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Resolution 1635 (2008)<sup>1</sup>

### **Combating violence against women: towards a Council of Europe convention**

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1. Domestic violence against women is one of the most widespread violations of human rights in Europe. Domestic violence affects all Council of Europe member states and all social classes. According to available estimates, 80 million women throughout Europe could be concerned by this scourge.
2. As underlined in its Recommendation 1847 (2008), the Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the campaign conducted by the Council of Europe from 2006 to 2008 to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, which for the first time involved all three political dimensions of the Council of Europe (parliamentary, governmental, local and regional), and associated non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Council of Europe campaign “Stop domestic violence against women” helped to create greater awareness of the phenomenon and acknowledgement of the fact that violence against women, in particular domestic violence, is an unacceptable violation of human rights.
3. The Assembly stresses the significant mobilisation and the major contribution of the national parliaments of the Council of Europe member states, and of those holding observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly, in implementing the parliamentary dimension of the campaign. For two years, some 40 national parliaments and 56 contact parliamentarians conducted more than 200 activities throughout Europe to condemn domestic violence against women, raise awareness among parliamentarians and the general public, amend the laws to better protect victims, prosecute the perpetrators of domestic violence and prevent this ill. The creation of a network of contact parliamentarians under the aegis of the Assembly constituted an innovative working method.
4. The Assembly is gratified by the co-operation developed during the campaign with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Parliament and the Nordic Council.
5. The Assembly nevertheless considers that action to combat violence against women must be intensified. The Council of Europe, as Europe’s human rights watchdog, should take a pioneering role in this regard. The Assembly intends to remain mobilised and encourage national parliaments to

keep up their efforts in this direction.

6. The Assembly therefore invites the national parliaments to:

6.1. strengthen national legislation on prevention of violence against women, in accordance with the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence;

6.2. carry on adopting, and supervising the application of, the seven landmark measures identified by the Assembly in paragraph 6.6 of Resolution 1582 (2007) and regarded as minimum standards, namely:

- making domestic violence against women, including marital rape, a criminal offence;
- regarding violence perpetrated between (former) partners as an aggravating circumstance;
- setting up sufficient numbers of safe emergency shelters;
- making provision to remove violent spouses or partners and take out protection orders against perpetrators;
- guaranteeing effective access to the courts and to protection measures for victims;
- allocating sufficient budgetary resources for the implementation of the law;
- monitoring the application of laws on violence against women passed by parliament”;

6.3. support the preparation of a Council of Europe framework convention on the severest and most widespread forms of violence against women, in co-operation with the ministries concerned;

6.4. appoint, within their national delegations to the Assembly, a contact parliamentarian responsible for keeping abreast of legislative developments in the prevention of violence against women in his or her country and reporting on this matter regularly to the Assembly;

6.5. continue the actions to raise the awareness of parliamentarians and the general public, focusing especially on men's involvement in combating violence against women, in conjunction with governmental, local and regional authorities and with NGOs;

6.6. organise on the occasion of each International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November) an action to raise awareness in parliament;

6.7. support the work of non-governmental organisations active in combating violence against women.

7. The Assembly agrees to convene the network of contact parliamentarians in 2009 in order to assess the legislative advances made and to prepare the Assembly's contribution to the drafting of a framework convention.

8. The Assembly invites the European Parliament and the Nordic Council to maintain their co-operation with the Council of Europe.

9. The Assembly invites the Inter-Parliamentary Union to consider joint actions in the context of the United Nations campaign to end violence against women and girls (2008-15).

1. *Assembly debate* on 3 October 2008 (36th Sitting) (see [Doc. 11702](#), report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: M. Mendes Bota). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 3 October 2008 (36th Sitting).