



Resolution 1852 (2011)¹

Psychological violence

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Psychological violence in the context of intimate relationships is a widespread form of violence, primarily affecting women as victims and the children who witness it, but also men, even if in fewer numbers. It can take a variety of forms: verbal abuse, threats, harassment, isolating the victim or discouraging her or him from participating in independent activities, and results in placing the victim in a position of subjugation.
2. The Parliamentary Assembly is convinced that it is of the utmost importance to combat psychological violence, not only because it is a serious form of violence which leaves deep and lasting scars on the victims, but also because, unless it is stopped, it often escalates into physical violence.
3. In recent years, a number of Council of Europe member states have introduced or strengthened legislation on violence against women and domestic violence, including provisions on psychological violence, which is sometimes defined as a crime in itself or as an aggravating factor to be taken into account in judicial proceedings.
4. The Assembly welcomes these developments, as well as the inclusion of specific provisions on psychological violence in the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CETS No. 210). It also recalls that, once the convention enters into force, the states parties may decide to apply it to all victims of domestic violence, irrespective of their gender.
5. The Assembly believes, however, that greater efforts should be made to raise public awareness of the phenomenon of psychological violence, its consequences and the solutions to prevent it. These efforts should help victims overcome their difficulties in seeking assistance and legal remedies and, in general, bring forward a positive change of mentalities in society by making it clear that violence should not be tolerated, even when it takes place in the home.
6. In addition, there is a need to further strengthen the legal framework applicable to psychological violence, in particular in those member states where it is not considered a crime, and to address the existing obstacles to the effective implementation of the relevant law, including a poor understanding on the part of law-enforcement officials of the phenomenon of psychological violence and its impact on victims.
7. Similarly, efforts should be made to improve the availability and quality of assistance measures for victims of violence, including child victims and witnesses of domestic violence, as well as of rehabilitation structures for perpetrators.
8. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on the Council of Europe member states:
 - 8.1. as regards the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, to:
 - 8.1.1. sign and ratify the convention as soon as possible, and ensure its effective implementation by all institutions concerned;

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 25 November 2011 (see [Doc. 12787](#), report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Ms Kovács; and [Doc. 12793](#), opinion of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Ms Rupprecht).

- 8.1.2. apply the convention to all victims of domestic violence (including child victims or witnesses of domestic violence), irrespective of their gender, as allowed by its Article 2, paragraph 2, on the scope of the convention;
- 8.1.3. refrain from making reservations to the convention, in particular to its Article 33 on psychological violence;
- 8.2. as regards the national legal framework and its effective implementation, to:
 - 8.2.1. consider introducing the notion of psychological violence in their criminal law;
 - 8.2.2. ensure that, in all cases, the sanctions against perpetrators of psychological violence are effective, proportional and dissuasive;
 - 8.2.3. train the police to identify psychological violence;
 - 8.2.4. provide in-depth training to judges and prosecutors on psychological violence, including its effects on the victims and their children, its manifestations, legal aspects including the issue of evidence;
 - 8.2.5. ensure that health professionals are adequately trained to identify signs of psychological violence and domestic violence;
- 8.3. as regards data collection and research, to:
 - 8.3.1. monitor the implementation of the legislation on domestic violence and/or psychological violence and regularly collect data on:
 - 8.3.1.1. the number of cases that are reported to the police;
 - 8.3.1.2. the follow-up given to such cases;
 - 8.3.1.3. the reasons why certain cases are not followed up;
 - 8.3.1.4. the outcome of judicial decisions;
 - 8.3.2. regularly carry out surveys on domestic violence among the population, with a view to collecting information on:
 - 8.3.2.1. the number of victims, broken down by gender;
 - 8.3.2.2. the type of violence (psychological or physical) and its manifestations;
 - 8.3.2.3. the presence of children in the household concerned;
 - 8.3.2.4. the estimated number of murders and suicides due to domestic violence;
- 8.4. as regards assistance to victims, to:
 - 8.4.1. set up telephone help lines and websites to provide advice on available social and legal measures, which can be accessed in total confidentiality and free of charge;
 - 8.4.2. set up assistance centres, safe houses and shelters for victims of domestic violence and their children;
 - 8.4.3. promote programmes to help victims of psychological violence and domestic violence pursue their education or vocational training or to enter, or re-enter, the labour market;
 - 8.4.4. set up schemes to provide free legal assistance and representation to victims of domestic violence, including psychological violence;
- 8.5. as regards rehabilitation for perpetrators, to:
 - 8.5.1. set up or promote the setting up of rehabilitation centres for perpetrators of domestic violence, including psychological violence, and ensure that a sufficient number of these centres can be accessed on the basis of individual requests or referrals by doctors, without the need for a court order;
 - 8.5.2. ensure that information about rehabilitation centres for perpetrators is widely publicised;

8.6. as regards awareness raising, to:

8.6.1. organise educational and prevention programmes on psychological and domestic violence for primary and secondary schools;

8.6.2. conduct nationwide awareness-raising campaigns on psychological violence that reach out to the general public.