



**Resolution 1861 (2012)<sup>1</sup>**

## **Promoting the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence**

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Violence against women is a serious crime, a form of discrimination and a human rights violation which impairs or makes the enjoyment of other human rights impossible. It also makes equal opportunities for women and men impossible to achieve.
2. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210) is the most far-reaching binding instrument providing a comprehensive framework to prevent violence against women, protect its victims, prosecute the perpetrators and set up a wide range of measures to address this scourge in all its complexity.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly commends the convention for the strong political message that it conveys, namely that changes in mentality should be promoted in society, with a view to eradicating prejudices which are based on the so-called “inferiority” of women or on the stereotyped roles of women and men; that States have a responsibility to prevent, stop and sanction violence against women, whether it happens in the family or outside; and that violence against women can never be justified or excused on the basis of any cultural, historical or religious argument.
4. In addition, the Assembly praises the convention as a legal instrument setting high and progressive standards, particularly as regards its broad personal and material scope, its victim-centred approach, the obligation of criminalisation, effective investigation and prosecution of the forms of violence covered by the convention, and its strong, independent and innovative monitoring mechanism.
5. The Assembly is convinced that the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence can save and change the lives of millions of people and make a tangible contribution to improving the respect of human rights and the status of women in Europe and beyond.
6. For this to happen, however, the convention needs to be signed and ratified by a sufficient number of Council of Europe member States to enable it to enter into force; subsequently, it needs to be signed and ratified to by as many States as possible and effectively implemented.
7. While welcoming the ratification of the convention by the Turkish Parliament, which symbolically took place on the eve of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 24 November 2011, the Assembly calls on the other Council of Europe member States which have signed the convention – Albania, Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and Ukraine – to take prompt measures, if necessary relying on the advice and expertise provided by the Council of Europe, to adapt their national legislation to the convention and accelerate the ratification process.
8. The Assembly also calls on the Council of Europe member States which have not yet signed the convention to do so and rapidly proceed to ratification.

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1. Assembly debate on 26 January 2012 (8th Sitting) (see [Doc. 12810](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Mr Mendes Bota). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 January 2012 (8th Sitting).

9. It also asks the Council of Europe member States to:
  - 9.1. refrain from making reservations to the convention;
  - 9.2. apply the convention not only to women but also to other victims of domestic violence, under Article 2.2;
  - 9.3. organise awareness-raising campaigns to enhance the knowledge of the phenomenon of violence against women in society at large;
  - 9.4. support activities aimed at providing information about the convention, including ensuring its translation into national languages;
  - 9.5. make voluntary contributions in support of the work undertaken by the Council of Europe to promote the convention and facilitate its signature and ratification.
10. As regards the potential impact of the convention beyond the member States of the Council of Europe, the Assembly:
  - 10.1. encourages the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in the light of their universal outreach capacity and their commitment to the eradication of violence against women, to promote the convention as an instrument which could be acceded to also by non-Council of Europe member States, or which could inspire the strengthening of national legal frameworks;
  - 10.2. encourages other regional parliamentary assemblies to take a similar position;
  - 10.3. calls on Council of Europe observer States and the European Union to sign and ratify the convention;
  - 10.4. encourages the parliaments enjoying the status of partner for democracy to promote accession to the convention by their respective States.
11. Expressing appreciation for the work accomplished by non-governmental organisations in a wide range of activities aimed at preventing violence against women and assisting its victims, the Assembly encourages them to pursue their work to promote the signature and ratification of the convention and resolves to work in close co-operation with them.
12. The Assembly calls on the parliaments of the Council of Europe member States to:
  - 12.1. urge their governments to sign the convention;
  - 12.2. organise or promote parliamentary debates and hearings on the convention;
  - 12.3. play a proactive role in the context of the ratification process;
  - 12.4. promote and conduct activities to raise awareness about the convention among the general public, practitioners, non-governmental organisations and civil society.
13. As regards its own work, the Assembly:
  - 13.1. decides to enlarge the network of contact parliamentarians committed to combating violence against women to include also contact parliamentarians appointed by the parliaments enjoying the status of partner for democracy;
  - 13.2. welcomes the decision taken by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination to appoint a general rapporteur on violence against women, and believes that such a step will contribute to enhancing the visibility and relevance of the Assembly's work in this area.
14. Finally, the Assembly calls on the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to appoint a Council of Europe special envoy on gender equality, to continue to provide political impetus to the Council of Europe's work in this area, ensure the visibility of the Organisation at the highest political level and represent it with relevant high-level external interlocutors.