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Press release

European and Latin American states continuously fail to eradicate the violence against and killing of women

Brussels, October 16th 2013. Femicide is the most extreme form of violence against women. Today, the European civil society networks CIFCA and Grupo Sur and the Heinrich Böll Foundation launch a campaign in the European Parliament that aims to highlight this phenomenon and to end the impunity that nourishes it.

The first step of the campaign is the production of a video counting with the participation of different members of the European Parliament and civil society representatives and citizens of both continents. The video defines the phenomenon of Femicide and its characteristics, emphasizing on the current dramatic situation. Furthermore, it highlights the crucial role of governments in Europe and in Latin America with regards to the ratification of international treaties and conventions that are aimed at protecting the rights of women.

Participants in the video “Highlighting the phenomenon of Femicides in Europe and Latin America” include Mikael Gustafsson, Member of the European United Left Party - Nordic Green Left Group, Cécile Gréboval, General Secretary of the European Women’s Lobby and Gustavo Hernández from the Network of the Latin-American Association of Development Promotion Organizations (ALOP). The launching of the campaign was attended by Raúl Romeva and Ska Keller, both Members of the European Greens/ALE Group, Marc Tarabella, Member of the Group of Socialists and Democrats, and Dagmar Schumacher, Director of the UN Women Brussels Liaison Office.

« In many countries Femicide is accepted, justified and tolerated »

The UN in its Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) recognizes the phenomenon of Femicide and calls upon governments to promote appropriate policies and to put an end to impunity. During the press conference, Dagmar Schumacher, director of the UN Women Liaison Office in Brussels, recalled that, according to a recent report by the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, the prevalence of different manifestations of gender-related killings is reaching alarming proportions.

Marc Tarabella (S&D) called upon the European countries to ratify the Istanbul Convention, the first binding instrument on preventing and combating violence against women, signed in Istanbul in 2011.

Five of the twelve countries with the highest rates of Femicide are in Latin America. In Guatemala 658 women were murdered in 2012. In Colombia, 52 women per day were victims of sexual violence in 2011, an increase since 2010 and a crime which remains in impunity. Within Europe, the rates show that in Italy alone, 137 women were murdered in 2012, more than half of them by their partners. Although the killing of women are mainly committed in the domestic sphere, the reasons and contexts in which they occur are numerous. "In Mexico for example, the drug trafficking and the fight against organized crime threaten women's safety", argued Ska Keller, member of the European Green/ALE Group.

End the impunity and take responsibilities

The ongoing increase of Femicide in most parts of Latin America and the impossibility to reduce it in Europe demonstrates the failure of States to fulfil their duties to prevent and eradicate this extreme form of violence against women.

In this context, two members of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat), Gloria Flores, Member of the Andean Parliament and Raúl Romeva i Rueda, Member of the European Parliament, have initiated the elaboration of a resolution on Femicide in Europe and Latin America.

Although it is not binding, the campaign launched today in the European Parliament promotes this resolution. It is an opportunity to create a space of coordination and debate between civil society and States in order to raise awareness and influence the political will of public policy decision makers. In particular it aims to have an impact on the representatives of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly and through them the national Governments.

This initiative is supported by other organizations such as ALOP, APRODEV, European Women's Lobby, Amnesty International and ODHACO. The video can be found on the following web pages: www.gruposur.org, www.cifca.org, www.boell.eu

ALOP - AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL - APRODEV- CIFCA - GRUPO SUR - HEINRICH BÖLL FOUNDATION - ODHACO