

**Question for written answer E-007063/2011
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Eva-Britt Svensson (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

On 7 April 2011, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a new Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

This Convention is unique of its kind, an international, legally-binding, comprehensive instrument to prevent violence, to protect victims and to end the impunity of perpetrators. The framework laid down in this Convention is very comprehensive. It defines and criminalises various forms of violence against women (including forced marriage, female genital mutilation, stalking, physical and psychological violence and sexual violence). And it contains rules on prevention, protection, and prosecution. The Convention was opened for signature in Istanbul on 11 May 2011.

Many of us would like to see the EU sign this Convention, using the possibility created by the Lisbon Treaty to adhere to international conventions and treaties. Many questions, however, remains to be clarified as to its scope and implementation in the EU, and what it would actually mean if the EU became a signatory to the Convention.

Would the Commission clarify the following points:

If the EU signs the above-mentioned Council of Europe Convention, will the rules laid down in the Convention become primary law of the EU?

Will the rules laid down in the Convention become directly applicable in the courts of the Member States (comparable to an EU directive)?

Where would a citizen turn for litigation purposes: to the European Court of Justice, or to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg?