



October 30th, 2019

## Submission to Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights re. visit to Spain

CESR has been working with partners in Spain for many years to analyze and document the impacts of economic policies (in particular, austerity measures) on human rights and poverty in the country since the financial crisis of 2008/9. These materials are briefly summarized and hyperlinked in the present document, in chronological order.

- In **May 2012** Spain was assessed by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) for the first time in eight years. CESR coordinated a [shadow report](#), as part of a coalition of 19 organizations, which was submitted to CESCR ahead of the session. (An English-language summary of the document can be found [here](#)). A CESR [factsheet](#) providing a statistical snapshot of the worrying trends in economic and social rights in the country was also distributed to members of the Committee.
- On the occasion of Spain's appearance before the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism in **January 2015**, a [factsheet](#) by CESR illustrated how four years of austerity had driven rising poverty, deepening inequality and a serious deterioration in a variety of economic and social rights in the country. The factsheet made evident that over four years of budget cuts had severely undermined social services and increased poverty and inequality. For instance, almost 13 million people were facing poverty and social exclusion in Spain, some 3 million more than in 2007; a quarter of children were at risk of malnutrition; and economic inequality was deepening wider and faster than in other European countries. A quarter of the active population - and more than half of those under 25 - was unemployed, with long-term unemployment (2.4 million people) and increasing wage precarity (44% of the population) becoming chronic features of the economic landscape, with many people losing access to unemployment benefits and other social protection measures after two years without work. Women's rights to life and physical integrity were at risk due to the drastic cuts in budgets dedicated to gender equality and gender-based violence (down to 77% of the 2009 allocation). The findings highlighted that Spanish austerity measures were particularly detrimental to the right to health of disadvantaged groups. With one of the steepest drops in an already low level of health spending and the implementation of drastic health reforms, Spain's previously universal public health system became fragmented while almost a million undocumented immigrants were stripped of their previously-recognized right to access public health services through Royal Decree 16/2012.
- In **December 2017** CESR released a [statement](#) with Amnesty International, Médicos del Mundo, Red Acoge, la Red de Denuncia y Resistencia al RDL 16/2012 (REDER) and semFYC denouncing the recent Constitutional Court's Judgment (STC134/2017), saying it violated fundamental human rights obligations of Spain and that it was regressive,



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discriminatory and put at risk the lives of people excluded from the national health system since 2012.

- In **March 2018**, for the 6<sup>th</sup> periodic review of Spain by the UN CESCR, CESR released an updated [factsheet](#) analyzing the ongoing impact of austerity measures on the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to health, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and the right to work. The factsheet was based on a [collective report](#) submitted to CESCR by CESR and a coalition of 36 Spanish civil society organizations. The factsheet documented the devastating and disproportionate impact of austerity on the most vulnerable populations—including women, migrants, young people and children - and concluded that the measures adopted since 2012 did not comply with human rights standards. CESR also outlined feasible and human rights-aligned alternatives to austerity, such as strengthening progressive taxation and tackling tax abuse and corruption, that could have offset the need for austerity, while also boosting tax morale and helping to regain the public's trust by strengthening transparency, accountability and participation.
- In **July 2018**, CESR [applauded](#) the new government for overturning the Royal Decree 16/2012 (which had restricted access to healthcare for migrants in Spain), based on the recommendations of the UN CESCR and sustained pressure from civil society.