



3. Presentation of the CEDAW shadow report

Spain has ratified six of the seven principal human rights tools, among which is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). They are all binding and therefore enforceable for the Spanish state.

Spain signed the CEDAW in 1980 and it took effect on 5 January 1984. From that date forward and at least once every four years, Spain is obligated to submit a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative and any other type of measures adopted to make the provisions of the Convention effective, as provided for in Article 18, for consideration by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, comprising 23 experts in the field. In this for reviewing governments, the governmental reports are contrasted with “shadow” reports –which are independent or parallel reports– provided by NGOs.

Among its last recommendations to the Spanish government, the Committee mentioned that its reports provided little data on Roma girls and women, so the FSG opted to draft a shadow report for the 44th session of the CEDAW. And the truth is that, if the Roma community has traditionally been faced with situations of discrimination and marginalisation, Roma women have suffered particularly, because they are subject to multiple discriminations: for reasons of gender, ethnicity and, in many cases, social origin.

The main concerns regarding compliance with the articles of the Convention that were presented were:

- Despite the progress in issues of non-discrimination based on gender and ethnicity, enforcement is minimal.
- The lack of **data broken down by gender and ethnicity** makes it difficult to know the degree of access that Roma women have to services such as education, employment, housing, health care and political participation. And, indeed, in Spain’s Plans for Social Inclusion, the importance of gathering updated information on the Roma population via reports and investigations in order to assess the impact of current social policies and to design them is acknowledged.
- The media systematically provide images loaded with negative stereotypes about Roma women, generalising and extending the actions of individuals to the entire community as a whole.
- With regard to education: although there is a legal obligation for people to attend school until the age of 16, governments do not always developed measures to ensure that they remain and, as the Committee pointed out with respect to the report from the Spanish government, enough effort is not being made –despite progress– so that Roma girls and young women remain in the educational system.

The specificity of gender and culture means taking into account those characteristics that cause the opportunities for Roma women to be diminished with respect to the men in their community, and with respect to society in general. These are the guarantees that a society must put into place in order to address specific problems, with the understanding that the starting point is not the same for all women and, therefore, the way forward should –and can– be different.