



Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

Statement by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination on current threats to women's rights in Europe, 24 April 2017

We wish to express our deep concern at the growing trend in European countries and beyond to challenge the achievements made in the field of women's rights over recent decades. Sexist hate speech flourishes online and offline, sexual and reproductive rights are being questioned and violence against women remains high.

The Committee notes with regret that the provisions of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, long considered a "gold standard", are increasingly being challenged in the name of "traditional family values", weakening the protection of women against violence. The Committee reaffirms its commitment to combating all forms of violence against women and calls on parliamentarians to support the signature and ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

The Committee also reiterates its call for more equality and increased representation of women in the public sphere. While women's parliamentary representation continued to increase in Europe in 2016, most countries have yet to go beyond the so-called "critical mass" of 30 to 35% of seats in parliament being held by women. In the economic sector, women still face the glass ceiling and the gender pay gap. They are also too often the targets of stereotypes and of misogynistic and sexist attacks which aim at pushing them outside the public sphere.

We must stem this tide.

The Committee wishes to commend women's marches and other women's rights movements and reaffirms its full support for the associations and the many women who are actively defending their rights.

The Committee calls on all political leaders to make a firm commitment to respecting women's rights and to combating any backward steps that would undermine the principles of equality and non-discrimination which underpin our democratic societies.