

**26 Haziran 2007**

***The image of women in advertising***

Mrs BİLGEHAN (*Turkey*) said that advertising was defined in law as any form of communication coming out of a commercial or industrial organisation which promoted a product or service. The average individual in a developed country was subject to 2 500 advertising messages every day. The images displayed by the medium of advertising often gave a negative image of people in society. That was particularly a problem for children, who found it difficult to distinguish between advertising and society. Advertising distorted their vision of the world.

Women's image in advertising had not changed over the years. Women were primarily seen in advertising as models of physical beauty with a role to attract consumers to a product. Many erroneous and stereotypical clichés were still used for women – for example, the housewife and child-bearer – even though women did more than was portrayed. Nudity and sexuality were also used as lures to sell products. However, these images had no direct connection with the commodity – for example, they were often being used to sell a car or a refrigerator. The use of the female body had come to a head during the phenomenon of porno chic to sell luxury goods. Violence was also often implied in advertising and those images had damaged human dignity. While freedom of expression was a pillar of democracy, it was important that individuals did not hide behind it to justify degrading dignity.

It was important that people were encouraged to be critical of advertising. Relevant legislation and monitoring were necessary and voluntary restraint by the industry was important. She recalled a Dolce and Gabbana porno chic advert as an example of the negative use of women in advertising. She proposed that the Assembly adopt the resolution which would provide for legal and educative measures with respect to advertising and noted that a European code of good conduct was also necessary.

Mrs BİLGEHAN (*Turkey*) thanked colleagues for their support. The debate had been very important and had emphasised differences between the 47 member states of the Council of Europe. For example, Sweden was far ahead of many other member states in terms of gender equality. However, for many other member states the issue of gender equality was a no-go area.

At the committee's hearing in Paris, a British advertising agency revealed the extent of the complaints against violence in the media, especially against women. Often stereotypical and violent imagery regarding women bore little relationship to the product being promoted. The public were becoming increasingly aware of the nature of such advertising. There was still a need, however, to educate people, especially the young, about the dangers of such media representations. Advertisers were very clever in the way they manipulated images of women.

The report would have important repercussions in the wider society. The press in many member states had shown a keen interest in its content. The report was well balanced and had reconciled freedom of expression with the dignity of women. She called on delegates to support it.

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### ***Combating anti-Semitism in Europe***

Mr CEBECI (*Turkey*). – Dear colleagues, Europe has witnessed in the past many conflicts fuelled by racial, ethnic and religious hatred and intolerance. The Council of Europe was set up in 1949 to ensure that the atrocities of the Second World War would never happen again. Racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance were among the main features of that great tragedy. Unfortunately, new forms of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and discrimination continue to threaten basic values and the democratic fabric of our societies, even today.

I would like to thank Mr Margelov for his excellent work. However, we have before us an alarming report on the rise of anti-Semitism, including its violent manifestations in many of our countries. We must consider not only the extremist circles and parties, but the fact that certain segments of society and the media seem to be fuelling such tendencies. Economic and social factors, as well as the use of advanced communication technologies, make our societies even more vulnerable to the spread of prejudices and hatred.

Turkey's millennium-long experience in a land where countless cultures and religions co-existed throughout history helped to build a culture of tolerance, which led to an exemplary conciliation and harmonisation of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Anti-Semitism in particular is traditionally alien to Turkish people. Turks and Jews have been living together in peace and harmony for more than 500 years. We enjoy a solid friendship cemented on this togetherness. The solidarity displayed by our citizens of all convictions in response to the heinous synagogue bombings in Istanbul in November 2003 proved that no evil force will be able to disturb this harmony. History has taught us that lack of mutual knowledge and respect among civilisations can greatly and adversely affect stability and peace. Turkey's contribution to international efforts in the fight against anti-Semitism and other actions generated by racial and religious hatred is guided by that experience.

An effective strategy to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and discrimination cannot solely rely on legal and judicial measures. Breeding grounds of these phenomena should be eradicated through proactive and positive action aimed at countering prejudices and promoting human values, tolerance and respect for diversity. The desired level of respect and harmony can be achieved only if there is a strong political will. Additionally, active involvement of civil society is a must. Our primary tool in an effective long-term strategy to achieve this end should

be targeted and focused education and media. The first step should be overcoming existing prejudices towards one another. Eventually, tolerance, acceptance, respect for the other and inclusiveness will become part of our daily life and political practice. That is what I hope.