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Stronger measures to tackle violence against women

Press release from EFA MEP Jill Evans (Wales)

The European Parliament today voted in favour of ratifying the Istanbul Convention, which is the first legally binding instrument on preventing and combating violence against women and girls at international level.

The move was welcomed by Plaid Cymru MEP **Jill Evans**, a long standing campaigner for women's rights and former Vice Chair of the European Parliament's Women's Rights Committee. She has worked closely with organisations working to combat violence against women and raise awareness of the need for more government action.

The Istanbul Convention, under the auspices of the Council of Europe, establishes a comprehensive framework of legal and policy measures for preventing such violence, supporting victims and punishing perpetrators.

Recent figures show that reported domestic violence in Wales increased by at least 23% between 2013 and 2015. Estimates by the Welsh Government in 2014 show that domestic abuse affects 11% of women each year in Wales, and sexual violence affects 3.2% of women in Wales. The UK Government has announced its intention to introduce a Domestic Abuse Bill to enable ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

Jill Evans MEP said:

"Women and girls have a right to live free from violence and the threat of violence. The Istanbul Convention provides a framework to raise standards and improve protection.

"One in three women in Europe have experienced some form of violence, and 50 women are murdered in Europe each week by a partner or ex-partner.

"Whilst the EU has partially adopted the Convention, progress on full ratification has been too slow.

"Today's vote will speed things up and I urge the Estonian EU Presidency to facilitate ratification without delay. Having a legal framework at European level on tackling domestic violence will make a huge difference to the lives of so many women and girls.

"It will also send a positive message to organisations working to combat violence.

"I would also call upon the National Assembly for Wales to ratify the convention, in what would be an important symbolic move."

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Jill Evans

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