

Sinikka Hurskainen

Dear colleagues,

As a chairman of the Finnish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I would like to open this meeting by welcoming you all to Eduskunta, the Parliament of Finland.

I myself participated last Friday to the session of the Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg, where the resolution and recommendation concerning the mid-term assessment of the Council of Europe campaign to combat violence against women was adopted. It was such a shame that this important matter gathered only 37 parliamentarians to the plenary.

According to the report many actions have been taken in different countries, but much more should be done. The Assembly invites national parliaments to reinforce their actions, for example by adopting laws against domestic violence or controlling their application.

Lot should be done also in Finland. The specific legislation would be needed. More shelters for victims should be created. The coordination should be improved.

The Finnish delegation to the PACE fully supports all the actions taken in Finland to combat domestic violence. I hope that this meeting will also bring us new ideas on how to handle this difficult phenomenon.

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I noticed last Friday, that the parliamentary Assembly also had paid attention to the fact that male MPs are not generally very committed to this campaign. This is certainly a problem in most of the countries. Therefore I am very happy that we in Finland have at least one male parliamentarian who is very committed to this combat: Jukka Gustafsson, our contact parliamentarian. It is wonderful that you accepted to take this responsibility!

In conclusion I would like to wish you a very fruitful meeting today. Unfortunately, because of the other obligations and duties, I cannot stay here the whole day, but I am waiting for conclusions of this meeting and further actions to be taken in Finland. Jukka will certainly tell you more about our plans.

I will now thank you for your attention and give the parole to Carina Hägg, the chairperson of this meeting. Var så god, Carina.