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Asking France to ensure that human rights defenders in Andorra do not suffer reprisals and to advocate for the decriminalisation of abortion

Written question No. 757 to the Committee of Ministers
by Ms Laura CASTEL, Spain, Members not belonging to a Political Group

Andorra is one of the few Council of Europe member States to still have a total ban on abortion.

In 2019, the Andorran Government opened a criminal investigation, still ongoing today, against women's rights defender Ms Vanessa Mendoza Cortés. She is facing up to four years' prison time and fines of up to €30 000, under "defamation against the co-princes and institutions" for raising women's rights concerns before the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and statements made to the press.

International NGOs like Amnesty International, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT) and the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) are demanding that charges against Ms Mendoza Cortés to be dropped immediately, to cease judicial reprisals against her, to change the Criminal Code to derogate defamation, and to legalise abortion.

It should also be recalled that, according to the Andorran Constitution, the President of the French Republic is one of the two heads of State or "co-princes" of Andorra.

Ms Castel,

To ask the Committee of Ministers:

What steps will the Committee of Ministers take to request France to comply with Council of Europe standards, more particularly to help protecting, not only sexual and reproductive rights by promoting the decriminalisation of abortion, but to also guarantee that civil society in Andorra can work in a safe environment.