#EndVAWinEurope – EWL calls on MEPs to back ratification by the EU and Member States of legal tool to tackle violence against women

**[Brussels, 23 November 2012]** Ahead of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November), Members of the European Parliament are mobilising to have the EU ratify a ground-breaking international legal document to tackle the most prevalent human rights abuse within its borders.

Five Members of the European Parliament this week initiated a written declaration calling on the European Union to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on violence against women, agreed by the Strasbourg-based club last year. As soon as the written declaration gets the signatures of half of the MEPs, it will enter into force and be considered a strong political statement from the European Parliament. The EWL has launched a social media campaign to gather the necessary MEP signatures under the hash-tag ‘#EndVAWinEurope’.

In Europe, seven women die every day from male domestic violence and an average of 25% of women experience violence at the hands of their partner or ex-partner. One in ten women experience sexual violence yet only between four and 10% of rape cases are reported to the authorities, and far fewer end in justice for victims.

The European Women’s Lobby supports the call for the EU to back the commitment of its signatory Member States and itself ratify the Council of Europe Convention. This human rights instrument is the first European-wide convention providing a comprehensive legal framework to address many forms of violence against women. Protection, prevention and prosecution measures, as well as partnership with women’s organisations, are foreseen in the Convention. By ratifying it, the EU would send a clear signal that violence against women is not acceptable in the 21st Century.

The ratification by the EU of the Convention would furthermore serve to ensure the legal commitment of all the Member States, and encourage them to individually sign, ratify and implement the text. To this day, 24 member states of the Council of Europe have signed the Convention, 16 of them being EU Member States; only Turkey has ratified it.

“Women’s associations have long been calling for a legal instrument to take European fundamental rights from principle to practice”, says Cécile Gréboval, Secretary General of the EWL. “Now, we have such an instrument which has resulted from long and careful consideration and negotiation between, among others, every single EU country. All Member States should ratify the Convention as soon as possible and the EU as a whole has a duty to formally recognise and take on board this collective commitment.”