Assessment of the results of the 2006-2010 Roadmap for Equality between women and men and forward looking recommendations

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The Council also took note of the Commission's report on Equality between women and men, 2010 (doc. 5056/10). This report focuses, in particular, on gender equality and employment as a way to stimulate economic recovery and growth; the reconciliation of work and private life; promoting social inclusion through gender equality; and preventing and combating gender-based violence. The report will be forwarded to the Spring European Council.

The Council also unanimously adopted a set of conclusions on the **eradication of violence against women in the EU**, following an exchange of views In adopting the conclusions, ministers called, inter alia, for:

- the promotion of the introduction of a free Europe-wide telephone number that could be used in Member States to offer information and assistance to victims;
- consideration of the possibility of standardising national legislation on combating violence against women, based on the results of a forthcoming feasibility study; and
- the establishment of a European observatory on violence against women, building on existing institutional structures, with a view to collecting high-quality statistics to support policies.

During the debate, Ministers agreed that violence against women had no place in a civilised society and must be made a thing of the past. They stressed the need of better statistics, better coordination and the exchange of good practices.

Many ministers highlighted the **importance of preventive measures**, including awareness-raising campaigns, the protection of victims, including children, and of efficient sanctions against perpetrators. Underlining the importance of consistency between the Europe's internal and external actions, many ministers also argued in favour of continuing to address the problem of violence against women in the external policies of the EU.

While underlining the diversity of situations in different Member States, ministers also recognised that they faced similar challenges, including the widespread problem of domestic violence. They stressed that issues such as human trafficking also involved a cross-border dimension. It was therefore vitally important for Member States and the Commission to work together.

Ministers also stressed the importance of addressing problems such as female genital mutilation, forced marriages and so-called honour crimes.

Eradicating gender-based violence and trafficking is one of the priorities in the **Commission's Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010).** Violence against women is also one of the critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing platform for action. The Commission also included "Dignity, Integrity and an End to Gender-Based Violence" among the principles listed in its recent "Women's Charter".