Statement at the 811th meeting of the Permanent Council
May 27, 2010

Agenda item: Any other business

The 7th Conference of Ministers responsible for Equality between Women and Men of the Council of Europe, taking place on 24-25 May in Baku, Azerbaijan, focused on the topic "Gender equality: bridging the gap between de jure and de facto gender equality". The event gave an opportunity to review progress accomplished and to examine delays and even regression in this field.

The Conference was attended by 34 country delegations. High-level participants of the conference included, among others, Madame Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe and Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations.

In her opening speech, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Madame Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, stressed that equality between women and men is an integral part of human rights and a fundamental criterion of democracy. "Gender equality means an equal visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation of both women and men in all spheres of public and private life", she added.

At the end of the Conference of Ministers the participants stated that making gender equality a reality - in practice as well as in law - remained a challenge in Europe and that further measures are needed to achieve progress in combating discrimination of women. The ministers adopted a resolution on "Bridging the gap between de jure and de facto equality to achieve real gender equality" and an Action Plan that maps out the future work of the Council of Europe in this field. The ministers also called for the finalisation and adoption of a convention to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence.