removal of a violent spouse from the marital home;
- 5.7 ensure that laws and measures already adopted are applied satisfactorily, where appropriate in co-operation with the public players and non-governmental organisations active on the ground;
- 5.8 to encourage the public authorities to take the necessary action to combat domestic violence effectively and publicly, in particular, by providing refuges for the victims of domestic violence and their children, setting up domestic violence victim support facilities in police stations, training the staff concerned (in the health-care, police, justice, social and education services, etc), ensuring that complaints made by women to the police are taken seriously, setting up treatment centres for those responsible for such violence and compiling statistics, broken down by sex, type of violence and relationship between perpetrator and victim;
- 5.9 identify the obstacles to implementing the norms contained in Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec (2002) 5 to member states on protecting women against violence;
- 5.10 launch at national level a domestic violence information and prevention campaign and, with the assistance of health-service staff, a campaign to detect victims of domestic violence;
- 5.11 make every effort to make the legislative measures adopted and existing arrangements for assisting the victims of domestic violence known to the general public;
- 5.12 give special attention to groups of women who are particularly exposed to the risks and consequences of domestic violence, in particular women in and from immigrant communities, Roma women, women from other ethnic minority communities, pregnant women, disabled or vulnerable women, women in precarious situations or women confronted with alcohol or drug problems.
6. The Assembly calls on national parliaments of Council of Europe member states and parliaments having observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly to support the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, by:
- 6.1 financing specific national and European activities at intergovernmental, parliamentary, local and regional levels;
- 6.2 instructing their governments to allocate funding for initiatives at national level to combat domestic violence and to assist victims, and to include in their international co-operation programmes support for the introduction or strengthening of arrangements to combat domestic violence in Council of Europe member and observer states;
- 6.3 providing support to local NGOs combating domestic violence and ensuring that they are involved in parliamentary discussions on the drafting of legislation and regulatory measures;
- 6.4 proposing study visits to members of the Council of Europe national and observer parliaments in order to exchange good practice and/or providing technical assistance to parliaments wishing to improve their legal framework against domestic violence;
- 6.5 appointing a member of parliament to act as point of contact between the national parliaments of each member state and the Assembly and to play a leading role in promoting the implementation of the Assembly campaign at national level, ensuring that he or she is given the appropriate secretarial assistance;

6.6 encouraging local and regional authorities to implement the Council of Europe pan-European campaign at local and regional level and to organise seminars with staff members of the medical, paramedical and education sectors, members of the police, socio-professional groups working in particular with women, trade unions representatives and non-governmental organisations on the issue of domestic violence ;

6.7 encouraging the media to support the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign and drawing their attention to the fact that use of stereotypical images of women can be a factor that contributes to the trivialisation of domestic violence.

7. The Assembly welcomes the report on the "current situation in combating violence against women and for any future action" adopted on 2 February 2006 by the European Parliament and invites it to join the Parliamentary Assembly's initiative "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women" in order to condemn domestic violence as an unacceptable violation of human rights and to raise the awareness of the public authorities and the general public in the European Union of the need to combat domestic violence against women.

8. The Assembly calls on international and regional interparliamentary organisations, especially the Interparliamentary Union, the Nordic Council, the Forum of Parliaments of European Small States and the network of female members of parliament of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, to participate in the Parliamentary Assembly's initiative "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women".



Doc. 10934
19 May 2006

Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women

Report
Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
Rapporteur: Ms Minodora Cliveti, Romania, Socialist Group

Summary

The Parliamentary Assembly deplores the upsurge in domestic violence against women in Europe, a serious breach of human rights which concerns all the member states of the Council of Europe.

The Assembly, together with the national parliaments of the member states and parliaments having observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly, is invited to develop the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, agreed at the Third Summit of the Council of Europe in May 2005. In this connection, the Assembly could propose the launch of a multi-annual activity (2006-2008) entitled "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence". The report suggests a series of measures and actions which will enable national parliaments to take an active role in this campaign, including appointing a member of each parliament to act as point of contact, condemning domestic violence explicitly and publicly, adopting legislative measures and evaluating their effectiveness, and the running of awareness-raising campaigns targeting the public and socio-professional players.

The Assembly could implement this activity in co-operation with international and regional interparliamentary organisations and non-governmental organisations.

The national parliaments of the 46 member states will be invited to hold a symbolic sitting at 12 noon on 24 November 2006 in order to denounce domestic violence and show their determination to combat this scourge.

A. Draft resolution

1. The Assembly deplores the upsurge in domestic violence against women in Europe, a problem which affects every single Council of Europe member state, resulting in serious violations of human rights. It stresses that domestic violence knows no geographical boundaries, has no age limit, is not the preserve of any particular race and occurs in every kind of family relationship and in every sort of social milieu.
2. Domestic violence is characterised by violent conduct in various forms, physical, sexual or psychological, or it may be based on financial dependence. It is one of the most widespread violations of human rights and must be combated in all Council of Europe member states. The Assembly rejects any arguments based on cultural or religious relativism, which would lead states to avoid their obligation to eliminate all forms of violence against women.
3. The Assembly welcomes the fact that the Heads of State of Government responded favourably to the Assembly's recommendations and included the organisation of a pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, in the Action Plan adopted at the Warsaw Summit (16 and 17 May 2005), and that the Committee of Ministers decided that this campaign should be launched in late 2006. The Assembly resolves to play its part in this initiative, in particular by developing the parliamentary dimension.
4. In this context, convinced of the key role that national parliaments can play in preventing domestic violence, assisting victims and informing the public at large, the Parliamentary Assembly resolves to develop, in co-operation with the national parliaments of member states, parliaments having observer status with the Assembly, the European Parliament and the Nordic Council, an initiative entitled "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women", which will constitute parliamentary contribution to the Council of Europe's campaign. The Assembly takes this opportunity of welcoming the July 2005 decision of the Mexican Congress to participate in this Parliamentary Assembly initiative.
5. Accordingly, the Assembly invites the national parliaments of Council of Europe member states and parliaments having observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly:
 - 5.1. to organise a parliamentary day of action to combat domestic violence against women on 24 November 2006, to coincide with the launch of the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign in all member states and to make the issue of combating domestic violence against women a central theme of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in 2006 to;
 - 5.2. adopt, on 24 November 2006, a solemn declaration affirming the national parliaments' commitment to combating domestic violence against women;
 - 5.3. become actively involved in the preparation, launch and implementation of the parliamentary dimension of the pan-European campaign from 2006 to 2008 by drawing up in that framework a timetable of activities designed to combat domestic violence against women;
 - 5.4. encourage members of parliaments to take an individual and public stand on combating domestic violence against women whenever they have the opportunity to do so;
 - 5.5. organise public and parliamentary debates condemning domestic violence, and parliamentary hearings to examine and assess the effectiveness of legislation and other measures relating to violence within the family;
 - 5.6. adopt appropriate legislative and budgetary measures and national plans to bring to an end domestic violence against women, including, where such measures do not already exist, making marital rape a punishable criminal offence in the same way as other cases of rape and providing for the removal of a violent spouse from the marital home;
 - 5.7. ensure that laws and measures already adopted are applied satisfactorily, where appropriate in co-operation with the public players and non-governmental organisations active on the ground;
 - 5.8. to encourage the public authorities to take the necessary action to combat domestic violence effectively and publicly, in particular, by providing refuges for the victims of domestic violence and their

children, setting up domestic violence victim support facilities in police stations, training the staff concerned (in the health-care, police, justice, social and education services, etc), ensuring that complaints made by women to the police are taken seriously, setting up treatment centres for those responsible for such violence and compiling statistics, broken down by sex, type of violence and relationship between perpetrator and victim;

5.9. identify the obstacles to implementing the norms contained in Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec (2002) 5 to member states on protecting women against violence;

5.10. launch at national level a domestic violence information and prevention campaign and, with the assistance of health-service staff, a campaign to detect victims of domestic violence;

5.11. make every effort to make the legislative measures adopted and existing arrangements for assisting the victims of domestic violence known to the general public;

5.12. give special attention to groups of women who are particularly exposed to the risks and consequences of domestic violence, in particular women in and from immigrant communities, Roma women, women from other ethnic minority communities, pregnant women, disabled or vulnerable women, women in precarious situations or women confronted with alcohol or drug problems.

6. The Assembly calls on national parliaments of Council of Europe member states and parliaments having observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly to support the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, by:

6.1. financing specific national and European activities at intergovernmental, parliamentary, local and regional level;

6.2. instructing their governments to allocate funding for initiatives at national level to combat domestic violence and to assist victims, and to include in their international co-operation programmes support for the introduction or strengthening of arrangements to combat domestic violence in Council of Europe member and observer states;

6.3. providing support to local NGOs combating domestic violence and ensuring that they are involved in parliamentary discussions on the drafting of legislation and regulatory measures;

6.4. proposing study visits to members of the Council of Europe national and observer parliaments in order to exchange good practice and/or providing technical assistance to parliaments wishing to improve their legal framework against domestic violence;

6.5. appointing a member of parliament to act as point of contact between the national parliaments of each member state and the Assembly and to play a leading role in promoting the implementation of the Assembly campaign at national level, ensuring that he or she is given the appropriate secretarial assistance;

6.6. encouraging local and regional authorities to implement the Council of Europe pan-European campaign at local and regional level and to organise seminars with staff members of the medical, paramedical and education sectors, members of the police, socio-professional groups working in particular with women, trade unions representatives and non-governmental organisations on the issue of domestic violence ;

6.7. encouraging the media to support the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign and drawing their attention to the fact that use of stereotypical images of women can be a factor that contributes to the trivialisation of domestic violence.

7. The Assembly welcomes the report on the "current situation in combating violence against women and for any future action" adopted on 2 February 2006 by the European Parliament and invites it to join the Parliamentary Assembly's initiative "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women" in order to condemn domestic violence as an unacceptable violation of human rights and to raise the awareness of the public authorities and the general public in the European Union of the need to combat domestic violence against women.

8. The Assembly calls on international and regional interparliamentary organisations, especially the Interparliamentary Union, the Nordic Council, the Forum of Parliaments of European Small States and the network of female members of parliament of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, to participate in the Parliamentary Assembly's initiative "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women".

B. Draft recommendation

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution ... (2006) on "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women"
2. The Assembly welcomes the fact that the Heads of State of Government responded favourably to the Assembly's recommendations and included the organisation of a pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, in the Action Plan adopted at the Warsaw Summit (16 and 17 May 2005). It expresses its appreciation for the work accomplished by the members of the Task Force appointed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, whose expertise made it possible to prepare a draft strategy for the Council of Europe campaign to be submitted to the Committee of Ministers.
3. The Assembly resolves to develop the parliamentary dimension of this campaign and to embark upon an initiative entitled "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women" to oversee implementation of the Council of Europe campaign in the national parliaments of member states.
4. The Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers to make the fight against domestic violence a priority activity in 2007/2008 and to ensure that the Parliamentary Assembly continues to be represented on the bodies co-ordinating the Council of Europe campaign.
5. The Assembly encourages the European Commission to support the activities proposed as part of the Council of Europe campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, in particular under the Daphne programme.
6. The Assembly encourages the Committee of Ministers to invite its steering committees to incorporate the aims of the campaign in their activities, particularly with regard to the protection of the rights of immigrant women and police handling of complaints filed by women under its "Police and human rights" programme.
7. The Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers to:
 - 7.1. allocate the necessary budgetary resources to ensure the success of this campaign, by financing specific national and European activities at intergovernmental, parliamentary, local and regional level;
 - 7.2. urge member states to:
 - 7.2.1. play their part in implementing the initiative through voluntary contributions to finance the activities proposed as part of the Council of Europe campaign, including the parliamentary dimension;
 - 7.2.2. support non-governmental organisations in their efforts to raise public awareness and offer protection to victims.
8. The Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers to step up its co-operation with the European Union in order to develop a common method for compiling statistics on violence within the family.

C. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Cliveti, Rapporteur

I. Introduction

1. In its Recommendation 1681 (2004), the Parliamentary Assembly, "convinced that the organisation of a pan-European campaign against domestic violence [would] encourage member states to take the urgent measures which [were] needed", invited the Committee of Ministers to undertake a pan-European campaign to combat domestic violence against women in 2006, in co-operation with European and national players such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)¹.

2. Responding favourably to the Parliamentary Assembly's request, in Recommendation 1693, that they "make the commitment to continue to fight against all forms of violence, including domestic violence and trafficking in human beings"², the Heads of State and Government of the member states, meeting at the Third Summit in Warsaw on 16 and 17 May 2005, stated in paragraph 9 of the Summit's Final Declaration that they were "committed to eradicating violence against women and children, including domestic violence"³.

3. Combating violence against women was expressly mentioned in the Action Plan adopted at the Third Summit, to the Assembly's great satisfaction. The Action Plan provides for the appointment of a task force and the preparation of a pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence:

"Combating violence against women

*The Council of Europe will take measures to combat violence against women, including domestic violence. It will set up a task force to evaluate progress at national level and establish instruments for quantifying developments at pan-European level with a view to drawing up proposals for action. A pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, will be prepared and conducted in close co-operation with other European and national actors, including NGOs."*⁴

4. Resolved to act quickly, the Assembly decided, during the debate under urgent procedure on the follow-up to the Third Summit in June 2005, to implement the parliamentary dimension of the campaign :

*"The Assembly welcomes the decision taken at the Third Summit for the Council of Europe to prepare and conduct a pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence. In view of the constantly rising death toll from domestic violence, the Assembly considers that this campaign should be organised in 2007 and decides to launch its campaign at that time."*⁵

5. The Assembly welcomes the decision taken in autumn 2005 by the Committee of Ministers to organise and launch a pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, as from 2006. The Committee of Ministers will adopt the blueprint of this campaign, based on the proposals made by the Task Force. The Council of Europe pan-European campaign will include an intergovernmental dimension, a local and regional dimension and a parliamentary dimension, which will be dealt with by the Parliamentary Assembly in conjunction with the national parliaments of Council of Europe member states and parliaments having observer status with the Assembly.

¹ Recommendation 1681 (2004), Campaign to combat domestic violence against women in Europe.

² Recommendation 1693 (2005), Parliamentary Assembly's contribution to the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, paragraph 18.i.h.

³ Document 10555, Warsaw Declaration, Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe.

⁴ Doc 10556, Action Plan of the Third Council of Europe Summit, Section II, paragraph 4.

⁵ Recommendation 1712 (2005), paragraph 13.

6. The Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men suggested giving thought to the preparation and launch of such a pan-European campaign and appointed me Rapporteur on 23 June 2005. I would like to express my gratitude to the Swedish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly which invited the Sub-Committee on Violence against Women to meet at the Swedish parliament in Stockholm on 30 March 2006 to prepare the launch of the parliamentary dimension of the pan-European campaign and consider, together with the campaign partners, the main thrusts of the campaign, appropriate means of action and the information strategy to be pursued.

7. The Council of Europe campaign will help to consolidate efforts to combat violence against women across the world. The Assembly wishes to point out that all Council of Europe member states have signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of discrimination against Women (1981), which was supplemented by the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993). The Assembly believes that the effective implementation of these United Nations instruments will help to combat the violence against women regularly denounced by Ms Yakin Ertürk, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. Accordingly, the Committee suggested that the Bureau of the Assembly invite Ms Ertürk to attend the debate of this report during the June 2006 part-session.

II. A parliamentary contribution to the Council of Europe campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence

8. The Committee of Ministers had already come out in favour of safeguarding women against violence when it adopted Recommendation Rec (2002) 5 to member states on the protection of women against violence, which constitutes an essential, albeit insufficiently well-known – working basis for member states. Moreover, the Committee of Ministers has undertaken, at intergovernmental level and within the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG), to continue its work on violence against women by publishing good practice reflected in member states' legislation⁶, identifying measures to deal with men responsible for domestic violence⁷, considering treatment for men responsible for domestic violence⁸ and establishing, in the near future, domestic violence indicators.

9. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe appointed on 10 November 2005 the members of the Council of Europe Task Force to Combat Violence against Women, made up of Ms Ayşe Feride Acar (Turkey), Ms Dagmar Baraniewska (Poland), Ms Helena Ewalds (Finland), Mr Manuel Lisboa (Portugal), Ms Rosa Logar (Austria) and Ms Dubravka Simonovic (Croatia), along with Ms Hilary Fisher, then Director of the Amnesty International campaign "Stop violence against women", who was recommended by the Bureau of the Assembly in a personal capacity, at our committee's instigation, and Mr Chris Green (United Kingdom), who was proposed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. The Task Force has elected Ms Simonovic and Ms Fisher to chair its meetings. The Task Force met twice during the first half of 2006 (21-23 February and 25-27 April). It was tasked, amongst other things, with identifying the broad lines of action of the Council of Europe campaign and devising an information strategy. I would like to thank and congratulate the members of the Task Force for their work and expertise representing an extremely valuable contribution to the preparation of the pan-European campaign.

10. The Parliamentary Assembly intends to contribute to the success of the Council of Europe pan-European campaign by developing the parliamentary dimension. It plans to concentrate its efforts on the issue of domestic violence against women which is on the rise again and occurs in every single Council of Europe member state. It knows no geographical boundaries, has no age limit, is not the preserve of any particular race, and occurs in every kind of family relationship and in every sort of social milieu. Domestic violence is characterised by violent conduct in various forms, physical, sexual or psychological, or it may be based on financial dependence. Domestic violence is one of the most widespread violations of human rights in the world and must be combated in all Council of Europe member states.

⁶ Document EG (2004) 2, March 2004.

⁷ Document EG-SEM-MV (2003), Proceedings of the colloquy on 25 and 26 June 2003.

⁸ Document EG-SEM-MV (2004), Proceedings of the seminar on 18 and 19 November 2004.

11. As Jean-Guy Branger (France, EPP/CD) pointed out in the report adopted by the Assembly in 2004,⁹ while some men are the victims of violence perpetrated by their wife or partner, the figures remain very small - although the problem is worth mentioning. It can moreover be underlined that domestic violence thrives in a context where violence within society, and hence within families, is trivialised on television or the internet. It is important to make the media aware of the potential impact of violent images, particularly on young people, and of the trivialisation of domestic violence to which they may lead.

12. The Parliamentary Assembly's discussions have highlighted the role of parliaments in combating domestic violence. The Assembly action will be designed to encourage national parliaments to become involved in the campaign, and to contribute to the success of their initiatives, in close co-operation with non-governmental organisations, which play a key role in identifying victims and determining what assistance they can be offered. The parliamentary contribution to the campaign could be based on three main approaches: prevention, assistance for victims and information for the general public.

III. Implementation of the Assembly initiative "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women"

13. The Assembly initiative "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women" will be based on action by national parliaments and international, European and regional initiatives proposed by the Assembly.

14. The Assembly encourages national parliaments to become actively involved in the fight against domestic violence against women. National parliaments have a key role to play in promoting prevention and assistance to victims, informing the general public and helping nurture European awareness of the need to condemn domestic violence as a serious violation of human rights and a matter which cannot be justified or excused on any cultural or religious grounds. The Assembly therefore calls on national parliaments to play an active role in condemning domestic violence and to adopt appropriate measures to combat this violation of human rights. Only a clearly stated political commitment, transcending any political differences, will make domestic violence socially unacceptable and bring about a change in mentalities.

15. In liaison with the national delegations to the Parliamentary Assembly, the initiative will involve the national parliaments of the 46 member states and parliaments enjoying observer status (Canada, Israel, Mexico). The Assembly will also be developing close co-operation with the European Parliament and the regional parliamentary networks (Nordic Council, the Gender Task Force of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, the Forum of Parliaments of European Small States, etc) and with the main European NGOs active in the fight against domestic violence (Amnesty International, Women Against Violence in Europe, the White Ribbon network, etc).

i. Pan-European parliamentary day of action to combat domestic violence against women, 24 November 2006

16. In order to support the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign, scheduled for 24 and 25 November in Strasbourg, the Parliamentary Assembly will be launching its own initiative "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women" at the Spanish parliament on 24 November 2006. The two events could be video-linked to highlight the pan-European dimension of the launching of the Council of Europe campaign.

17. At the same time, the Assembly will ask national parliaments in session on that date to organise a simultaneous day of action to combat domestic violence which could take the form of a solemn declaration by members of parliament focusing on "stopping domestic violence against women". Parliaments will be encouraged to organise a symbolic event at mid-day Strasbourg time, to display the commitment of European members of parliament to combating domestic violence against women, making this issue a central theme of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in 2006.

⁹ Document 10273

ii. *Action by the parliaments of Council of Europe member states in 2007/2008*

18. National parliaments will be asked in 2007 to develop activities to put the fight against domestic violence on their agenda, to take a political stance against domestic violence, to come up with proposals during the campaign for activities targeting the general public and to embark on the drafting of legislation with the aim of identifying the main obstacles to combating domestic violence, the legal shortcomings and possible solutions. The Council of Europe campaign will be a starting point for long-term action seeking to change mentalities.

19. The activities suggested by the Assembly include organising public and parliamentary debates condemning domestic violence; parliamentary hearings to examine and assess the effectiveness of legislation and other measures relating to violence within the family; adopting a solemn declaration affirming the national parliament's commitment to combating domestic violence; adopting appropriate legislative and financial measures and national plans to bring an end to domestic violence against women and, where such measures do not already exist, making marital rape a punishable criminal offence, in the same way as other cases of rape, and providing for the removal of a violent spouse from the marital home; setting up refuges for victims of domestic violence and their children, training the staff concerned (in the health, police, justice, social and education services, etc), setting up treatment centres for those responsible for domestic violence, and compiling statistics, broken down by sex, type of violence and relationship between perpetrator and victim.

iii. *Networking national parliaments*

20. The Parliamentary Assembly will support and oversee the networking of initiatives taken by national parliaments in order to identify best parliamentary practices in Europe and make it easier for such practices to be exchanged between parliaments. To this end, it will invite all Council of Europe member states and states having observer status with the Assembly, to appoint a member of parliament to act as contact and liaison officer between the national parliaments of each member state and the Assembly and play a leading role in promoting the implementation of the Assembly campaign at national level. This member of parliament should be helped in his or her efforts by a contact person, appointed by the parliament in question, responsible more particularly for providing secretarial support and for the media and administrative follow-up of the activities proposed. The rapporteur also encourages the national parliaments to set up an ad hoc committee responsible for implementing the Assembly campaign within their parliament. Alternatively, parliaments could decide to appoint a team of MPs from different political groups, who could propose activities and support the contact MP in liaising with the Parliamentary Assembly and the national parliaments of Council of Europe member states.

21. In order to assist the efforts of national parliaments, the Parliamentary Assembly will provide a logo, poster and information booklet that can be downloaded, translated by national parliaments into the local language(s) and disseminated in the country. The Assembly will provide a handbook of best practices for members of parliament and will give its patronage to national and regional initiatives taken by national parliaments.

22. The Parliamentary Assembly will hold two parliamentary co-ordination sessions with the members of parliament appointed as liaison officers (the first could be held in September/October 2006), will keep the chairs and secretaries of national delegations informed in the margins of the Assembly sessions in Strasbourg, will offer to run two regional parliamentary seminars, a pan-European conference and a closing conference in 2008. The Committee would like to thank at this point those national delegations which have already expressed their willingness to organise a parliamentary activity to combat domestic violence against women.

23. The Assembly also expresses its readiness for members of its Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to take part in the activities organised as part of the Council of Europe's pan-European campaign.

24. As domestic violence is a problem affecting all countries, the Assembly would like those parliaments having observer status to join it in its action. Accordingly, in paragraph 9 of its Resolution 1454 (2005) on the disappearance and murder of a great number of women and girls in Mexico¹⁰, the Assembly suggested that the Mexican Congress and the Congress of the State of Chihuahua

¹⁰ Parliamentary Assembly document 10551

participate in its initiative to combat domestic violence. When that report was discussed in session on 21 June 2005, the Mexican delegation expressed its interest in contributing. The Mexican Congress subsequently confirmed this position (see document AS/Ega/Inf (2005) 4). I welcome this decision and encourage the parliaments of Canada and Israel to join in the Assembly initiative.

iv. Some thoughts on possible working themes for national parliaments

25. The Assembly would like to give special attention to groups of women who are particularly exposed to the risks and consequences of domestic violence, in particular women in and from immigrant communities, Roma women, women in vulnerable positions or women confronted with alcohol or drugs problems. Such situations require the provision of special support and protection measures.

26. The Bureau of the Assembly has also instructed the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to incorporate into its campaign against domestic violence, the question of police handling of complaints filed by women¹¹. Generally speaking, the police are the first institutional contact to which the victims of domestic violence turn. However, the complaints filed by women who have suffered violence are not always handled with due diligence by the police. In certain countries, traditions and mentalities are such that certain forms of violence against women continue to be viewed as private matters. Such attitudes lead to a denial of justice and deter women from reporting the violence committed against them. Studies have shown that only 2 to 20% of women who have suffered violence file complaints, or do so only after suffering repeated aggression¹².

27. Women victims of violence within the family should be able to find at their local police station, someone to listen to them and help them, thereby ensuring that a woman who comes in to file a complaint is handled with respect, is given support and protection and is duly informed of the procedure that will be followed. It is essential to provide a victim of domestic violence with a guarantee that appropriate proceedings will be taken against those responsible for violence against women. There should be provision for proceedings and disciplinary measures to be taken against police officers whose behaviour is incompatible with respect for human rights or victim protection. Such procedures could draw on the arrangements in place in the United Kingdom in dealing with rape victims¹³ or the family violence unit in the Strasbourg police station – nonetheless unique in France – supplemented by the setting up of “specialist officers” in Paris police stations¹⁴. The Assembly believes that the Council of Europe is a particularly appropriate forum for discussing the sharing of best practices on police handling of complaints filed by women, particularly with regard to domestic violence.

IV. Involving Council of Europe bodies and outside partners in the contribution of national parliaments to the Council of Europe campaign

28. The implementation of the pan-European Campaign in the parliaments of Council of Europe member states should be conducted through bodies and at levels where it is possible to help combat domestic violence at grassroots level. This applies to local and regional authorities, which often have a very important part to play in setting up bodies that can identify and take in victims, and deserve to be involved in parliamentary debates organised in member states.

29. I should like to draw attention to the work the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Alvaro Gil Robles has done in recent years in raising awareness of the need to combat violence against women. In this connection, I am pleased to note that the issue was addressed in his latest reports on Switzerland¹⁵, Liechtenstein¹⁶ and the Russian Federation¹⁷. The Commissioner's

¹¹ Document 10669.

¹² Professor Liz Kelly, *VIP Guide, Vision Innovation and Professionalism in Policing Violence Against Women* p.13, Council of Europe, 2003.

¹³ See www.rapecrisis.org.uk

¹⁴ Amnesty International France, “Les violences faites aux femmes en France: une affaire d’État”, Index AI: EUR 21/001/2006, <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/FRAEUR210012006>.

¹⁵ See paragraph 105 of the report by Mr Alvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights, on his visit to Switzerland from 29 November to 3 December 2004, document CommDH(2005)7 of 8 June 2005.

¹⁶ See paragraphs 18 and 19 of the report by Mr Alvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights, on his visit to the Principality of Lichtenstein from 8 to 10 December 2004, document CommDH(2005)5.

recommendations are important in that they condemn continuing domestic violence and alert the authorities of the countries visited to the measures needed to combat this scourge effectively. I very much hope that Mr Thomas Hammarberg, the newly elected Commissioner for Human Rights, will continue this work and I would like to express our committee's readiness to pursue the dialogue on this issue.

30. Non-governmental organisations working to combat violence against women will be ideal partners for the purposes of relaying the 2007 campaign and ensuring that action by national parliaments is taken up by civil society. Mention should be made here of the multi-annual "Stop violence against women" campaign launched by Amnesty International in March 2004 and relayed worldwide by all the organisation's local sections¹⁸, and the establishment of a European Observatory on Violence against Women by the European Women's Lobby¹⁹.

31. The Assembly would like to co-operate with the European Parliament in combating domestic violence. The European Parliament has come out against this phenomenon on several occasions, particularly when it adopted its Resolution on "the need to establish the European Union-wide campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women"²⁰. On the basis of the report prepared by Ms Carlshamre, MEP (Sweden), it adopted, on 2 February 2006, a Resolution on the "Current situation in combating violence against women and for any future action" (2004/2220(INI)). Following its exchange of views on 9 March 2006 with Ms Záborská, Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, and the testimony of Mrs Carlshamre at the Sub-Committee's hearing in Stockholm on 30 March 2006, our committee intends to further develop co-operation with the European Parliament on this issue, which could, for example, take the form of the pooling of expertise between the two Assemblies on how to combat domestic violence, support for the initiatives taken by each of the two Assemblies and the joint organisation of a pan-European conference on the role of parliaments in combating domestic violence.

32. Since 1997, the European Commission, in the framework of its Daphne programme²¹ has been supporting transnational and multidisciplinary projects of more than 400 non-governmental organisations working in the field of combating violence against children, young people and women. Many projects have focused on the fight against domestic violence. I welcome the interest in the Council of Europe campaign expressed by the Daphne Programme Co-ordinator at our hearing in Stockholm (30 March 2006), and the willingness to think about common actions which could be developed by the European Union and the Council of Europe in the field of combating domestic violence against women. I would wish that this co-operation could lead to the implication of NGOs supported by Daphne in the Council of Europe campaign, the sharing of good practices developed by these NGOs and the co-financing of activities linked to the Council of Europe campaign.

33. In view of the excellent co-operation between our committee and the Nordic Council which included a speech by Mrs Bjartmarz, member of the Presidium of the Nordic Council, at the Sub-Committee's hearing in Stockholm on 30 March 2006, a seminar on exchanging best parliamentary practices in combating domestic violence against women could be held in 2007.

34. It seems to me that the impact of the Assembly's action could be enhanced by regional parliamentary initiatives, particularly in the context of the assistance programme the Assembly has set up for countries in the South Caucasus, or the work of the Gender Task Force of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. Domestic violence was on the agenda of the parliamentary workshop on the promotion of equality between women and men in the South Caucasus that our committee held in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 13 and 14 October 2005. This productive exchange of views provided the opportunity to benefit from the expertise of parliamentarians from countries such as Austria, which

¹⁷ See paragraphs 482 to 488 of the report by Mr Alvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights, on his visits to the Russian Federation from 15 to 30 July 2004 and from 19 to 29 September 2004, document CommDH(2005)2 of 20 April 2005.

¹⁸ <http://web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/index-eng>

¹⁹ <http://www.womenlobby.org/Document.asp?DocID=49&tod=12036>

²⁰ Report A4-0250/97 by Ms Marianne Eriksson of 16 July 1997.

²¹ http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/funding/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm

have succeeded in strengthening their legislation on violence against women. If regional activities are to be developed, however, it will be necessary to find outside funding, possibly in the form of voluntary contributions from member states, as underlined by the representative of the Gender Task Force, Mrs Hadjimitova, at the Sub-Committee's hearing in Stockholm on 30 March 2006.

35. Lastly, our committee welcomes the topic chosen by the Interparliamentary Union's Third Standing Committee (Democracy and Human Rights) in session in Nairobi, Kenya (7 to 12 May 2006), which adopted a Resolution on "How parliaments can and must promote effective ways of combating violence against women in all fields", incorporating two amendments proposed by the Parliamentary Assembly.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

36. The Assembly welcomes the fact that the Heads of State of Government responded favourably to the Assembly's recommendations and included the organisation of a pan-European campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, in the Action Plan adopted at the Warsaw Summit (16 and 17 May 2005), and that the Committee of Ministers decided that this campaign should be launched in late 2006. The Assembly should agree to play its part in this initiative, in particular by developing the parliamentary dimension.

37. The Parliamentary Assembly could show that it is prepared to organise the parliamentary dimension of this Council of Europe campaign. It could commit itself fully to this and allocate the resources needed to mobilise parliamentarians in Council of Europe member states, in close collaboration with the national delegations to the Assembly, which could ensure that a work programme is drawn up and implemented and that information on combating violence against women is disseminated in the language of each country, which I consider essential.

38. The Assembly should therefore take a decision to provide the financial and human resources needed to prepare, launch and implement the campaign entitled "Parliaments united in combating domestic violence against women" by means of activities that are also geared to the general public, in co-operation with non-governmental organisations and other external partners.

39. The Assembly should invite the national parliaments of Council of Europe member states, parliaments having observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly and regional parliamentary networks (in particular the Nordic Council and the network of female members of parliament of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe) to:

39.1. become actively involved in the preparation, launch and implementation of the pan-European campaign in 2007 by drawing up a timetable of activities designed to combat domestic violence;

39.2. involve local and regional authorities and non-governmental organisations closely in the pan-European campaign at national, regional and local level.

40. The Assembly should encourage the European Parliament to alert the authorities and the general public in the European Union countries to the need to combat domestic violence against women and invite the European Commission to support the action proposed as part of the Council of Europe campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence.

41. The Assembly should encourage Council of Europe member states to:

41.1. to play their part in implementing the initiative through voluntary contributions to finance specific national and European activities at intergovernmental, parliamentary, local and regional level;

41.2. to support non-governmental organisations in their efforts to increase public awareness and protect victims.

Reporting committee: Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

References to Committee: Doc 10555 and Doc 10556, references N° 3095 and N° 3096 of 6 June 2005 and Doc 10669, reference N° 3195 of 17 March 2006

Draft resolution and draft recommendation unanimously adopted by the Committee on 15 May 2006.

Estimated financial implications: € 150 000 in 2006, € 250 000 in 2007, € 50 000 in 2008.

Members of the Committee: Mrs Minodora **Cliveti** (Chairperson), Mrs Rosmarie **Zapfl-Helbling** (1st Vice-Chairperson), Mrs Anna **Čurdová** (2nd Vice-Chairperson), Mrs Svetlana **Smirnova** (3rd Vice-Chairperson), Ms Birgitta Ahlqvist, Ms Elmira Akhundova, Mrs Edita Angyalová, Mrs Željka Antunović, Mrs Aneliya **Atanassova**, Mr John **Austin**, Mr Oleksiy Baburin, Mr Denis Badré (alternate: :Mr Jean-Guy **Branger**), Ms Marieluise Beck, Mrs Gülsün **Bilgehan**, Mrs Marida Bolognesi, Mr Krzysztof Bosak, Mrs Mimount **Bousakla**, Mr Paul Bradford, Mrs Ingrida **Circene**, Ms Diana Çuli, Mrs Lydie **Err**, Mrs Catherine Fautrier, Mrs Maria Emelina **Fernández Soriano**, Ms Sonia Fertuzinhos (alternate: Mr José **Mendes Bota**), Mrs Margrét Frimannsdóttir, Mr Guiseppe Gaburro, Mr Piotr Gadzinowski, Mrs Alena **Gajdúšková**, Mr Pierre Goldberg, Mrs Claude Greff, Mr Attila Gruber, Mrs Carina **Hägg**, Mr Poul-Henrik Hedeboe, Mr Ilie **Ilaşcu**, Mrs Halide **Incekara**, Ms Danuta **Jazlowiecka**, Ms Verica Kalanović, Mrs Eleonora Katseli (alternate: Ms Maria **Damanaki**), Baroness Knight of Collingtree (alternate: Mr Bob **Laxton**), Mrs Angela Leahu, Mrs Minna Lintonen, Mrs Danguté **Mikutiené**, Mrs Fausta Morganti, Mr Burkhardt Müller-Sönksen, Mrs Christine Muttonen, Mrs Hermine Naghdalyan, Mr Hilmo Neimarlija, Mrs Vera Oskina, Mr Ibrahim Özal, Mr Julio Padilla, Mrs Patrizia Paoletti Tangheroni, Ms Elsa Papadimitriou, Mrs Fatma Pehlivan, Mrs Antigoni Pericleous-Papadopoulos, Mr Leo Platvoet, Mrs Majda Potrata, Mr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Mr Andrea Rigoni, Mrs Marlene Rupprecht, Mrs Rodica-Mihaela **Stănoiu**, Mrs Darinka **Stantcheva**, Ms Agnes Vadai, Mrs Ruth-Gaby **Vermot-Mangold**, Mrs Betty **Williams**, Mrs Jenny Willott (alternate: Ms Chris **McCafferty**), Mr Gert Winkelmeier, Ms Karin S. Woldseth, Mrs Gisela **Wurm**, Mr Andrej Zernovski.

N.B. The names of the members who took part in the meeting are printed in bold.

Secretaries of the Committee: Ms Kleinsorge, Ms Affholder, Ms Devaux

