

Intervenció ambaixador Ferran Costa

Presentació Informe PIDCP

2-3 de març del 2026, Ginebra

Mr Chairman of the Committee,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for my delegation and myself to present the Principality of Andorra's Initial Report to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights before the Human Rights Committee today.

I would like to introduce the members of the delegation accompanying me today.

- Alba Noya Travesset, Deputy Permanent Representative
- Mr. Joan Carles Villaverde, Director of the Department of Social Affairs
- Mrs. Laura Mas, Director of the Department of Childhood and Adolescence
- Mr. Albert Maluquer, Director of the Department of Educational Systems and International Relations
- Mr. Carles Miquel, Director of the Department of Energy and Climate Change

- Mrs. Mireia Porras, Head of the Department of Equality Policies
- Mrs. Anna Blázquez, Inspector of the Department of Immigration
- Mr. Jeroni Estopiñán, Director of the Department of Multilateral Affairs and Cooperation

Despite sometime has elapsed between the ratification of the Covenant by the Principality of Andorra on 22 September 2006 and the presentation of the Initial Report, the Government of Andorra firmly believes that the work of the Committee and the accountability of States Parties are essential to maintaining and consolidating an inclusive multilateralism, demanding and respectful of the diversity of situations.

Effective implementation of international legal instruments such as the ICCPR is essential to ensure that our commitments are not only binding, but also meaningful, effective and realistic, and that implementation is progressive and increasingly demanding in the safeguard and promotion of human rights.

This initial report, coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is the result of a collective work between the various ministries of the Andorran Government, our Parliament, the

Administration of Justice, and other bodies such as the Ombudsman and the Andorran Institute for Women.

The presence today of a large delegation comprising members of the various ministries involved in implementing the Covenant illustrates our Government's commitment to honouring our international obligations, particularly with regard to human rights.

It is important to recall that Andorra is a small country of approximately 90,000 inhabitants, which acquired full international sovereignty in 1993 with the adoption of its Constitution. Since then, we have endeavoured to accede to most international legal instruments relating to human rights, while ensuring their proper implementation at the national level, which we consider to be essential. This entails a significant investment of human and institutional resources for our administration and represents a substantial legislative effort for a Parliament composed of 28 members.

Thus, since the ratification of the Covenant, considerable progress has been made in implementing the main international human rights instruments, as we explained in our Initial Report and during the presentation of our latest Universal Periodic Review last November.

Ladies and gentlemen,

One of our most recent international legal commitments is the signature by our Head of Government, Mr Xavier Espot, last September at the United Nations, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The internal legal procedures for its ratification are in the pipeline and the Parliament will soon be ready to adopt its ratification, which will undoubtedly take place this year.

We have also acceded to the three Protocols to the 1977 Geneva Conventions, which entered into force on 19 December last year. We are now also party to the Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Also, after the Government's approval, the UN Convention Against Corruption is now awaiting Parliament's approval.

And by the end of the legislative term in 2027, we plan to accede to the Protocols to the same Convention against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, and against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition.

We will also ratify, before the end of 2027, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As reflected in our Initial Report, the Government of Andorra devotes a significant portion of its efforts and budget to the main social and societal issues relevant to the country.

Andorra takes particular pride in the quality, diversity and inclusiveness of its education system. Families are free to choose between three high-quality public education systems — Andorran, French and Spanish — all of which are publicly funded. Two private systems, including one in English, are also available. In addition, the Andorran education system is particularly inclusive, with 98.8% of children with disabilities integrated into the general public education system.

A National Plan for Children and Adolescents has also been established in cooperation with the Council of Europe for the period 2022-2026. This is the result of the 2019 Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents. This law places the prevention and protection of children's rights at the heart of the legal system and provides a cross-cutting response to current issues, in particular through a National Commission

for Children and Adolescents, which coordinates all policies and measures adopted in favour of children's rights.

In addition, the Personal and Family Law Act adopted in 2022 prohibits marriage before the age of 18 and forced marriages, a measure welcomed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Gender equality, the empowerment of women and the eradication of violence against women remain central priorities of the Government. As detailed in our Report, Andorra now has a comprehensive legislative framework covering equal rights, effective equality between women and men, and the prevention and eradication of violence against women and domestic violence. This legislative framework has enabled the strengthening of institutional capacity, notably through the establishment of a State Secretariat for Equality and Citizen Participation reporting directly to the Head of Government. The team responsible for caring for women victims of gender-based violence has also been strengthened and provides psychological, economic, social and legal support to victims and refers their children to a specialised service within the Department of Childhood, when necessary. This team also organises numerous training courses and awareness-raising activities, both for the various administrations and for civil society.

It is also important to note that very recently, on 9 October, our Parliament approved an amendment to the Act that will allow Andorra to lift its reservation to Article 30.2 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. From now on, the State will have to compensate victims of violence against women financially in the event of the perpetrator's insolvency.

The State Secretariat for Equality and Citizen Participation is also responsible for putting in place the necessary safeguards to prevent and combat various forms of discrimination. It is also responsible for training and awareness-raising activities against discrimination. However, the Ombudsman's mandate also includes combating discrimination as defined in the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In this sense, the Ombudsman can denounce discrimination committed by both the administration and the private sector.

In this same spirit of equality and inclusion, Andorra is firmly committed to ensuring that all citizens can exercise their right to vote on an equal basis, regardless of disability. To this end, the Government has adopted a specific regulatory

framework aimed at strengthening the guarantee of autonomous voting for persons with disabilities.

The measures implemented are based on a clear and fundamental principle: support must never replace the will of the voter. Their purpose is to remove physical, communicational and procedural barriers, while fully respecting the freedom, dignity and confidentiality of the vote.

This regulation operationalises existing electoral legislation and aligns national practice with the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

With reference to Articles 6 and 7 of the Covenant, it is important to emphasise that women's rights, and in particular women's health and sexual and reproductive health, are essential rights to which we attach great importance. That is why, in 2020, the Ministry of Health set up a Comprehensive Women's Care Service, known as SIAD, with the aim of creating a public space for information, guidance and professional advice on sexual and reproductive health, including family planning.

This service provides individualised assistance throughout the country. SIAD offers comprehensive information on voluntary pregnancy interventions. The measures

concerning these interventions are available, free of charge and in strict confidentiality, for women who decide to terminate their pregnancy.

The issue of abortion remains particularly sensitive in Andorra, due to the institutional and constitutional characteristics of our country.

It is important to recall that the Bishop of La Seu d'Urgell in Spain, a High-Representative of the Catholic Church is, along with the President of the French Republic, one of the Heads of State of Andorra, known as the Co-Princes. This constitutional arrangement which reflects the historical and institutional configuration of our country has an impact on the scope and pace of possible legislative reforms decriminalising abortion. Furthermore, Article 8 of the Constitution 'recognises the right to life and fully protects it in its various stages'.

In this specific case, it is therefore very difficult to strike a balance between this right of women and the institutional system of the Principality, to which the Andorrans are very attached since it guarantees the secular independence of our country.

I would now like to address the issue of refugee rights. As stated in our report, although Andorra has not ratified the

1951 Geneva Convention, many refugees have found refuge there throughout contemporary history.

In 2018, Andorra adopted its first legislative framework for receiving refugees and providing them with the necessary protection and services. Law 4/2018 on Temporary and Transitional Protection for Humanitarian Reasons has enabled the reception of 26 Syrian refugees, the last of whom arrived in Andorra last month, and, from 2022, more than 300 Ukrainians.

For a country of Andorra's size, welcoming more than 300 refugees within a few months and ensuring their dignified treatment has required significant logistical and financial efforts. The Government has set up an interministerial working group to coordinate the integration of new arrivals. To this end, we have benefited from the advice of the Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The delegation from the Principality of Andorra stands ready to engage in a constructive and substantive dialogue with the Committee and to provide any further clarification required.

Thank you.