Espai Dones Formentera



Every year on this day, 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women rears its head. A reminder to continue decrying the social ailment that is violence, a reminder of the victims this violence has left. We must continue to make clear that domestic violence is not a private problem; quite the contrary, it affects society as a whole. It is an expression of the inequity that exists between men and women, based on the supposed superiority of one sex over another. Domestic violence is a drama. It is a great problem in our society and, as such, it must be the collective cause taken up by everyone: men and women.

Silence and resignation are not the solution and they must never be. Neither for the victim of physical or psychological mistreatment nor for those of us that live with someone who is suffering. We cannot tolerate this. Society cannot allow the aggressors to win, and we are the ones that make up our society, the ones with the obligation to provoke change. Domestic violence is an ailment we have fought for years, but this year things are worse than last, because violence against women is being forgotten. Both the national and regional governments alike, with their policies of cutbacks, have caused us to lose ground. They are taking backward steps, the likes of which began with the first official communiqué from Minister Ana Mato that used the term “violence in the family environment” to describe a husband's killing of his wife.

The steps backward had just begun. The national government's budget since 2011 has reduced funding for the prevention of domestic violence by 27%, or more than 8 million euros. In our own autonomous community the *Institut Balear de*

la Dona – an entity charged with fighting domestic abuse – has also seen its funding repeatedly cut. Then there was the PP's decision to tax users for a service that facilitated escape from their abusers, a devastating blow for those women attempting to break free from abusive relationships, one reason being the additional economic difficulties proportioned.

The Domestic Abuse Section of the General Council of the Judiciary (*Consell General del Poder Judicial*) has already made a serious claim: government cutbacks are responsible for the fact that many battered women, finding themselves once again in a situation of reduced protection, retract charges against their abusers. We can thus conclude that budget cuts in equality policies are putting women – and also their daughters and sons – in at-risk situations.

In the first 11 months of the year, nearly 50 women were killed at the hands of their current or ex-partners. Three of these cases occurred in the Balearics (one in Mallorca and two in Eivissa). However, our current government is one that does not condemn these killings. It does not engage in awareness action, and it is providing less and less support to victims.

Espai Dones wishes to address our society at large and political organisations and parties in particular in a call for a united defence: maintain the budgets and resources necessary to continue programming campaigns in prevention, awareness and support for women.