



**United Nations
Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
Review of the Periodic Report of Andorra
109th Session
September 30-Oct 18, 2013
Geneva**

**Statement of the Advocates for Human Rights – ANDORRA –CRITIQUE OF
GOVERNMENT WEBSITE ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

17 September 2013

To the Honorable Members of the Committee and the Delegation of Andorra:

This statement follows up on our prior written statement of September 13th in which we encouraged the Committee to take a deeper look at the treaty reporting websites maintained by each state party in the examination of their reports. In this statement we would like to take a more specific look at the official website of the Government of Andorra in this regard.

Websites examined:

The main websites we reviewed were:

- The main government portal www.govern.ad (in Catalan)¹ and
- The website of the Permanent Mission in Geneva available through the “exteriors” portal: www.exteriors.ad (in English, French, Spanish and Catalan)

If we have missed any other relevant sites we apologize for that, and would recommend that such sites be linked to one or both of the above sites to aid in their findability. Promoting such sites through social media would also be useful.

Comments and suggestions:

There appears to be very little human rights information available at these sites at the present time. While the main government portal (www.govern.ad) has some general references to human rights in some of the official press releases, we could find no information about Andorra’s human rights treaty obligations through that site.

The Geneva Permanent Mission site (www.exteriors.ad) has a table listing multilateral treaties to which Andorra is a party, including the core human rights treaties (both CEDAW and its Optional Protocol are listed under the heading “UN organization”), but this is only a mention on a list, with no links to

¹ We don’t speak Catalan so we used Google translate to navigate the government site. We also used the search term “drets humans” which we understand is Catalan for “human rights”, but were not able to find any information on Andorra’s obligations under human rights treaties at this site.

the subject matter of any of these treaties, and no information about Andorra's current reporting to the treaty bodies.

- There is no information about the submission of the present state party's report to CEDAW
- There is no information about the prior concluding recommendations of the Committee or the state party's progress toward implementing the same
- There is no information about the scheduling of the state party report during the current CEDAW session or that the review will be available in live and archived webcasts at <http://treatbodywebcast.org> for interested persons who wish to follow the proceedings
- There is no link to the CEDAW website or to the OHCHR treaty body website as a whole for more information
- We note in particular paragraph 22, page 9, of the state report (CEDAW/C/AND/2-3), where the state party has assured the Committee that it has achieved the widest possible dissemination of Catalan-translated versions of the Convention, the Optional Protocol, and the Committee's prior recommendations. But we could find no copies of these translated versions on either of these websites. And no other "know your rights" type of information seems to be available.
- The state report (CEDAW/C/AND/2-3) also indicates that a female ombudsman has been established to handle some types of complaints from women apparently under CEDAW, and that this ombudsman is funded in various budgeted amounts (Table 34, p.48). Does the ombudsman have a website link? We could find no information at either location for this ombudsman office.
- There are also other "know your rights" types of publications referenced in the projects in table 34 on p. 47 of the state party report (Women's association projects funded by the Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2000-2007). Again, these materials look like they would be useful publications to make available at the government website in addition to the traditional form of published pamphlets. But we could find no evidence of them being posted.
- We note also the state party's reply to item 5 on the Committee's List of Issues (CEDAW/C/AND/Q/2-3/Add.1), detailing the steps it has taken to raise awareness of the Convention amongst women about their rights. We note that no use of the Internet is mentioned in that response, indicating again what would appear to be a missed opportunity. Making CEDAW related information available on a government website is inexpensive and technically quite achievable. It could be combined with other traditional measures to increase awareness and take advantage of new technologies.

The Government of Andorra has also begun to establish a social media profile on the Internet, with links for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr on its main website. But again this appears to be a missed opportunity when it comes to human rights information. We looked through the last 30 days of postings on these channels, and could find no human rights related information posted by the state party.

It should also be noted that Andorra has some of the most advanced Internet and telecommunications technologies in the world available to its residents. According to the latest telecommunications data, 86% of the population has Internet access and 74% has mobile phone access. In addition, according to the Andorran national telecommunications company (SOM), by 2010 every home in the country was to have fibre-to-the-home internet access at a minimum speed of 100 Mbit/s (SOM Newsletter, March 2009) [cited from Wikipedia]. From this technical proficiency it would seem the state party should do more to promote human rights through its official websites.

In this regard we would make the following suggestions:

1. **Treaty body reporting site.** The Ministry of Health and Welfare (or other appropriate agency) should create and maintain a general treaty body reporting site, which identifies:

- a. the international treaties to which Andorra is a party,
 - b. the latest reports submitted to each treaty body,
 - c. the latest core report (Andorra appears not to have filed a core report to date),
 - d. the latest concluding observations of each treaty body,
 - e. the schedule of next appearances before each treaty body,
 - f. deadlines for submitting next reports or followup information,
 - g. progress toward implementation and consultation opportunities for civil society,
 - h. information about the live and archived treaty body webcasts of appearances of the state party before any Committee
 - i. the site should be disability accessible (we note that Andorra is not yet a party to the CRPD, but it has signed the Convention with the intention apparently to ratify it soon; we note that its main government website (www.govern.ad) indicates that the government is seeking to become fully disability accessible in the website design of all official websites, but has not achieved that objective yet)
 - j. the content of the site should be regularly updated; the site should indicate when the content was last revised and the government's policy on how frequently it intends to update the site in order to keep the information current
2. **Other general comments.** Other features or links on the government website that we would recommend include the following:
- a. A link to each Committee website or to the OHCHR treaty body site as a whole. With respect to CEDAW it would seem particularly useful to have a specific link to the Committee website.
 - b. In case the Government of Andorra is planning to have a press conference or press release after its appearance before this Committee, or after the Committee's concluding recommendations are issued – it would be helpful if the date and time of that event were also noted on the website and in social media.
 - c. Use of social media to promote awareness of these websites is also suggested. We note that Andorra has recently completed its chairmanship of the EU and that during that campaign it highlighted social media and general awareness of European human rights treaties as one of its core initiatives.² Yet none of those techniques have apparently yet been applied to Andorra's own treaty obligations and to the promotion of general awareness amongst its own civil society of the UN human rights treaties. We suggest that the state party is in an ideal position to apply these techniques now to its own country and to its obligations under CEDAW.

These are a few observations we had after exploring these websites. We would be happy to provide additional information or ideas if requested.

Penny L. Parker

The Advocates for Human Rights

<http://ProjectEleanor.blogspot.com> (a blog about the treaty bodies)

<http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org> (main NGO site)

You can also follow us on Twitter at: [@PennyLParker](https://twitter.com/PennyLParker) and [@The_Advocates](https://twitter.com/The_Advocates)

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Press release – European Union DC014(2013). Culture of Democracy and Intercultural Dialogue - an Andorran initiative. Strasbourg, 06.02.2013 - ... Minister of Foreign Affairs of Andorra Gilbert Saboya Sunyé, Minister of Education and Youth of Andorra Roser Suñé Pascuet, and Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe Gabriella Battaini Dragoni will be among the key speakers at the Conference. On the occasion of this initiative, the Andorran Chairmanship of the Council of Europe will launch a campaign “Nurturing human rights”, which aims at raising awareness of civil society and young people of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights. [Subscribers to the campaign have the opportunity also to spread their commitment to human rights through their profiles on Facebook and Twitter]