



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION
on violence against children, young persons and women**

and

**Proposal for a
COUNCIL DECISION**

**on a medium-term Community action programme on measures providing a
Community-wide support to Member States action relating to violence against children,
young persons and women (the DAPHNE Programme)
(2000-2004)**

(presented by the Commission)

SUMMARY

This Communication has two functions.

1. It introduces a proposal for a Council Decision adopting a programme of Community action 2000-2004 on measures relating to violence against children, young persons and women.

The five-year Community action programme builds on the DAPHNE Initiative, which, since 1997, has supported non-governmental and voluntary organizations (NGOs) throughout the European Community working in the field of violence against women and children.

NGOs play an essential role in this area, providing services that public authorities are unable or lack the competence to provide and have at their disposal significant expertise and experience in their field. They are a source of innovative and imaginative ideas and programmes.

The programme provides clear added-value at Community level through, *inter alia*, the setting-up and reinforcement of European networks, and, on the other hand, the implementation of innovatory projects, the results of which are capable of transfer throughout the Community. It complements measures already undertaken in the field of justice and home affairs.

The programme will run for five years and provide total aid of ECU 25 million for activities in two principal areas: exchange of information and cooperation (networks) at Community level and the raising of public awareness and the exchange of best practice.

The programme will be opened to the eleven applicant States with whom the accession process has been launched.

2. The Communication also makes specific proposals in the areas of violence towards children and violence towards women.

In the case of children, it proposes that Eurostat be mandated to collect and analyse at European Union level publicly available statistics on child sexual exploitation and abuse within the Member States, in order to provide a base for future understanding and action.

It also supports the involvement of Europol in the establishment, maintenance and standardization of official registers of missing children within the Member States.

In the case of women, it proposes, within the framework of the actions taken by the European Parliament and the Commission during 1999, information campaigns and awareness-raising programmes as well as the promotion of research, data collection and statistics in the field of violence against women.

CONTENTS

PART I: BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN, YOUNG PERSONS AND WOMEN

1.	INTRODUCTION	4
2.	AIM OF THIS COMMUNICATION	4
3.	VIOLENCE TOWARDS CHILDREN, YOUNG PERSONS AND WOMEN	5
4.	THE INTERNATIONAL BACKGROUND	6
5.	THE UNION'S RESPONSE	7

PART II: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DAPHNE PROGRAMME.....7

Exchange of information, coordination and cooperation	9
Raising of public awareness and exchange of best practice	10
Opening the programme to the applicant countries	10

PART III: SPECIFIC MEASURES TO REINFORCE THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST VIOLENCE10

(a) The collection and analysis at EU level of publicly available statistics on child sexual exploitation and abuse	10
(b) Official registers of missing persons in the Member States and the role of Europol	11

PART IV: MEASURES SPECIFIC TO WOMEN.....12

PART I: BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN, YOUNG PERSONS AND WOMEN

1. INTRODUCTION

Violence towards children, young persons and women is a phenomenon in our society of very long standing and constitutes a gross violation of their basic human rights. It is, regrettably, present in all societies and at all levels of society, regardless of levels of development, political stability, culture or religion. It is found both in the public and private domains. It exists worldwide, and therefore is prevalent within the countries of the European Union.

Violence against any human being without lawful cause is a serious violation of his or her human rights. The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines the right of those under eighteen to protection "from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury and abuse"¹. Following the Vienna Declaration of 1993 on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995 declares that the human rights of women and girl children include their rights to have control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence².

The issue of violence against women and children requires long-term investment and these measures must be part of a coordinated comprehensive multi-disciplinary approach to the problem, involving both public and law-enforcement bodies as well as non-governmental and voluntary organizations (NGOs).

2. AIM OF THIS COMMUNICATION

This Communication seeks at European level to reinforce the initiatives, actions and measures taken by the Member States, the Community institutions and NGOs, against violence against children, young persons and women.

- (a) Part II proposes a multiannual Community action programme (the DAPHNE Programme) which is designed to establish and reinforce networks among Community NGOs facilitating the exchange of relevant information and experiences, to promote information campaigns, to encourage pilot projects and innovative measures, to stimulate research on violence and the exchange of best practice on support children, young persons and women at risk. The Council Decision establishing the programme is based on Article 235 of the Treaty establishing the European Community. Part II serves as the Explanatory Memorandum for the Decision.

¹ Article 19.

² Chapter IV, Part C (Women and health), point 97.

- (b) Part III proposes specific measures to protect children from violence. These measures aim to promote and improve the collection and analysis of publicly available statistics on child sexual exploitation and abuse as an essential basis for present and future actions in the field, and also to make full use of the services of Europol in the search for missing children. They fall under Title VI of the Treaty on European Union.
- (c) Part IV proposes specific measures against violence towards women in the framework of events to be organized during 1999 at Community level.

3. VIOLENCE TOWARDS CHILDREN, YOUNG PERSONS AND WOMEN

Various factors increase the vulnerability of both women and children to violence: poor socio-economic conditions, status in society, the breakdown of the family and other support mechanisms, lifestyle crises such as drug or alcohol abuse, perceptions of women and children as legitimate sexual targets. This violence may include both physical and psychological ill-treatment. Available national statistics show that it is widespread and of alarming proportions.

The sexual exploitation³ and abuse⁴ of children is one particularly revolting form of violence. It includes assault, incest, rape and trafficking in children, involvement in the prostitution of children, whether as a procurer or client, the manufacture and possession of pornography involving children and its dissemination by any means, including the Internet.

Urban violence, particularly among young people, and violence in schools are all too common a feature of our society today at all levels. They occur particularly in deprived urban areas which have above-average poverty, bad housing and social conditions and a population drawn from different ethnic groups.

Although cases of sexual violence tend to attract the greatest amount of public notice and to cause the greatest revulsion, the vast majority of acts of violence against both women and children are of a non-sexual nature. Both types of violence occur most often in the domestic situation.

A frequent feature of domestic violence against women and children which deserves special attention in the legislation of the Member States is the fact that it is systematically repeated over a period of time.

Statistics and existing evidence show that women and children in certain vulnerable groups may be at a greater risk of violence. These include, in particular the physically and mentally handicapped, those in ethnic minorities, migrants, refugees, victims of racial discrimination, those in prison and those engaged in the sex-industry and in other activities which place them at risk of sexual abuse or exploitation.

³ The term "exploitation" is used to describe a situation which generally involves a third party who makes a profit either financial or in kind.

⁴ The term "abuse" is used to describe a situation which generally does not involve a third party and is often perpetrated in the home or by a person known to the child.

All acts of violence have an impact not only on the victims, but also on their families and on society as a whole. Particularly in the case of children, acts of violence directed towards them and other acts of violence occurring within the family or viewed in the media may have consequences which are likely to affect their physical, emotional and mental health. Evidence suggests that abused children are at risk of becoming abusers themselves in later life.

Since the victims of violence are often reluctant to admit the cause of their injuries, it is impossible to calculate the costs to society as a whole. A recent study⁵ carried out at the request of the Dutch authorities put at more than ECU 145 million the total annual "costs" of violence against women in the Netherlands alone. On any view, the costs throughout the European Union and, in particular, those to the public funds of the Member States, to provide the necessary medical treatment and psychological and social support resulting from violence must be substantial. Any action which serves to reduce them can only be welcomed.

4. THE INTERNATIONAL BACKGROUND

The need for concerted action throughout the world to defend human rights and to eliminate violence has long been recognized at different levels and in different ways.

At international level:

- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the Convention of 1979 on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention of 1989 on the Rights of the Child, the 1990 World Summit for Children, the Vienna Declaration of 1993 on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the 1994 Cairo World Conference on Population and Development and the platform for action of the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women the latter calling upon Governments and international organizations, in particular to "take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women"⁶ and to "eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking"⁷;
- the 1996 Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action at the first World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, representing a landmark and forming a basis for national and international action in this field today.

at European level:

- the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms recognizing the rights of all persons, including women and children, not to be "subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment" and the Final Declaration and Action Plan adopted in Strasbourg on 11 October 1997 at the second Summit of the Council of Europe;

⁵ *Economic costs of domestic violence against women*, Utrecht, Stichting Vrouwenopvang Nederland, 1997.

⁶ Objective D1.

⁷ Objective D3.

- the Baltic Sea States Summit in Riga on 22-23 January 1998 supporting and associating its Member States with European Union Joint Actions on combating trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of children.

5. THE UNION'S RESPONSE

The Union, its Member States and institutions all have essential roles to play in the fight against violence. While the principle of subsidiarity is fully recognized, there is a need to reinforce and develop Community action in this field.

The European Parliament has on many occasions⁸ underlined the need for action against violence against women and children and, to this end, has called upon the Commission to draw up and implement coordinated action programmes to combat this violence.

The Council and the Commission has taken action in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs, social policy, in particular in the area of public health, education, audio-visual services, the Internet, information policy, tourism and the Union's external relations.

The basis for Community action in the fight against the sexual abuse and exploitation of children was set out in the Aide-Mémoire of 25 September 1996 building on the Action Plan of the Stockholm World Congress.

In the case of women, the Commission supports an active and visible policy of mainstreaming and the inclusion of a gender perspective in all European policies and programmes, and for the closer integration of issues relating to violence against women within the framework of European Community policy.

In addition to the measures already planned at Union level, the Commission considers that action is called for as set out in Parts II, III and IV of the Communication.

PART II: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DAPHNE PROGRAMME

The European Parliament inserted into the 1997 budget a line (B3-4109) to cover measures for combating violence against children, young persons and women (the DAPHNE Initiative). The Commission is now bringing forward a legal instrument for the DAPHNE Programme proposing a Council Decision adopting a programme of Community action 2000-2004 on measures providing a Community-wide support to Member States action relating to violence against children, young persons and women.

In view of the multi-disciplinary character of the programme and of the number of different Community objectives involved, the achievement for which the Treaties have not provided the necessary powers, the Commission is proposing Article 235 of the Treaty establishing the European Community as the legal base for the Decision.

⁸ In particular see its following Resolutions:

- 19 September 1996 on minors who are victims of violence (OJ C 320, 28.10.1996, p. 190),
- 12 December 1996 on measures to protect minors in the European Union (OJ C 20, 20.1.1997, p. 170).
- 16 September 1997 on the need to establish a European Union-wide campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women (OJ C 304, 6.10.1997, p. 55).

The aim of the programme is to assist and encourage NGOs and voluntary organizations active in the fight against this violence. NGOs and voluntary organizations play an essential role in the fight against violence against children, young persons and women. In many cases, they provide services which public authorities are unable or lack the competence to provide. Society will benefit if the expertise and experience of NGOs and their ideas and programmes are stimulated and disseminated throughout the Community and are shared with like-minded organizations in other Member States. The Commission believes that the role of the programme is to foster this work.

The real success of the DAPHNE Initiative in 1997 lies in the potential unleashed. As such, it represents very much a beginning of cooperative European action at NGO level in the fight against violence towards women and children and, given the massive interest demonstrated by NGOs throughout the Community, it clearly meets a deeply-felt need within the voluntary sector active in the field. This need is evidenced by the fact that 428 projects requesting subventions totalling ECU 35 million were submitted. In the event, because of the funds available, the Commission was only able to support 47 projects.

The DAPHNE Programme will complement the work undertaken in the area of justice and home affairs. On 29 November 1996 the Council adopted a Joint Action establishing a multiannual programme against trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of children (the STOP Programme)⁹. This is an incentive and exchange programme for those responsible for combating trade in human beings and the sexual exploitation of children, such people being defined as public officials, for example, judges, police officers, civil servants, immigration and tax officers and social workers. As the DAPHNE Programme covers the voluntary sector, the two programmes therefore together include all the major actors involved in the fight against violence.

Moreover, the DAPHNE Programme will assist the police and the judiciary, in particular by supporting those NGO projects which deal with cases of missing children, with awareness-raising among police officers of the special needs of children, young persons and women at risk.

The actions to be proposed by NGOs under the programme will involve, on the one hand, the setting-up and reinforcing of European networks, and, on the other hand, the implementation of pilot projects of an innovatory character, the results of which are capable of transfer to other Member States and regions, thereby providing an added-value at European level.

A multiannual programme will provide a known and assured budget and the ability to support multiannual projects as well as a structured framework within which consistency and continuity in the different areas of activity can be assured and comprehensive coverage can be achieved. The Commission will, as in the past, maintain a balance in terms of funding between projects fighting violence against children and those fighting violence against women.

⁹ OJ L 322, 12.12.1996, p. 7.

The Commission, in the light of the experience of the actions in previous years, will be able to guide the programme towards those areas where particular action is needed and to help avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

On the practical level, the programme will contribute to its aim by assisting and encouraging NGOs and voluntary organizations throughout the EU:

- to work with each other and with public authorities working in the field, including the law-enforcement agencies (networking);
- to improve the quality of their actions by means of pilot projects, the exchange of best practices and the dissemination of information, *inter alia*, through seminars, conferences, publications and the Internet;
- to raise public awareness and to stimulate and exchange best practice on the support of children, young persons and women at risk.

The NGOs' actions will be implemented within two principal areas, although in many cases these areas will inevitably overlap. They are:

- the exchange of information, coordination and cooperation;
- the raising of public awareness and the exchange of best practice.

Exchange of information, coordination and cooperation

(a) *Among NGOs and voluntary organizations in the different Member States*

The experience of NGOs dealing with the problem of violence differs among Member States and depends on the level of activity. The Commission seeks to facilitate the exchange of information, coordination and cooperation in this field among NGOs by encouraging the creation and development of networks in the different Member States. NGOs would derive particular benefit from a clearing-house facility, potentially via an Internet web site, which collects, analyses and makes accessible all types of material in the field, including issues relating to missing persons.

(b) *Among NGOs and public authorities, including law-enforcement officers and social workers*

The Commission has noted the need to improve contacts between NGOs and public authorities. There is a need for closer cooperation on both sides in order to improve efficiency and the quality of service in the interests of the victims. The DAPHNE Programme will encourage such cooperation through actions aimed at, in particular:

- assisting in the training of public officials including police officers in dealing with children, young persons and women at risk;
- increasing mutual understanding of the role that NGOs can play in assisting public authorities.

Raising public awareness and the exchange of best practice

In this area of action, the Commission essentially wishes to promote pilot projects with an innovatory value which involve various partners and which will support actions capable of dissemination among other Member States. Greater understanding of the nature and extent of the problem of violence on the part of the public, and in particular on the part of children, young persons and women at risk, is vitally important.

Areas of activity where the Commission believes that action could usefully be undertaken, include:

- awareness-raising and information campaigns for the public at large and, in particular, for women and children at risk;
- research programmes in the field of violence;
- stimulation and exchange of best practice on the support of children, young persons and women at risk.

Opening the programme to the applicant countries

Violence against women and children is a serious preoccupation of many of the applicant countries. The European Council, at its meeting in Luxembourg of 12 and 13 December 1997, decided that these countries should have the opportunity to participate in Community programmes as a key feature of the enhanced pre-accession strategy. It is therefore in line with this intention, as well as constituting a practical step towards the strengthening of human rights, that the DAPHNE Programme should be opened to these countries. The opening of the programme to the applicant countries will be provided for in the Commission's proposal for its legal base, by the inclusion of an Article to this effect.

The Commission is presenting a proposal for a Decision adopting a programme of Community action 2000-2004 on measures relating to violence against children, young persons and women.

PART III: SPECIFIC MEASURES TO REINFORCE THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST VIOLENCE

(a) The collection and analysis at EU level of publicly available statistics on child sexual exploitation and abuse

Accurate statistics concerning child sexual exploitation and abuse are extremely hard to obtain. Although the Member States all maintain records of criminal convictions and certain figures are available of the number of cases referred to local social services, many cases of exploitation and abuse, probably a majority, are never reported to the authorities.

The Commission considers that the fight against the sexual exploitation and abuse of children within the EU must be based on the best available information of the scale and nature of the problem. It is recognized that not all Member States have common definitions of sexual offences or even a consistent definition of "child".

At present, Eurostat does not itself collect the relevant statistics. Nevertheless, it has had considerable experience of working with the authorities of the Member States in the field of the harmonization of statistics, particularly in the area of social policies. Such harmonization in the case of the sexual exploitation and abuse of children within the Member States would be of great value in forming a proper assessment of the situation and in proposing measures to combat it.

On 19 March 1998 the Council gave a mandate to Eurostat to collect and analyse statistical data in the fields of asylum and immigration.

The Commission suggests that the Council should give a mandate to Eurostat to collect and analyse all publicly available statistics on the sexual exploitation and abuse of children within the Member States.

(b) Official registers of missing persons in the Member States and the role of Europol

Official registers of missing persons exist in some, though not all Member States. In certain Member States they are maintained at regional rather than national level. Their methods of operation are far from standardized, in particular as regards definitions and the criteria for inclusion in the registers and the compatibility and accessibility of the Member States' databases. The creation and maintenance of these registers are a matter for the Member States themselves.

On 19 March 1998, the Justice and Home Affairs Council, in implementing the Joint Action of 24 February 1997¹⁰, approved proposals concerning missing persons and unidentified corpses, proposing that national coordination points should be set up in respect of missing persons and unidentified corpses or that existing working methods should be improved. The tasks of these coordination points should be to collect, analyse and store data, exchange data with coordination points in other countries via Interpol or under the Schengen Information System (SIS) and coordinate information and training. It further proposed that the handling at national level of reports of missing persons should be improved, with priority being given to high-risk categories of missing persons, in particular to children under 13 and young persons under 18 where it is suspected that they are in the company of people who may constitute a danger to them.

In order to provide support to the Member States, the EDU and, in the future, Europol will take substantive action in the fields of information exchange, analysis and support of operations. In the view of the Commission, a request for information or the forwarding of data on missing children via the ELOs is the most efficient and fastest way to obtain relevant information from other Member States and Member States can benefit from the accuracy, relevance and absolute confidentiality of the data transfer. Access to other agencies may be obtained through the ELOs, and there would be no language barriers to delay the forwarding of information. In cases where notification to Interpol is appropriate, this procedure should not replace such notification, and the Interpol database should be used in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

¹⁰ OJ L 63, 4.3.1994, p. 2.

The Commission suggests that:

- Member States should use the facilities of Europol and in particular its Europol Liaison Officers in order:
 - to ensure fast mutual assistance in the tracing and recovery of missing children with a view, in appropriate cases, to taking action against the criminal(s) or criminal networks involved; and
 - to improve and harmonize the existing international and national registers of missing persons in the Member States, in particular with regard to definitions and criteria for inclusion in the registers and the compatibility and accessibility of the databases in and between the Member States;
- Europol's capacity to carry out detailed analysis should be used to identify and initiate the necessary decisions at the political, legal and strategic levels and in order to initiative or support international law-enforcement investigations and operations in the field of missing children;

PART IV: MEASURES SPECIFIC TO WOMEN

In response to the original request of the European Parliament¹¹ to organize a European Year against Violence towards Women in 1999, the Commission eventually agreed to organize a series of campaigns, for example conferences and exhibitions, in conjunction with the Parliament and the Presidency of the Council. Preparations for this are already on the way at the level of the UK Presidency and work will start during the Austrian Presidency. It is hoped to include events in the applicant States. These will involve the exchange of information and experience particularly on the subjects of prevention and protection and the social and professional rehabilitation of victims of violence. The specific measures proposed will include the consolidation and analysis of statistical information on violence against women in the Community. Consideration will need to be given to the needs for additional financing beyond the funds contained in the DAPHNE budget line (B3-4109). Member States will be encouraged to contribute actively by drawing up their own initiatives during the year.

For the major conference to be held during the German Presidency on International Women's Day 1999, on 8 March, a report will be prepared containing a comprehensive consolidation and analysis of publicly available statistics on violence against women in the Member States. This report will be undertaken in cooperation with national experts from all the Member States and will provide a solid platform for understanding and action in this field of violence, including domestic violence. It will bring together research and statistics in the many diverse aspects involved in the issue, for example, the types of violence - in particular domestic violence, a major preoccupation for the European Parliament and certain Member States - the extent and nature of self-inflicted injury, and the socio-economic costs of violence.

¹¹ Resolution of 16 September 1997 on the need to establish a European Union-wide campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women (OJ C 304, 6.10.1997, p. 55).

In conjunction with this statistical report, a survey (Eurobarometer) should be undertaken to enable comparison between the existing tangible data and public perception within the Member States on the issue of violence against women. By including representative social examples from all the Member States, this study would produce a more refined analytical basis for realistic future actions.

For the second major conference at the end of 1999 during the Finnish Presidency, a full report will be compiled of all actions undertaken or initiated by Member States throughout the year - for example conferences, school information activities, campaigns, pilot projects, reviews of mechanisms including legal and law enforcement measures to protect and raise awareness of women's rights.

The Commission suggests that:

- Member States should promote research, collect data and compile statistics on all forms of violence against women, in particular domestic violence, and encourage research into the effectiveness of measures implemented to prevent and to redress violence against women;
- Member States should encourage the creation and reinforcement of structures, programmes and measures, particularly within the NGO sector, aimed at increasing the knowledge and understanding of the causes, the consequences and mechanisms of violence against women;
- Member States should, in the framework of the actions taken by the European Parliament and the European Commission in 1999, organize and fund information campaigns and educational and training programmes in order to raise the awareness of men, women and children of the detrimental personal and social effects of violence on victims, in the family, the community and society.

Proposal for a
COUNCIL DECISION
on a medium-term Community action programme on measures providing a
Community-wide support to Member States action relating to violence against children,
young persons and women (the DAPHNE Programme)
(2000-2004)

SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

Article 1

The Article establishes a five-year Community action programme for the period 2000-2004 on measures for combating violence against children, young persons and women. The aim of the programme is to contribute towards the fight against this violence and, in particular, to assist and encourage NGOs and voluntary organizations active in this fight.

The proposed actions fall under two headings:

1. Networks, exchange of information, coordination and cooperation at EU level;
2. Raising of public awareness and the exchange of best practice.

Article 2

The Article requires the Commission to implement the actions in cooperation with the Member States and organizations active in the relevant field.

Article 3

The Article requires consistency and complementarity with other Community programmes and actions.

Articles 4 and 5

The Articles establish an Advisory Committee with representatives from each Member State, chaired by the Commission, and lay down its procedures.

Article 6

The Article encourages cooperation with third countries and international organizations. It also opens the programme to the applicant States.

Article 7

The Article provides for monitoring and continuous evaluation of the programme and for the Commission to report to the European Parliament and the Council during the third year of the programme and on its completion. The reports should also be sent to the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

Annex

The Annex sets out the specific objectives and actions within the programme under the three headings in Article 1.

Proposal for a
COUNCIL DECISION

on a medium-term Community action programme on measures providing a
Community-wide support to Member States action relating to violence against children,
young persons and women (the DAPHNE Programme)
(2000-2004)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 235 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission¹²,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament¹³,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee¹⁴,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions¹⁵,

1. Whereas acts of violence against children, young persons and women constitute a serious breach of their human rights and inflict serious damage to the physical and mental health of the victims of such violence and to their families, as well as involving high social and economic costs to society as a whole;
2. Whereas the European Parliament, in its Resolutions of 19 September 1996 on minors who are victims of violence¹⁶, of 12 December 1996 on measures to protect minors in the European Union¹⁷ and of 16 September 1997 on the need to establish a European Union-wide campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women¹⁸, has called upon the Commission to draw up and implement action programmes to combat such violence;
3. Whereas direct action concerning violence against women, young persons and children is in essence part of Member States' activity at national or local level;
4. Whereas, the Community can provide added value to the actions of Member States concerning the prevention of violence against women, young persons and children through the dissemination of information and experiences, the joint establishment of priorities, the development of networking as appropriate, the selection of Community-wide projects and the motivation and mobilization of all involved;

¹² OJ

¹³ OJ

¹⁴ OJ

¹⁵ OJ

¹⁶ OJ C 320, 28.10.1996, p. 190.

¹⁷ OJ C 20, 20.1.1997, p. 170.

¹⁸ OJ C 304, 6.10.1997, p. 55.

5. Whereas this programme can bring added value by identifying and stimulating good practice and policies, encouraging innovation and exchanging relevant experience;
6. Whereas, therefore, in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality as set out in Article 3b of the Treaty, the objectives of the proposed measure can be better achieved by the Community; whereas this Decision confines itself to the minimum required in order to achieve those objectives and does not go beyond what is necessary for that purpose;
7. Whereas active partnership between the Commission, the Member States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and in particular women's and children's organizations needs to be promoted in this area and synergy between all the relevant policies and measures encouraged;
8. Whereas cooperation with the international organizations competent in the field of public health and with third countries should be fostered;
9. Whereas provision should be made for opening up this programme to participation by the applicant countries in the pre-accession phase, in conformity with the conditions established in the relevant agreements, particularly the association agreements and the additional protocols to those agreements;
10. Whereas, in order to increase the value and impact of the programme, a continuous assessment of the actions undertaken should be carried out, with particular regard to their effectiveness and the achievement of the objectives set and with a view, where appropriate, to making the necessary adjustments;
11. Whereas this programme should be of five-year duration in order to allow sufficient time for actions to be implemented to achieve the objectives set;
12. Whereas for the purposes of the application of this Decision, the Commission should be assisted by an advisory committee;
13. Whereas Article 2 of the Treaty provides that one of the tasks of the Community is the promotion throughout the Community of a high level of social protection and the raising of the standard of living and quality of life;
14. Whereas under Article 3(j) and (o) of the Treaty the activities of the Community include the strengthening of social cohesion and contribution to the attainment of a high level of health protection;
15. Whereas the DAPHNE Programme will contribute to the achievement of those objectives;
16. Whereas the Treaty does not provide, for the adoption of this Decision, powers other than those under Article 235,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1
Establishment of the programme

1. This Decision establishes a medium-term Community action programme on measures relating to violence against children, young persons and women (the DAPHNE Programme), hereinafter referred to as "the programme", for the period from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2004.
2. The aim of the programme is to contribute towards protection against acts of violence towards children, young persons and women and, in particular, to assist and encourage NGOs and voluntary organizations active in this fight.
3. The actions to be implemented under the programme and their specific objectives are set out in the Annex and involve:
 - (a) the setting-up of networks, the exchange of information and coordination and cooperation at Community level;
 - (b) the raising of public awareness and the exchange of best practice;
 - (c) complementary expenditure.

Article 2
Implementation

1. The Commission shall ensure implementation, in close cooperation with the Member States, of the actions referred to in Article 1(3).
2. The Commission shall cooperate with institutions and organizations active in the fight against violence against children, young persons and women.

Article 3
Consistency and complementarity

The Commission shall ensure that there is consistency and complementarity between the Community actions to be implemented under the programme and those implemented under other relevant Community programmes and measures.

Article 4
Committee

1. For the purpose of the application of this Decision, the Commission shall be assisted by a committee of an advisory nature composed of the representatives of the Member States and chaired by the representative of the Commission.

The representative of the Commission shall submit to the Committee a draft of the measures to be taken. The Committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft, within a time-limit which the chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote.

The opinion shall be recorded in the minutes; in addition, each Member State shall have the right to ask to have its position recorded in the minutes.

The Commission shall take the utmost account of the opinion delivered by the Committee. It shall inform the Committee of the manner in which its opinion has been taken into account.

2. The Committee shall draw up its own internal rules of procedure.

Article 5 **Functions of the Committee**

1. The Committee, acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 4, shall assist the Commission in particular concerning:
 - (a) the criteria, and procedures for selecting and financing projects under the programme;
 - (b) the monitoring and evaluation procedure.
2. The representative of the Commission shall keep the Committee regularly informed about the overall state of progress of the programme.

Article 6 **International cooperation**

1. In the course of implementing the programme, cooperation with third countries and with international organizations competent in the field of public health shall be fostered.
2. The programme shall be open to participation by the associated countries of Central Europe (CEC), in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Association Agreements or Additional Protocols related thereto concerning participation in Community programmes. The programme shall be open to participation by Cyprus on the basis of additional appropriations in accordance with the same rules as those applied to the EFTA countries, in accordance with procedures to be agreed with that country.

Article 7 **Monitoring and evaluation**

1. In the implementation of this Decision, the Commission shall take the necessary measures to ensure the monitoring and continuous evaluation of the programme taking account of the general and specific objectives referred to in Article 1 and in the Annex.
2. During the third year of the programme, the Commission shall present to the European Parliament and to the Council an evaluation report.
3. The Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council a final report on completion of the programme.

4. The Commission shall incorporate into the reports referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 information on Community financing in the various fields of action and on complementarity with the other actions referred to in Article 3, as well as the results of the evaluations. It shall also send them to the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS**I. ACTIONS TO SET UP NETWORKS AND TO ASSURE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION, COORDINATION AND COOPERATION AT EUROPEAN COMMUNITY LEVEL**

Objective: to assist and encourage non-governmental organizations and voluntary organizations (NGOs) to work together with each other and with officials of public bodies including law-enforcement officers and social workers

1. Support for the establishment of networks involving NGOs from different Member States in order to facilitate the exchange of relevant information and experiences including issues relating to missing persons.
2. Encouragement of cooperation between NGOs and officials of public bodies in order to improve on both sides the level of understanding of each other's role and to exchange relevant information and experiences.

II. ACTIONS AIMED AT THE RAISING OF PUBLIC AWARENESS AND THE EXCHANGE OF BEST PRACTICE

Objective: to raise public awareness about violence against children, young persons and women including trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, commercial sexual exploitation and other sexual abuse and to encourage the exchange of best practice

3. Promotion of information campaigns and pilot projects and awareness raising activities among the general public and, in particular, among children and young persons about potential risks of violence and of ways of avoiding them.
4. Development of a Community-wide information source to assist and inform NGOs of publicly available information compiled by governmental, NGO and academic sources relevant to the fight against violence.
5. Research programmes in the field of violence.
6. Stimulation and exchange of best practice at Community level on the support of children, young persons and women at risk.

III. COMPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE

In addition, the programme will finance studies, meetings of experts, conferences and seminars, information and publications directly connected with the realization of the action of which they are an integral part.

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