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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 29 August 2024 from the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations has the honour to refer to the candidature of Spain to the Human Rights Council for the period 2025–2027, in the elections to be held on 9 October 2024, during the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The Permanent Mission of Spain has the further honour to transmit the voluntary pledges and commitments of Spain regarding the promotion and protection of human rights, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [60/251](#) (see annex).

The Permanent Mission should be grateful if the present note verbale and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 115 (c) of the provisional agenda.

* [A/79/150](#).



**Annex to the note verbale dated 29 August 2024 from the
Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations addressed to
the President of the General Assembly**

**Candidature of Spain to the Human Rights Council for the period
2025–2027**

**Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution
[60/251](#)**

I. External action in the area of human rights

1. Spain attaches great importance to becoming a member of the Human Rights Council for the third time, for the period 2025–2027.
2. Through its candidature, Spain is giving new impetus to its strong commitment to human rights and, in particular, to the multilateral system for protecting and promoting them.
3. Spain has assumed far-reaching obligations in terms of protecting human rights and has been monitored by international treaty bodies.
4. Its commitment has been demonstrated in the universal periodic review and in the reviews of Spain conducted by the bodies of the human rights treaties to which it is a party, as well as during its membership of the Human Rights Council in the periods 2011–2013 and 2018–2019. If re-elected, Spain will ensure that its work in the Council is guided by that commitment.
5. The importance that Spain attaches to the protection of human rights is aptly reflected in its second national human rights plan, which was developed with the participation of civil society and approved by the Government in June 2023 for a period of five years (2023–2027), with a view to further advancing the human rights agenda at the national and international levels.
6. The main priorities of its external action, in terms of human rights, are as follows: combating the death penalty; achieving real and effective equal opportunities for men and women; combating discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation; and defending and promoting economic, social and cultural rights, including the rights to safe drinking water and sanitation and the rights of persons with disabilities.

II. Commitments of Spain concerning the Human Rights Council

7. Spain commits to promote human rights through the following actions:
 - (a) Contributing to the proper functioning of the Human Rights Council, supporting the independence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;
 - (b) Continuing to participate in the Human Rights Council, in the negotiation of resolutions and in debates, building trust and bridging gaps;
 - (c) Promoting the ratification of conventions, especially through the recommendations made to countries undergoing the universal periodic review. Spain was the third country to ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and was one of the first countries to ratify the third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Furthermore, it was the second country to

ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto;

(d) Supporting and participating in the universal periodic review, which has proven to be of irreplaceable value for the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. Spain has undergone three reviews under this mechanism. Its fourth cycle review will take place in 2025. In addition, Spain participates in all universal periodic review sessions with recommendations for all countries under review, as a testament to its commitment to this mechanism based on universality and dialogue;

(e) Strengthening the system of treaties and special procedures. Spain has ratified all the protocols that establish individual grievance procedures related to the international conventions to which it is a party. As early as 1991, Spain extended an open and standing invitation to all of the special procedures to visit the country at their own request;

(f) Promoting human rights in the Security Council. During its five terms on the Security Council, Spain has advocated for this body to pay particular attention to human rights issues. Respect for human rights is an indispensable requirement for peace. Accordingly, Spain has highlighted the importance of preventing and combating impunity for human rights violations;

(g) Providing financial support to the United Nations agencies that are committed to strengthening the international human rights framework in strategic areas such as gender equality, human rights protection and environmental sustainability with a global justice approach.

III. Objectives of Spain in the Human Rights Council

8. As a member of the Human Rights Council, Spain has set 10 main objectives for strengthening the human rights system:

(a) Play an active role in the search for common ground during consultations and negotiations, upholding relevant principles and requirements in the defence and promotion of human rights. Spain will do this by remaining in constant contact with the member and observer countries of the Human Rights Council, bridging gaps, promoting dialogue and rapprochement and building trust in relation to different sensitivities;

(b) Work towards achieving equal opportunities for men and women, while promoting feminist foreign policy that incorporates a gender perspective in all areas of external action. Spain will continue to implement its strong commitment to the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence against women and girls, in all its manifestations, in compliance with its international commitments and, in particular, the Istanbul Convention and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;

(c) Given that the defence and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights is also a key area of our country's action, continue to promote the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, the effective realization of which is, in turn, a prerequisite for the realization of other rights, such as the rights to health, education and food;

(d) Continue to promote diversity and efforts to combat all forms of discrimination, in particular discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, including by promoting the decriminalization of consensual same-sex relations. Combating discrimination benefits society as a whole, as it contributes to the free development of all people. Promoting diversity in all its forms contributes to the creation of more open, inclusive, equitable and tolerant societies;

(e) Work to ensure the development of effective mechanisms for promoting the human right to a healthy, safe and sustainable environment. A healthy environment is the basis and precondition for economic development, sustainability and social justice. Spain plays an active role in global efforts to strengthen environmental governance, focusing on its implications for human security and health. It is essential to sustain and improve our environment in order to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by all;

(f) Continue working to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Spain will continue to promote an innovative vision of the rights of persons with disabilities and will participate actively in the negotiation of resolutions on the rights of persons with disabilities within the framework of the Council's sessions. Spanish law on disability and integration is among the most advanced in the world, and Spain has a Disability Strategy in place for the period 2022–2030;

(g) Make a commitment to the ethical and responsible development of digital rights, ensuring equal access for all people;

(h) Advocate the protection and promotion of the work of human rights defenders as positive agents of change. Their work is essential for drawing attention to situations of social injustice, combating impunity and promoting democratic processes around the world. Spain will continue to advocate a safe and enabling environment for the defence of human rights and will encourage countries to redouble their efforts to protect human rights defenders;

(i) Place particular emphasis on the active involvement of the private sector in defending and promoting human rights. Companies have a major impact on the lives of people and the communities in which they operate. For this reason, Spain promotes human rights due diligence as a business management tool, supporting the adoption of European legislation in this area. It also commits to draft a law on the protection of human rights, sustainability and due diligence in business activities;

(j) Remain firmly committed to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and continue to participate in the voluntary national review of progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Following the adoption of its new Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Global Solidarity Act, Spain will commit to devoting 0.7 per cent of its gross domestic product to development aid, focusing on human rights and gender, on equality and on diversity.

IV. Promotion and protection of human rights at the national level

9. The Second National Human Rights Plan sets out various objectives and measures to further improve the fulfilment of the country's human rights obligations and commitments at the national level, among which the following are particularly notable:

(a) Uphold the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of human rights in national policies and interventions;

(b) Promote human rights in bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation, in keeping with the values of equality, non-discrimination and the promotion of democracy;

(c) Evaluate and propose improvements to the application of the existing laws concerning comprehensive protection measures against gender violence, particularly in the context of the activities of the police and the courts; and also make progress towards the institutionalization of the State pact against gender-based violence and improve co-governance, participation, financing and evaluation instruments;

- (d) Combat trafficking in and exploitation of persons by enhancing measures to detect, identify and provide comprehensive assistance to victims of trafficking, sexual exploitation, labour exploitation and any other form of exploitation;
 - (e) Combat all forms of discrimination, particularly discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation or gender identity;
 - (f) Promote efforts to combat against racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, prosecuting hate crimes in all realms, including the digital realm, and implementing measures on prevention, information and awareness, and care and protection for victims;
 - (g) Eradicate violence, including sexual violence, against children and adolescents, continue to combat child and adolescent poverty and reduce inequality of opportunity;
 - (h) Take a human rights-based approach to education, promoting ongoing teacher training and the development of didactic and pedagogical materials that incorporate this approach in all educational practice;
 - (i) Guarantee the right to health by strengthening the capacities of and access to the national health system;
 - (j) Promote occupational health and the right to safe and healthy working conditions and an adequate working environment;
 - (k) Promote digital rights and equal access to technology and digitalization processes for all citizens, while safeguarding human rights in the digital domain, including in the development of ethical and humanistic artificial intelligence.
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