

16 July 1997

A4-0250/97

REPORT

on the need to establish a European Union wide campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women

Committee on Women's Rights

Rapporteur: Mrs Marianne Eriksson

PE 220.962/Fin.

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By letter of 9 July 1996 the Committee on Women's Rights requested authorization to draw up a report on the need to establish a European Union wide campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women.

At the sitting of 5 September 1996 the President of Parliament announced that the Conference of Presidents had authorized the Committee to report on this subject.

The Committee had appointed Mrs Eriksson rapporteur at its meeting of 2 July 1996.

At its meeting of 2 July 1996 it decided, pursuant to Rule 45(2), to include in its report the following motion for a resolution which had been referred to it:

- B4-0047/94 by Mr David Martin on the need to establish a European wide campaign for Zero Tolerance of Violence against women, referred on 27 October 1994 to the Committee on Women's Rights as the committee responsible.

It considered the draft report at its meetings of 20 March 1997, 17 April 1997 and 14 July 1997 .

At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution unanimously with 2 abstentions.

The following took part in the vote: van Dijk, chairperson; Fouque, 1st vice-chairperson; Bennasar Tous, 2nd vice-chairperson; Torres Marques, 3rd vice-chairperson; Eriksson, rapporteur; Blak (for Ahlqvist); Cars (for Larive); d'Ancona (for Crawley); García Arias (for Frutos Gama); Gröner, Grossetête; Hautala; Izquierdo Rojo (for Ghilardotti); Kestelijn-Sierens; Kokkola; Lenz (for Glase); Lulling; McNally; Ojala (Rule 138.2 for Ribeiro); Sornosa Martínez; Van Lancker; Waddington; Zimmermann.

The report was tabled on 16 July 1997.

The deadline for tabling amendments will be indicated in the draft agenda for the relevant part-session.

A.
MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

Resolution on the need to establish a European Union wide campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution by Mr Martin on the need to establish a campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women (B4-0047/94),
- having regard to the UN Convention of 1979 on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) and the UN Declaration of 1993 on the elimination of violence against women,
- having regard to the 1993 report by the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna and the platform for action of the 1995 UN Conference on Women,
- having regard to the declarations and resolutions of the 3rd European Ministerial Conference on equality between women and men of the Council of Europe and its Recommendations on violence in the family of 1985 and 1990,
- having regard to the excellent reports by the UN's Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Mrs Coomaraswamy,
- having regard to the fourth action programme for equality between women and men (1996-2000)⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 June 1986 on violence against women⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 December 1993 on pornography⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 May 1994 on abuse of women's freedom and fundamental rights⁽⁴⁾,

(1) COM(95)0381

(2) OJ C 176, 14 July 1986, pp. 73-83.

(3) OJ C 20, 24 January 1994.

(4) OJ C 205, 25 July 1994, pp. 489-492.

- having regard to its resolution of 18 January 1996 on traffic in human beings⁽⁵⁾,
 - having regard to Rule 148 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights (A4-0250/97),
- A. whereas on the basis of articles 1, 3 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, any form of violence against women which can be construed as a threat to their life, liberty or security of person or which constitutes torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is not in keeping with the Universal Declaration and therefore when Member States do not execute a proper policy preventing and incriminating violence against women, they are not complying with their international obligations under the Universal Declaration,
 - B. the Beijing UN platform for action defined violence against women as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.',
 - C. whereas violence against young and adult women carried out by men taking place within the family, at the work-place or in society includes, inter alia, ill-treatment, battering, genital and sexual mutilation, incest, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, trafficking in women and rape,
 - D. whereas violence against women is a violation of the right to life, safety, liberty, dignity and physical and mental integrity of the victim and therefore an obstacle to the development of a democratic society,
 - E. whereas violence against women in general is unquestionably linked to an unequal balance of power between the sexes in the social, economic, religious and political spheres despite national and international legislation proclaiming equality,
 - F. whereas, according to UN statistics, the vast majority of victims of human rights violations are women or children,
 - G. well aware of the fact that domestic violence against women in the Union is widespread and persistent, and that insufficient legal instruments, if any, are available at national level for women to rely on in defending themselves against abusive men,
 - H. whereas all forms of gender-based violence falling within the scope of the CEDAW definition should be considered criminal offences ,
 - I. whereas under the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, parties to the Convention are also specifically obliged to act against private persons, companies and organisations committing violence against women,

(5) OJ C 32, 5 February 1996, pp. 88-93.

- J. whereas the majority of all cases of abuse are not reported to the police, mainly due to the lack of proper legal, social and economic instruments to protect the victims, with the result that violence against women remains a largely hidden crime,
- K. whereas comparable statistics and research are not available in most Member States, either on the occurrence of violence against women in and outside the family, or on the effects of different policies in preventing violence and the economic and social costs involved,
- L. whereas the statistics that do exist show that violence is endemic in our societies and affects women on a daily basis,
- M. whereas men who use violence are of various ages and come from all types of environments, cultures and social classes,
- N. whereas men's violence against women is still surrounded by myths such as domestic violence being a private matter or the idea that women's behaviour can be to blame for men's violence against them,
- O. whereas no detailed studies have been carried out into the social costs and consequences of men's violence against women, particularly in relation to the financial cost of housing, social services, health care, police protection, legal costs and insurance costs,
- P. whereas the sexual violence to which women are subjected has extremely damaging physical and psychological consequences for them, and the establishment of organizational arrangements for providing appropriate care should be promoted,
- Q. whereas the results of a recent study done at the request of the Dutch authorities show that the total annual 'costs' of violence against women in the Netherlands alone can be put at a figure exceeding ECU 145 million,
- R. whereas replies received from the Member States indicate that the main advance made in the form of legislation on men's violence against women during the last ten-year period is that most Member States have adopted provisions concerning and outlawed sexual violence within marriage,
- S. whereas there is still a low level of awareness of the specific needs of women victims of violence among the services dealing with such women, including the police, social workers, and lawyers, legislators and other public servants and agencies,
- T. whereas victims of constant violence often fall into a state of subjection and inability to react in any way,
- U. whereas research must be developed into the bearing of pornography and prostitution on men's violence against women,
- V. whereas sexual mutilation must not be tolerated and constitutes a criminal act,

- W. whereas rape is used as a means of active warfare and is defined as a crime against humanity by the statutes of the International Ad Hoc Tribunal on War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia,
- X. whereas alcohol is a contributory factor in very many cases of violence against women,
- Y. whereas violence against women in the home and in our societies directly and indirectly affects children and can often create a cycle of violence and abuse which is perpetuated through generations,
- Z. whereas violence against women has long-lasting negative effects on children's emotional and mental health,
1. Calls on the Commission and the Member States in the UN to work towards converting the Beijing Declaration into a Convention which is binding on all signatories;
 2. Believes that gender-based violence not only reflects unequal gender power relations in our society, but also forms a formidable barrier to efforts to overcome inequality between women and men;
 3. Stresses the importance of lifting the secrecy surrounding violence in society, and particularly the taboo on discussion of violence in the family; points out that any discussion of violence against women must take place from the women's perspective and have the aim of empowering women;
 4. Urges Member States which have not already done so to make violence against women on the basis of the CEDAW definition a criminal act and to carry out a policy in line with all the obligations laid down in the Convention;
 5. Urges the Member States to introduce specific legislation outside the criminal law in the strict sense of the term, in order to protect victims of gender-based violence such as, for example in family law, simplified divorce proceedings, custody over children and financial compensation, and to introduce special laws against 'stalking';
 6. Calls on the Member States and the Commission, in their respective policies, to pay special attention to the position of migrant women as victims of gender violence;
 7. Stresses the importance of training for all those working with women victims of violence including the police, legal services, health care, housing and social services; takes the view that such training should be compulsory for judges presiding over cases of gender-based violence;
 8. Is concerned that the link between domestic violence and child protection is often overlooked, and that many women therefore find themselves exposed to continuing abuse through court orders authorizing contact between a violent partner or ex-partner and his children; points out that measures to protect children in such circumstances should also protect the non-abusing parent;

9. Urges the Commission and the Member States to investigate the link between violence against women and violence against children, and the cycle of abuse perpetuated through generations to which this may lead;
10. Recalls with concern that legal procedures in many Member States often deter women from pursuing cases against their attackers; calls on the Member States to review the administration of legal procedures and take action to remove barriers which prevent women from obtaining legal protection;
11. Points out that while sexual harassment at work very often involves abuse of power by superiors, women are also subject to harassment from colleagues and clients, and are more vulnerable to harassment when they are in precarious employment or work including travelling away from the workplace;
12. Calls on the Commission and Member States to launch programmes for schools aimed at enhancing awareness among boys and girls of the effects of gender-based violence and developing collaborative means of resolving conflicts in order to counteract attitudes and behaviour which tend inter alia to regard women's bodies as commodities and inevitably lead to violence;
13. Urges the Member States to intensify their efforts against those organizations and individuals involved in trade in women, often resulting in forced prostitution, to set up special programmes and to introduce specific measures to support those persons who are the victims of enforced sexual exploitation ;
14. Calls for the programmes planned by the Commission with the aim of combatting trafficking in women for purposes of sexual exploitation and combatting violence against women not to be confined to campaigns to provide information about and to prevent prostitution but also to include support for projects to rehabilitate victims;
15. Urges the Member States to recognize that where violence and coercion occurs in connection with prostitution and pornography legal action must be taken against the perpetrators; urges them to take proactive measures to help and support women to escape such situations;
16. Calls on Member States to work towards achieving an efficient strategy against pornography involving children, with specific reference to its availability on the Internet;
17. Welcomes initiatives in some Member States to develop, in addition to effective sanctions, programmes for perpetrators which result in men taking responsibility for their actions and calls for greater commitment from all Member States to adopt such initiatives;
18. Calls on the European Community and Member States to investigate urgently the role of alcohol abuse in violence against women;

19. Calls on the Member States immediately and actively to provide support and funding for independent services for the survivors of violence, including refuges and shelters; and to establish bodies to ensure inter-agency cooperation in supporting women and any dependent children in rebuilding their lives ;
20. Stresses the importance of reliable, 24-hour help lines free of charge or at the cost of a local telephone call as an initial source of information and support for women who feel or have felt that they are victims of violence;
21. Urges the Member States to agree on a common basis for collecting statistics on violence against women, which should include information about the woman, her attacker, the type of attack and its location, what the woman did afterwards and what action was taken by the authorities, and what the result was;
22. Recognizes however that such statistics can never represent the true levels of violence since many incidents, including psychological abuse, threats and intimidation, go completely unrecorded;
23. Calls on the Member States, in the most serious cases in which victims are unable to take action, to permit women's organizations or appropriate institutions to take legal action in defence of the victims;
24. Considers that all cases of violence against women should be systematically recorded whether these are first reported to the police, health and the social services, refuges and help lines or women's organizations, and urges the Member States to produce an annual report on the trend of violence against women based on the statistics and information collected;
25. Stresses the importance of a coordinated approach to tackle the problems of violence against women at national level and, therefore, welcomes the steps taken in some Member States to introduce a strategy among various government departments to prevent violence and deal with the consequences;
26. Recommends firmly that local initiatives should be based on a 'multi-agency' approach involving police, local authorities and bodies as well as women's organizations and NGOs;
27. Stresses the indispensable role of non-governmental organizations in combating violence against women, and urges Member States, therefore, actively to support their development and to establish an adequate financial framework for their development;
28. Calls for funds to be earmarked in the 5th Framework Research Programme for investigation into the costs of men's violence against women in terms of health care, housing, social services and the legal system and lost days at work, and in terms of the measures needed to support children who, as research illustrates, often witness and are adversely affected by such violent incidents;

29. Urges the Council of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs to adopt regulatory provisions on immigration and asylum applications to ensure:
 - that women who are threatened or persecuted on grounds of sex are admitted to the EU, taking account of the recommendations of the UNHCR;
 - that women from third countries are not deported in the event of their separating from a violent husband unless there are other grounds for doing so;
30. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to explore the options for granting different citizenship to women who have been given a new identity because of persecution by a man;
31. Calls on the Council to secure the incorporation of provisions on women's rights in agreements between the EU and third countries and to ensure that they are complied with;
32. Calls for the designation of 1999 as a European Year Against Violence Against Women;
33. Calls on the Commission to investigate the success of the campaigns already undertaken in various Member States with the aim of identifying and drawing on elements of 'best practice' for use in a Europe-wide campaign to be instigated during the proposed European Year Against Violence Against Women;
34. Calls on the Commission to propose a dedicated budget line for the European Year and Europe-wide campaign to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to allow for a high-profile campaign involving the Member States' governments, agencies, women's organizations and other NGOs;
35. Stresses that such a Europe-wide campaign should be based on 'best practice', and on the importance of women's organizations in the development of such campaigns, and the need for a flexible campaign to allow local, regional and national variations on the central theme;
36. Calls for the campaign to include high-profile positive imagery, messages and advertising which portrays women as survivors of violence rather than victims;
37. Calls for the campaign to promote the defence of survivors of abuse, the prevention of violence and the treatment of the perpetrators, using high-profile publicity to emphasize that violence against women affects all citizens of the Union, in particular children exposed to a violent domestic environment;
38. Calls for such a campaign to seek to alter attitudes in society so that zero tolerance of violence against women is achieved at individual, collective and institutional level;
39. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and governments of the Member States.

B.
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is widespread and occurs everywhere in society.. most violence happens in the home which helps to disguise the phenomenon.

Questions concerning violence against women are linked to equality between women and men, power relations between the sexes and men's view of women. We live in a patriarchal society where man and his needs are the norm and where woman and her needs are subordinated to those of men sexually, economically, socially and politically.

Aristotle already regarded woman as an imperfect being both mentally and physically and, according to him, woman was different from man, who was the perfect being. The purpose of woman's existence was to produce new men. This view of women runs through history via church fathers, philosophers, authors, politicians and other opinion-formers up to the present day and is still the predominant view - even though criticized and questioned.

A society that claims to champion human rights and work for equality must seriously tackle the widespread violence which directly and indirectly affects a majority of the population - women and children.

2. MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Sexual violence is a general concept covering rape, sexual attacks on children, mistreatment of women, sexual harassment, prostitution and pornography. Perhaps it should instead be called 'men's violence against women'. It is above all women and children, mostly girls but also boys, who are exposed to sexual violence.

The perpetrators of violence are nearly always men or older boys, although children can be subjected to violence and sexual attacks from women and older girls. Sexual violence is a breach of both physical and mental integrity.

All forms of sexual violence are surrounded by a host of myths and ideas which are more or less well enshrined in our society and, hence, in us all. One of the commonest myths is that the woman lies about what she has been subjected to. The reason for lying is supposed to be hatred and/or revenge. Another myth is that women invite rape by dressing 'provocatively', by being 'too' inebriated or by offending against male rules in some other way. A further myth is that 'only a certain type of woman' runs the risk of attack. Today, these myths have been the subject of some research which shows that they are just myths which we cherish in order to protect ourselves from realising the problems and taking action. If we are to change the conditions under which we live, we must make them visible for only then have we an opportunity to bring about change.

3. PROSTITUTION

The sex trade is one of the world's most lucrative industries. Women have become a commodity.

The sex trade harms first and foremost all the women who are exploited, but it also creates a false image that everything can be bought for money. It confirms the prejudice that sexuality is a male preserve and, hence, underpins the unequal balance of power between the sexes.

In Europe the myth is spread of the prostitute who chose prostitution herself. In-depth interviews with prostitutes show that this is, in fact, a myth. The differing views surrounding the mythical image can be exemplified by different analytical models that have been developed in the area of research into prostitution. The one approach is that individuals prostitute themselves on the basis of a rational choice and that it should be possible to eliminate the destructive element in prostitution through decriminalization and official control of the organized sex trade and by according prostitution the status of an honourable 'profession'. The other approach assumes that the freedom of choice thesis is pretty meaningless, since the position of prostitutes is governed and defined as a commodity on the sex market in terms of economic interests, dependency on pimps, etc., which are beyond the individual's power to influence, and that proactive social measures are needed to help and support women to abandon prostitution.

In the USA, surveys show that the average age of women entering into prostitution is 16. Over half of these young people had run away from home, and approximately 75% of them had been sexually abused. There is reason to suppose that the same also applies in the EU. Priority should be given to research in this area.

The sex trade has consequences not only for those directly involved, but also for society as a whole. The more widespread the sex trade is, the more male society's limited view of the relationship between the sexes and sexuality is confirmed.

4. PORNOGRAPHY

'Sandy is the cutest, prettiest little girl I ever met. I am like a father for her. Perhaps I ought to take her along to the zoo, and so on, but instead I subject her to THIS!!! All can have a go at the girl. Four masked madmen do it and two Africans and 11 guys (!) gang-bang her. Altogether, 30 men have the pleasure of the young kid, total strangers picked straight off the street. It could have been YOU ... Help yourselves! Enjoy genuine teenage sex!'

This blurb on the pornographic rental video 'Italian Lolita' illustrates very well today's easily accessible pornography which is ranked as one of the best-selling products on the world market: products where the woman is depicted in a grossly offensive and degrading way; where supposed sexual themes are combined with acts of violence and/or sadistic behaviour; where both female and male sexuality are presented in an extremely debasing and often racist way; products which are echoed in ordinary advertising captions and images in public media. Obviously, all sorts of pornography are also to be found on the Internet. Pornography reflects male power and violence where women are objects, functional articles over which the man can freely dispose, and is indeed entitled to do so.

Danish and American research shows that it has become increasingly common for rape to be committed by a group of men who not only violate the women through intercourse with her, but also insert objects, for example, bottles, chair legs, broomsticks, etc. The research also clearly shows that the inspiration for these bestial gang rapes is derived from pornographic media.

The marketing of pornography also plays on the fact that it is describing a taboo subject. 'Shameful', 'forbidden', 'dirty' and 'sinful' are the commonest terms, which shows that the fight against puritanism and double standards and for positive and wonderful eroticism is also a struggle against the porn industry's brutalized and brutalizing view of human beings.

The view of lesbian love put across by the porn industry is ultimately that the women are there for the man's needs!

Pornography in reality also despises its viewers/readers. The man is certainly presented - unlike the woman - as a subject but as a subject that is an unfeeling prey to its instincts. What pornography does is to sexualize the lack of equality by making inequality a sexually enjoyable experience. It shows women as ecstatic, happy and enraptured beings who are just waiting to be used and invaded by men. Rape is presented as a longed-for and welcome act. The violence and compulsion that go into producing 'the ecstatic smile' on photos/film are not shown to the consumer. Threats, street prostitution, abuse, pimps, brothels. Lack of freedom and denial of woman's own sexuality.

Pornography is produced, like prostitution, through enforced poverty, enforced violence, enforced drug dependency, enforced homelessness. The porn industry is part of the traffic in human beings.

There is obviously also a link between the degradation of women in pornography and their lower status in society.

There is a definite link between pornography and the debasing portrayal of women in both the general media and advertising. Such images undoubtedly reflect and influence, ideas, attitudes and power relations between men and women, but because they appear in the general media, their influence is all the more insidious.

5. DEFINITIONS OF VIOLENCE

Rape

Rape is an attack on, and the destruction of, the mental and physical frontiers of the self.

To be deprived of the right to one's own body and the possibility of defending oneself is shattering and bewildering. The experience is a major disaster in which the personal equilibrium is disrupted and a crisis results. Many female rape victims tend to compare it to an invasion.

Rape is used as a weapon in war; Pakistan and Rwanda are only two examples. Various reports show that between 20 000 and 60 000 women were raped during the war in former Yugoslavia.

The provisions of international humanitarian law cover most conceivable situations in which people are in need of protection but make no particular reference to sexual violence against women as an act of war.

In England, in particular, rape centres fulfil a major function and this should encourage similar arrangements in all EU Member States. In Sweden, a network was formed among men in 1993 which opposes men's abuse of women and children. Such initiatives should be given due attention and encouraged.

If progress has been made anywhere in the 10 years since the d'Ancona report on violence against women, it is in Member States' legislation recognising that rape in marriage is a crime. In 1986 only two Member States recognised this, but it is now the exception rather than the rule, and we must campaign to change those countries where it is still not recognised.

Domestic violence

Rape is only one aspect of domestic violence. A UN Declaration defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.". The declaration adopted by the UN on violence against women should be made a convention and, thereby, binding.

Domestic violence was regarded - and still is by many - as a private matter. It is of the utmost importance that society immediately take forceful measures to show that this is not the case.

Her own home is the most dangerous place a woman can stay. More violence takes place within the four walls of home than can be imagined. It can strike women irrespective of age, environment or social class.

Men are subjected to violence in the pub, on the street, often by strangers, other men. Naturally, women may also fall victim to this type of violence but it is rarer. In a certain sense, such violence is gender-neutral and often falls clearly into a particular category of crime. The violence women suffer in the home, from the men who they usually live with, and other sexual violence reflects the unequal balance of power between the sexes which permeates every society. Women are subjected to such violence because of their gender. Men who hit do so to wield power. Men who hit acknowledge that they control their violence by bearing in mind the person, the time, the place and whereabouts on the body they land the blow.

The main reason why a woman stays with a violent man is - paradoxically enough - fear of what he will do if she tries to leave him. According to Swedish and American surveys:

- (1) that the abuse will get worse,
- (2) the consequences for the children,
- (3) fear of being murdered.

Other reasons are fear of loneliness, her financial situation, social ostracism and fear that the perpetrator will harm others (in that order). Many battered women have returned because their men tracked them down and threatened to subject them to even more violence.

Physical abuse is often preceded by the man's systematic efforts to get the woman to 'realize' that she cannot manage without him. The abused woman ends up in a state of powerlessness.

To understand and take measures against this violence requires more than simply studying the individual and socio-psychological aspects, which is what current research does to a large extent. Instead, the focus should be on the social structures involved - women's subordination and men's dominance. On the whole, research in this area is neglected, particularly research based on women's experiences.

Nobody wants to be subjected to violence. Any person who subjects another to violence is committing a criminal act.

6. STATISTICS

Exactly how many women are killed each year as a result of battering is not known, but it is a large number. In Sweden it is estimated that one woman is killed every ten days as a result of domestic violence. There are no figures for comparing different countries.

Indeed, it is hard to know just how many cases of violence in any form go unreported. The British Crime Survey for 1995 estimates that only 1 in 5 cases of domestic violence is reported to the authorities. This is why statistics in this area can be misleading, and almost certainly understate the problem, although they are necessary to demonstrate that violence against women is endemic.

Responses from Member States to the rapporteur also show that there is currently no way of comparing statistics either across time or between countries. Different Member States at different times have used different criteria for the collection of statistics, so we have learnt that in Ireland "18 % of women had been subjected to some form of violence", 1 in 3 women in Germany "had suffered domestic violence at some time in their lives", with a similar figure from the UK; but from the Netherlands "11,4 % of women had experienced violence from a male partner in 1992", and a 1995 Portuguese survey revealed that 52 % of those questioned "had suffered violence of some kind, physical or not".

If statistics are to be useful at a European level, there needs to be a common basis for their collection in all Member States based for example on type of assault, relationship to the aggressor, where the attack took place, what action the women took, as well as information on conviction rates and measures taken against the perpetrator. Statistics also need to be updated regularly and information systematically recorded by the services or authorities concerned: the rapporteur was shocked for example that the most up to date figures received from Belgium and Finland referred to 1988. On the positive side, the Finnish government is planning a large scale survey on the subject in 1997, and the Netherlands includes violence against women in its annual survey from the Central Bureau of Statistics.

7. REFUGES/HELP LINES

Women's refuges in Sweden and other countries have been a leading force in highlighting previously unseen violence and this needs to be followed up and copied.

The rapporteur has been struck by the vastly different level of facilities available to women across the different Member States: in Germany there are over 330 shelters for women; in the Netherlands 42; in France on the other hand there are 50 across the whole of the country, which is just over one for every two departments; while in Portugal the first 2 shelters are currently being set up.

The shelters are usually local initiatives, set up by NGOs based on local needs. In Sweden and Denmark they receive national funding, but this is rare in the EU, and in the UK in particular women's NGOs have been critical of the lack of national funding and a national strategy for the setting up of shelters or refuges.

Statistics on helplines are also very variable, and the number of calls made to helplines does not necessarily reflect the level of violence in a society, since a woman is more likely to make a series of calls to relatives or friends to discuss the violence of her partner before she calls a public help line. The existence of a reliable, national or local, free helpline has been a lifesaver for thousands of women wherever they exist; but their existence is all too often dependent on the good organisation of women's NGOs acting without financial support.

8. THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Reports from Member States show that if progress has been made anywhere in the last 10 years, it is in the legislation concerning violence against women. Whether it concerns recognition of rape in marriage and domestic violence as a crime, or the availability of eviction and exclusion orders, the legal means of redress for women have expanded in most Member States. A lot more needs to be changed but legislation is only a half way house; necessary, but insufficient, as women still appear to be unwilling to pursue many cases in court.

A recent report from Ireland highlights the urgent need for improvements in court procedures, in particular long delays in a case reaching court and the treatment of women before and during the trial. Much of the trauma in bringing a prosecution concerns continued contact with the man involved: at identification parades; during the trial itself; or in cases where the violent partner is given continued access to the children, and uses this to continue his violent behaviour, the latter stressed in a 1996 report on the UK and Denmark.

Many problems stem from the attitude of judges. Male judges regularly fail to approach questions from the woman's point of view. From Austria we hear that "In a given sample of cases, men accused of rape were acquitted three times as frequently by a court with a male judge, male assessor and male prosecutor as in courts where a woman held at least one of these posts." There is a clear need for more woman judges in every Member State, but also compulsory awareness-training for all judges (male and female) taking cases involving violence against women. Unfortunately evidence from Germany and France suggests a low take-up of training offered to judges.

A 1989 report from Belgium spoke of the general low level of awareness of all services in how to respond to victims, and France is undoubtedly not the only country where "police officers do not know the new laws on prosecution and lawyers advise women against leaving the family home" ! From Greece the report from the government equality office stated: "When the police do show some interest, they usually call the husband for advice and try to patch things up by stating the risks to the children if they divorce."

Training of all services coming into contact with women who have suffered violence is vital. The rapporteur has seen a French police training document which is a very useful model for raising awareness and should be more widely used. In Finland too there have been many local projects on police agency training.

Steps have been taken in some countries to develop a coordinated inter-ministerial approach, most notably in Spain, the Netherlands, Austria and Belgium. In Belgium, for example, the Interior and Social Ministries have been liaising on common standards for reception facilities for victims of violence. In Finland, meanwhile, it is considered that progress has been made since the setting up of a specific parliamentary committee on violence.

A multi-agency approach at a local level has also proved a positive step. In the UK this has depended on local initiatives often coming from the women's NGOs; in France, however, national government circulars called for the creation of regional and departmental committees on violence involving police, housing, health and social services as well as women's NGOs. Each committee is obliged to submit an annual report on action taken.

9. DEALING WITH THE MALE PERPETRATORS

Violent men are of different ages and come from all types of environment and all social classes. Unlike women, these men establish new relationships which involve violence and thereby repeat their pattern of abuse. There is often no developed method of treating such men.

A programme focused on men has been developed in the Basque Country, and included a survey revealing just how "average" the typical man committing violence against women is. The average age was 42; there was an average 11 years of ill treatment; in marriages averaging 16 years; the violence was connected above all to low self-esteem and poor communication skills.

A project in Marseilles has looked also at men and their violence in terms of psychological dysfunction, recognising that men's violence comes often from their sense of powerlessness and is thus their way of reimposing power in the relationship. These and other programmes have looked at alternatives or additions to custodial sentencing, focussing particularly on therapeutic treatment aiming at getting men to take responsibility for their violence.

Campaigns focusing on men have had mixed results, though. In Germany the national campaign aimed to target "ordinary" men, but the "average" German man failed to realise that he too was implicated: whereas 40,000 women made calls to the helplines nationally, only 500 men did, and few men took up the offers of help or therapy. The Finnish authorities are more

positive about the outcome of their initiatives, which included a "Not to beat line" for men, to which 1000 calls a year are made, and has led to 250-300 men in the city of Espoo alone attending group therapy aimed at their taking responsibility for their acts.

Programmes aimed at men changing their behaviour are all very well, and clearly serve a useful purpose. However, if the violence endemic in our societies is to be overcome, the attitudes and behaviours that develop at a very young age need to be tackled. Schools have a vital role to play in developing positive role models for both boys and girls, for raising awareness of gender relations in society, and for encouraging non-violent means of conflict resolution.

10. REASSESSING THE COSTS OF VIOLENCE

One of the most formidable obstacles to NGOs and authorities attempting to set up support services and refuges or helplines for women is the question of the cost of providing such services. The rapporteur believes strongly that these facilities should not be seen only in terms of extra costs, but also in terms of the savings they provide to the budgets of the health services, housing, social services, the criminal justice system and in insurance costs. This point is raised by many women's NGOs and is beginning to be discussed in some national government responses, but only in Denmark has the rapporteur seen a concrete calculation of savings made, and that in one crisis centre. The Rontofte women's centre estimates that its facilities have saved the local housing authorities 13.4 DKr (1.8m ecus) in 10 years: spread over the whole of the EU, this would be a phenomenal saving to the public purse.

11. A CAMPAIGN

Society currently spends a great deal of money on other health and crime-related issues. Major road-safety campaigns, the harmful effects of alcohol etc. It is time that men's violence against women was exposed and its effects on women's health highlighted.

Many campaigns have been launched at various levels in the EU Member States. In Edinburgh, a zero-tolerance campaign against violence against women was started in 1992 with European follow-up. It is a long-term project, the main aims of which are:

- actively to stop criminal violence against women through information to the public and educating the police and other services
- to help actively by providing protection, accommodation and facilities for battered women
- to provide legal support.

The Edinburgh campaign aimed to shift the focus from changing women's behaviour to looking at men's behaviour and attitudes, and it aimed to move the whole issue up the political agenda. This was done by high profile publicity with large hoardings, press coverage, and information in public places such as libraries, bus shelters and doctor's surgeries.

The Zero-Tolerance campaign has spread across the UK now and been taken up in over 80 districts. Evaluation reports show that members of the public thought the campaigns represented "money well-spent", and had a positive impact on the image of the local authorities.

The Zero-Tolerance campaign in the UK has established a model for local campaigning adapted to local needs but based on the same criteria and priorities for action wherever it is set up.

National campaigns

The advantage of national campaigns is that they ensure a coordinated approach to tackling the issue of violence; they also involve national funding and this is where thus far the UK in particular has been significantly lacking, although in a number of other Member States national campaigns have been run, notably the German campaign already referred to in 1993, and the more recent 1996 campaign in Luxembourg: "Neen as Neen"; Finland is planning a 5-year national project on prevention of violence against women to run from 1997 - 2001, while the Helsinki municipality is proposing to extend its local campaign into making 1998 a national year of prevention of family violence. The rapporteur believes that running a visible, targeted national campaign specifically on violence against women can play a great part in raising awareness, and developing many of the specific measures already mentioned.

European level action

But what can be achieved at European level ? It would be neither desirable nor possible to harmonise Member States' legislation on violence against women, but Member States that lag behind should be urged to reform their legislation. The Commission should highlight positive progress in Member States to reinforce the work of the new observatory and information centre on violence opened by the European Women's Lobby this year.

It is important also that any initiative at European level should build on what has already been achieved at local or national level, and that any campaign should be adapted both to the national or regional cultures and to the different stage discussions on the subject have reached in each Member State.

The rapporteur would wish to see a high profile given to violence against women in the EU. This could take the form of a dedicated year like the 1996 Year of Lifelong Learning or 1997 Year against Racism and Xenophobia. Or it could take the form of a specific campaign coordinated by the European Commission, making EU funds available for publicity at European level and activities in the Member States, both nationally and locally, through a dedicated budget line.

A new budget line has been created in 1997 with 3 million ecus for measures to combat violence against children, adolescents and women. This is a welcome development, no doubt brought about by the horrific events of summer 1996 in Belgium. It is only a start, however. If a full-scale campaign to combat violence against women at European level is to get off the ground, a more substantial budget will be needed in a dedicated line referring to either the campaign or the year of no violence against women, whether this be in 1998 or 1999.

The campaign should harness the initiatives taken by NGOs and authorities in the Member States and mentioned in this report. Above all it should aim at protection and information as well as prevention, targeting both support services for women affected and awareness-raising

for society as a whole to make it quite clear: violence against women concerns each and every one of us.

ANNEX

Motion for a resolution
pursuant to Rule 45 of the Rules of Procedure
by Mr David Martin
on the need to establish a European Union wide campaign for Zero Tolerance of Violence
against women
B4-0047/94

The European Parliament,

- A. aware of the very professional and highly successful campaign on Zero Tolerance of Violence against women launched by the Edinburgh District Council,
 - B. concerned at the rise in unemployment and increase in social tension throughout the European Union,
 - C. mindful that violence against women is, unfortunately, a European-wide phenomena.
1. Urges Member State Governments to take violence against women more seriously and move it up their political agenda;
 2. Calls on the European Commission to undertake research into violence against women in the European Union and promote Edinburgh District Council's Zero Tolerance campaign on a European basis.