

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3134/09  
by Patrizia Toia (ALDE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Women's rights in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan the Member States are pledged to restore the principles of legality and effective management of public affairs. The financial commitment for the period 2002-2010 amounts to 8 billion euros. It has to be noted, however, that the commitment to safeguarding human rights, particularly women's rights, currently appears inadequate and deficient, in the face of the wave of violence against women, from members of elected assemblies to ordinary citizens.

Recently, women have been murdered, including Sitara Achakzai, a champion of the rights of the underprivileged, well-known for her struggles on behalf of women and a member of the Kandahar Provincial Council, while other women holding elected office have been the target of threats.

This murder occurred in a climate in which women's basic rights are increasingly being taken away or outlawed, as shown by the recent adoption of a law forcing women to have sexual relations with their husbands and prohibiting them from seeking work, undergoing education or having treatment without the prior consent of their spouse, in addition to the provision which, in the event of separation, awards custody of the children first to the father and then to the grandfather.

1. What specific measures has the Commission taken, or will it take, to enable the Muslim world to find expression through the voice of women, who are often the guardians of customs, dress and traditions dating back thousands of years?
2. Will the Commission intervene in the reconstruction process to promote projects involving the direct participation of women in public life and their full recognition as active members of society?
3. What is the Commission's view of the proposal which the author plans to put forward together with other Members of Parliament to promote the setting up of a network bringing together all of the most representative Muslim women to offer public support to the women of Afghanistan, including through measures targeting the country's government?