



# International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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## Human Rights Committee 145th session

### Summary record of the 4262nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 2 March 2026, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Soh

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### **Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 40 of the Covenant**

*Initial report of Andorra (CCPR/C/AND/1; CCPR/C/AND/QPR/1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Andorra joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Andorra**, introducing his country's initial report (CCPR/C/AND/1), said that his Government firmly believed that the Committee's work and the accountability of States Parties to the Covenant were essential to upholding an inclusive model of multilateralism that was respectful of the diversity of national circumstances. Despite being a small State of approximately 90,000 inhabitants that had only acquired full international sovereignty in 1993, since its ratification of the Covenant in 2006, Andorra had acceded to or had begun the process of acceding to a number of additional international instruments, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
3. The Andorran education system offered families a choice among three publicly funded systems – Andorran, French and Spanish – with almost all children with disabilities integrated into mainstream public education. The Qualified Act on the Rights of Children and Adolescents of 2019 placed child protection at the centre of the legal framework and established a national commission to coordinate relevant policies, in line with the National Action Plan for Children and Adolescents for the period 2022–2026. The Qualified Act on the Person and the Family of 2022 prohibited forced marriage and set the legal age of marriage at 18 years. A special regulatory framework was in place to ensure that persons with disabilities could exercise their right to vote on an autonomous and equal basis. The measures taken in that framework were designed to remove physical, communicational and procedural barriers while preserving the freedom, dignity and confidentiality of the vote. The framework aligned national practice with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
4. A comprehensive legislative and institutional framework, including the recently created State Secretariat for Equality and Citizen Participation, was in place to promote substantive gender equality and combat gender-based and domestic violence. A dedicated team provided support to victims of gender-based violence, including psychological, economic, social and legal assistance, with referral to a specialized service where children were involved. It also conducted training and awareness-raising activities across public bodies and civil society. In October 2025, the General Counsel had approved a legislative amendment enabling 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, thereby establishing a State obligation to compensate victims financially in the event of a perpetrator's insolvency.
5. In 2020, the Ministry of Health had established the Comprehensive Support Service for Women to provide information and guidance on sexual and reproductive health and family planning, including information on voluntary pregnancy interventions. Those services were available free of charge and in strict confidentiality for women who decided to terminate a pregnancy. The question of abortion remained particularly sensitive given the country's institutional and constitutional circumstances, as a principality in which one of the two co-princes was the Bishop of Urgell, a high representative of the Catholic Church. Article 8 of the Constitution recognized and fully protected the right to life in its various stages. Striking a balance between women's rights and that institutional framework presented a particular challenge.
6. Andorra had a long-standing practice of providing refuge. In 2018, the State had adopted its first legislative framework for the reception and protection of persons in need of humanitarian protection, namely, Act No. 4/2018 on Temporary and Transitional Protection on Humanitarian Grounds. It had received 26 Syrian refugees, the last of whom had arrived during the previous month, and, from 2022 onwards, more than 300 Ukrainian nationals. For a country the size of Andorra, the reception and integration of that number of arrivals within

a short period had required substantial logistical and financial resources. An interministerial working group had been established to coordinate integration efforts, drawing on the advice of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

7. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** said that he would be interested to learn more about the State Party's plans to ratify or accede to additional international human rights treaties and their optional protocols, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. With regard to the first Optional Protocol to the Covenant, he wished to know whether an internal procedure had been established to implement the Committee's Views and whether measures had been taken to raise awareness of the Optional Protocol among the general population, as well as among judges, prosecutors, police officers and lawyers. He would also welcome clarification as to whether the Covenant and international human rights law more broadly formed part of the curriculum taught at the various levels of education in Andorra. He wished to know whether international treaties were subordinate to or took precedence over the Constitution, how a potential conflict between domestic legislation and the provisions of the Covenant would be resolved and whether any examples of such a situation existed. With regard to the dissemination of the Covenant and its Optional Protocols, he wished to know what measures, beyond training for judges, prosecutors and other State officials, had been taken to ensure familiarity with those instruments among the general population of Andorra.

8. **Mr. Yigezu** said that he would appreciate clarification of the scope of Act No. 16/2024 on the Ombudsman. In particular, he wished to know whether the Ombudsperson was now empowered to challenge the constitutionality of laws and regulations before the Constitutional Court; to refer cases to the courts or intervene in judicial proceedings; to issue policy recommendations whenever deemed appropriate; and to propose accession to international human rights treaties to the relevant State bodies. He also wondered how transparency in the appointment of the Ombudsman was ensured. He further wished to know whether consultations had been held with civil society and other relevant stakeholders during the drafting of the Act and whether the Office was provided with sufficient human and financial resources to carry out its mandate. Information on the number of complaints relating to the provisions of the Covenant received by the Ombudsman during the reporting period and any follow-up action taken would likewise be welcome. In addition, he would be interested to learn about any steps taken or planned to establish a national human rights institution aligned with the Paris Principles.

9. In the light of reports that the State Party continued to lack a general anti-corruption policy, he would welcome information on measures taken to develop and adopt such a policy; to provide the Anti-Corruption Unit, currently reported to have only two staff members responsible for multiple tasks, with sufficient financial and human resources; to ensure that the Public Prosecution Service had the resources, powers and specialized training necessary to address corruption effectively; and to establish a follow-up mechanism for the implementation of the Code of Conduct adopted in November 2023 for members of Government and senior public officials. He also wished to know whether the State Party intended to adopt whistle-blower protection legislation and to put in place a system of pre-appointment integrity checks for ministers and other senior executive officials. Statistical data covering the reporting period on investigations into, prosecutions relating to and convictions for corruption, including details of sentences imposed, would be appreciated.

10. **Mr. Ndiaye** said that he wished to know whether there was guidance on the interpretation of article 4 of the Act on Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination (No. 13/2019), which protected against discrimination on the basis of "any other personal or social situation or circumstance". He would also be grateful for information on mechanisms in place to monitor equal treatment in the private sector, including in housing, employment, health, education and access to goods and services, as well as clarification of whether inspections or audits had been conducted to identify patterns of structural discrimination in those areas. In that regard, he wondered whether the State Party had taken concrete measures

to combat the structural and institutional discrimination historically faced by women in areas such as recruitment, pay, promotion and access to decision-making positions.

11. He wished to know whether the Department of Equality Policies had the power to refer cases brought before it to other bodies, such as the courts, labour inspectorates or the police, and whether its decisions and recommendations carried legal effect. He also wondered whether the Department and the Social and Equality Observatory collected data to analyse trends in and the causes of discrimination and violence. In that regard, he would welcome disaggregated data on cases of discrimination recorded during the reporting period, covering the most commonly alleged grounds, victims' profiles and types of outcomes, as well as information on how collected data informed public policies and preventive measures. Examples of recent policy changes directly inspired by the work of the Social and Equality Observatory would be of interest.

12. Information would be welcome on protections from discrimination for specific groups, such as persons with disabilities and children and adolescents, and on inter-departmental cooperation to support women with disabilities who were victims of gender-based violence. He wished to know how cases involving multiple grounds of discrimination were identified and addressed and whether specific protocols or tailored services existed for such situations. Clarification would also be appreciated as to whether the impact of awareness-raising campaigns was evaluated, including through feedback from target groups, and, if so, what conclusions had been drawn to improve future campaigns.

13. It would be useful to receive detailed information on hate-crime and hate-speech cases recorded since the establishment of dedicated monitoring mechanisms within the Department of Equality Policies and the Social and Equality Observatory, covering the persons and groups most commonly targeted and investigations, prosecutions, convictions and sanctions. He also wished to know what protection and reparation mechanisms were available to victims in such cases, which institutions bore specific responsibility for identifying and monitoring hate speech, including online, and what cooperation mechanisms existed between those institutions, the Department of Equality Policies and the Social and Equality Observatory upon detection of a case.

14. **Ms. Abdo Rocholl** said that she wished to know how normative developments in the State Party, including legislation on equal access to civil marriage for same-sex couples, public coverage of gender-affirming healthcare and the possibility of modifying gender markers in official documents, had translated into effective protection from discrimination for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons in practice. She would also appreciate an explanation of the requirements currently in force for legal recognition of gender identity and access to gender-affirming healthcare, and wished to know how the State Party ensured that the relevant procedures were accessible and compatible with the principles of non-discrimination and confidentiality.

15. She would be grateful for clarification of the objectives pursued by the law prohibiting conspicuous religious symbols in educational institutions and wished to know how its compatibility with the State Party's obligations under the Covenant had been assessed, particularly with regard to proportionality, non-discrimination and freedom of religion, and whether an impact assessment had been conducted in respect of students belonging to religious minorities. She would also welcome information on mechanisms for receiving and investigating complaints of discrimination against non-nationals, including from migrant workers, as well as disaggregated statistical data on complaints, investigations and decisions in cases of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or nationality.

16. In the light of reports of online hate speech targeting migrants, Muslims and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, and of technical difficulties in investigating and removing such content promptly, she wished to know whether the Criminal Code contained specific provisions on hate offences or aggravating circumstances where offences were motivated by racism, xenophobia, sexual orientation, gender identity or other discriminatory grounds, what the reported technical difficulties consisted of and what measures were being taken to address them. Lastly, she wished to know which body was competent to receive and examine complaints concerning speech liable to incite discrimination or violence, including in the digital environment, and whether measures

existed to strengthen the training of police officers, prosecutors and judges in identifying hate-related motivation in criminal offences.

17. **Mr. Carazo** said that he would welcome disaggregated data on specific measures taken to reduce structural inequalities between women and men, including in employment, remuneration, political representation and decision-making, as well as information on the results of independent evaluations of those measures. Noting that the measures taken by the State Party to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes appeared to be mostly ad hoc and isolated, he said that he would appreciate details of any sustained, structural and assessable measures adopted in order to change deeply rooted discriminatory sociocultural patterns.

18. He would be grateful for clarification of the mandates, resources and accountability mechanisms of the State Secretariat for Equality and Civic Engagement, the Observatory for Equality and the Andorran Institute for Women. In that regard, he wondered how the State Party ensured that the fragmentation of mandates among those bodies did not undermine its obligation to provide effective protection against discrimination. He also wished to know whether the Programme for Effective Equality between Women and Men was currently being implemented and would welcome an explanation of its content, implementation timeline, budget and compliance indicators.

19. In addition, it would be useful to receive concrete, disaggregated data on the gender pay gap, broken down by economic sector, professional category and type of contract; women's participation in managerial and decision-making positions in the private sector; and the protections and benefits afforded to seasonal and domestic workers relative to other workers. He would also welcome an assessment of the implementation and real impact of equality plans, professional-gap correction plans and equal-pay regulations, including data on inspections conducted, violations detected, sanctions imposed and remedies granted to affected workers.

20. He would welcome disaggregated statistical data enabling an assessment of the effectiveness of the measures taken to combat violence against women and girls. He wondered how the State Party ensured that complaints of gender-based and domestic violence resulted in prompt, impartial and thorough investigations and would welcome data on prosecutions, convictions and sanctions in such cases. He also wished to know what measures had been taken to eliminate structural barriers to reporting gender-based violence, ensure adequate financial resources for victim support services, evaluate the effectiveness of relevant awareness-raising measures and address sociocultural factors that perpetuated violence against women.

*The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.30 p.m.*

21. **A representative of Andorra** said that the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families did not currently feature in the working calendar of the Department of International Legal Affairs and Human Resources of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, owing principally to the absence of relevant cases on the national territory. Priority was accorded to instruments likely to have the greatest impact at the national level. The Government was nonetheless working attentively to prevent any situation that might constitute a violation of that Convention. The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture were among the texts scheduled for submission for ratification in the near future.

22. Regarding human rights education and the dissemination of the Covenant, the school curriculum on the humanities and social sciences, as well as cross-curricular competencies across the education system, were aligned with the concepts laid out in the "democratic citizenship" unit of the Manual on Human Rights Education for Children developed by the Council of Europe. Thus, the system promoted the capacity to develop ideas and solutions of a social, cultural and environmental nature and placed particular emphasis on the teaching of human rights concepts at all ages. No specific campaigns had been carried out to disseminate the content of the Covenant beyond the training activities already mentioned in the initial report. Dissemination was, however, pursued through other means, and further efforts would be made in that regard.

23. Article 3 of the Constitution established the hierarchy of norms within the legal order of Andorra, placing the Constitution at the apex, followed by international treaties, qualified laws and thereafter regulations and other instruments. International treaties thus enjoyed supra-legal status. Where doubts arose during parliamentary consideration as to the constitutional compatibility of an international text under review, a prior opinion on constitutionality could be sought from the Constitutional Court. Under the law governing State activity in the area of treaties, the Government was required to submit, within the shortest possible time, any legislative amendments necessary for a treaty's entry into force. Should the compatibility of domestic legislation with a treaty in force subsequently be called into question, the courts would apply the treaty in preference to the law, by virtue of normative hierarchy.

24. **A representative of Andorra** said that Act No. 16/2024 had significantly strengthened the Ombudsman's mandate and had conferred upon it the status of a public authority. The Act expanded the circumstances in which the Ombudsman could intervene with private entities, principally non-governmental organizations engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights. The Ombudsman operated *de facto* with the same competencies as a national human rights institution in conformity with the Paris Principles. While the institution did not enjoy constitutional recognition and the Andorran legal framework did not provide for its direct access to the Constitutional Court, where the Ombudsman detected a possible unconstitutionality in a legal norm, it could bring the matter to the attention of the General Council, whose members held the legal authority to refer such matters to the Court.

25. The Ombudsman had no specific power to request the ratification of a treaty. However, where it considered that ratification would be beneficial for the country, it could convey that view to the Government and the General Council. In turn, the Government and the General Council could seek the Ombudsman's opinion when considering ratification, though such an opinion was not binding. In 2025, the Ombudsman had handled 440 cases, of which 19 had been opened *ex officio* and 421 had arisen from complaints received. The recently approved State budget allocated €550,000 to the Ombudsman's Office for the fulfilment of its mandate. In terms of human resources, the institution comprised four full-time and two part-time staff members.

26. The Anti-Corruption Unit currently operated with limited resources. However, at the beginning of 2026, the Government had approved the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as a result of which new normative provisions would be adopted and the Unit would be strengthened to enable full compliance with the Convention's requirements. Mechanisms for the prior verification of integrity and the detection of potential conflicts of interest for public officials did not currently exist; however, ratification of the Convention against Corruption would assist the authorities in updating all relevant legal and regulatory provisions to ensure the highest possible degree of compliance. With regard to corruption cases that had come before the courts, one case had involved a parliamentarian who had used her position to promote legislative changes for the benefit of a private party. The matter had resulted in a conviction for aggravated corruption committed by a public authority, with a sentence of 2 years and 6 months' imprisonment, suspended, and a fine of €20,000.

27. **A representative of Andorra** said that the purpose of the Andorran education system was to help build a pluralistic society and promote social cohesion and equal opportunities; hence, students should not be subjected to any kind of proselytism in the classroom. The provisions of Act No. 10/2022 that prohibited the wearing of conspicuous religious signs and symbols by students and staff in public schools were consistent with the Covenant since they had been introduced in order to achieve the legitimate objective of safeguarding inclusive educational environments and were in no way intended to restrict students' freedom of conscience. The prohibition was grounded in the principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment and applied to individuals of all religions. The Government had sought to ensure that any affected students could continue to enjoy their right to education by introducing regulations that authorized remote schooling.

28. **A representative of Andorra** said that Act No. 13/2019 had been developed on the basis of a comprehensive study that had highlighted the need for a legal framework to

guarantee equality, equal treatment and non-discrimination. The Act covered all sectors and provided for the protection of women, children, adolescents, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants and LGBTIQ individuals. It established that any reports of discrimination should be transmitted to the relevant authorities, which would then conduct the necessary inspections or investigations. The Equality Service of the Department of Equality Policies participated in those processes and coordinated efforts to provide social, legal and psychological support to all victims of discrimination or gender-based violence, including refugees and migrants. The Department formed part of the State Secretariat for Equality and Civic Engagement, which reported directly to the Head of Government. In 2025, the Equality Service had dealt with 15 cases of discrimination or gender-based violence, almost half of which had involved sexual harassment, while the other half had concerned discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. It also ran awareness-raising campaigns and had set up a dedicated hotline to facilitate the prompt reporting of cases and initiation of action. Hate speech and hate crimes were addressed in Act No. 13/2019 and the Criminal Code. The handling of such cases was overseen by the Department of Equality Policies, which ran training sessions on detecting and managing cases of discrimination and hate crimes. Specific training on online hate crimes was offered to individuals working in the media and the digital sector. The police had established a dedicated cybercrime unit to handle such crimes, deliver relevant training and run awareness-raising workshops in educational establishments.

29. The Andorran Women's Institute was an independent body that reported any breaches of anti-discrimination legislation committed by the Government to the State Secretariat for Equality and Civic Engagement. The Institute had also worked closely with the State Secretariat to address issues relating to protocols on handling gender-based violence, which in turn had culminated in the development of a training programme that was currently being run by the University of Andorra. Act No. 6/2022, which had been developed to supplement Act No. 13/2019, focused exclusively on gender equality. It set out specific measures to be adopted by each government department and ministry, the implementation of which was coordinated by the Department of Equality Policies.

30. Labour inspectors continued to receive training to help them implement Act No. 6/2022. Companies with more than 50 employees had to draw up equality plans and submit them to a dedicated registry. The plans were then verified by the Department of Equality Policies. All companies had to submit data on their gender pay gap, and employers in both the public and private sectors were required to develop protocols on handling sexual and gender-based harassment. Labour inspectors conducted random checks to verify compliance with that requirement; any company found to be in breach thereof would be punished in accordance with Acts No. 6/2022 and No. 13/2019.

31. The Andorran Women's Institute formed part of the Social and Equality Observatory, which collected disaggregated data on the situation of women and other vulnerable individuals. The data gathered by the Observatory were used to inform policymaking. A four-year programme setting out all the measures to be taken by local authorities, the Government and the Andorran Women's Institute to promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence had been approved in November 2025. Many of the measures concerned had already been introduced by different entities prior to the programme's approval; it was hoped that their impact could be strengthened if they were delivered through a coordinated programme. The Department of Equality Policies held monthly meetings with representatives of local authorities and the Andorran Women's Institute to discuss steps to be taken to ensure the programme's full implementation. In accordance with a plan that had been adopted in 2020 to promote gender equality in schools, each educational establishment had set up an equality committee or designated an equality focal point to prevent and detect cases of gender-based discrimination and train staff in delivering awareness-raising activities. The plan was currently being reviewed with a view to incorporating new measures.

32. The country's first-ever support service for victims of gender-based violence had been established in 2006. Such victims could obtain support free of charge through a dedicated hotline, which was operated round-the-clock by qualified professionals. Victims could also share information via email or in person, at the offices of the Department of Equality Policies. Protocols and plans had been drawn up to help police officers, social workers, healthcare

personnel and judicial staff to detect cases of gender-based violence and refer them to the victim support service, as required under with Act No. 1/2015 on the Eradication of Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence. The service would then conduct a risk assessment and contact the woman concerned to determine whether she wished to obtain assistance, initiate legal proceedings and, where necessary, be moved to one of the country's five shelter houses. Women who chose to bring legal action were helped to file complaints and given access to legal counsel. The children of victims of gender-based violence were referred to other support services.

33. As of November 2025, women who were considered to be at risk of gender-based violence could ask to be given a security device containing a button that they could press when in danger, which would trigger a visit from the police. Perpetrators of gender-based or domestic violence could be referred or choose to refer themselves to the Programme for the Promotion of Non-Violent Relationships, which also ran workshops in the country's prison. A service responsible for supervising contact between children and parents who had committed domestic violence had been set up under Act No. 1/2015. Women with disabilities who experienced gender-based violence were provided with all necessary support, and campaigns were being run to tackle the intersecting forms of violence affecting them. The small size of Andorra meant that all government departments worked closely together, thereby making it easier to address intersectional discrimination.

34. **A representative of Andorra** said that all government bodies followed a cross-cutting approach, which meant that any examination of the resources available to the State Secretariat for Equality and Civic Engagement should take into account not only the specific budget earmarked for that entity, but also the resources used by other ministries and departments to support it in discharging its duties. The Ministry of Social Affairs was allocated a budget of €50 million, of which €32 million was earmarked for the delivery of direct forms of social assistance such as pensions and benefits for housing, food and childcare.

35. **A representative of Andorra** said that Andorra had formed part of the Group of States against Corruption of the Council of Europe since 2005 and thus submitted itself to the thematic evaluations and reviews conducted by the Group to verify its compliance with its obligations under the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption. The work conducted as part of those processes had helped promote greater transparency in the use of public funds. In the previous two years, codes of ethics had been introduced for members of the police, government officials, senior executives and prison staff. An updated version of the code of conduct for public officials was currently being drafted. The Government planned to build on the momentum generated by the preparatory work for the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption by adopting a specific strategy to tackle the issue. As part of that work, the Government had determined that there was a need to expand and review the functions of the Unit for Preventing and Combating Corruption. The Government must also decide whether the Unit should be separated from the Ministry of Justice and the Interior and reconstituted as a fully independent entity, with a view to ensuring compliance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

36. **A representative of Andorra** said that the plan to promote gender equality in schools covered all three educational programmes – Andorran, Spanish and French. Almost 85% of students at the upper primary and secondary levels had participated in the classroom workshops, awareness-raising performances and expert talks organized through the plan. Teachers were provided with educational resources to help them deliver lessons that reinforced the importance of coexistence and preventing and addressing discrimination and gender-based violence. Sex education was being strengthened with support from the national health authorities.

37. **Mr. Yigezu** said that he wished to know whether there were any obstacles preventing the designation of an official national human rights institution and would welcome a response to his earlier question concerning the establishment of a whistle-blower protection system.

38. **Ms. Abdo Rocholl** asked for clarification on whether an independent oversight body had been established with a mandate to address hate speech. Further details on the collection of data and development of indicators on that issue would also be appreciated.

39. **Mr. Carazo** said that it would be helpful if the delegation could provide more information on the specific outcomes of all the measures it had mentioned in its replies, since other small States would undoubtedly benefit from the lessons learned. In particular, he would appreciate a description of the progress that had been made in improving gender equality in the labour market.

40. **Mr. Quezada Cabrera** said that he would like to know what legal weight was given to the Committee's Views on individual communications and the recommendations that would be contained in its concluding observations.

41. **Mr. Ndiaye** said that he would like to know if any judicial decisions concerning the interpretation of the Act on Equal Treatment and Non-Discrimination (No. 13/2019), in particular article 4 thereof, has been issued. The delegation might explain what was done to oversee the implementation of the Act in the private sector and whether any individuals or companies had been found to have violated the Act or had been commended for their compliance therewith. He was curious to know what was being done to combat structural and institutional discrimination against women and increase their representation in all areas of society. It would be useful if the delegation could reply to his earlier question concerning the number of hate crimes committed in the State Party and specify what groups had been affected by such crimes and whether any cases had been brought before the courts and culminated in the effective punishment of the perpetrators.

42. **A representative of Andorra** said that the small size of the Andorran State meant that establishing new institutions could sometimes pose challenges. The law governing the work of the Ombudsman established that one of the body's main duties was to defend the rights recognized in the international conventions ratified by Andorra. The body had broad powers, which had recently been expanded. The Government had no plans to create a new human rights institution since the expansion of the Ombudsman's powers meant that it should have the mandate to perform all the duties expected of such institutions.

43. Measures to protect whistle-blowers against reprisals were set out in the Criminal Code. Confirmation of whether there were any plans to establish a specific whistle-blower protection programme would be provided after the review. Andorran law did not contain any provisions granting binding force to the recommendations issued by the human rights treaty bodies and other United Nations entities. Nonetheless, the country's participation in interactive dialogues and the universal periodic review demonstrated the importance it attached to such recommendations.

44. **A representative of Andorra** said that the Social and Equality Observatory was working to clarify the definition of hate speech, gather data and conduct studies on the phenomenon and implement the necessary policies. It was also in the process of developing indicators to measure the effectiveness of the programmes and services run by the Department of Equality Policies. In the case of the Programme for the Promotion of Non-Violent Relationships, for example, steps were being taken to establish the indicators needed to determine the impact the Programme had had on participants' behaviour. Data concerning the work of the support service for victims of gender-based violence were collected annually. An analysis of those data had suggested that the recent increase in the number of cases being handled by that service was not the result of a rise in violence, but of the improved detection of those cases. More women were being referred to the victim support service by public service workers or were referring themselves using new tools that enabled them to submit confidential requests for assistance. The fact remained, however, that cases continued to go undetected, which meant that efforts would continue to ensure that more cases were reported.

45. Responsibility for enforcing Act No. 13/2019 in the private sector lay with the labour authorities. Support was provided by the Department of Equality Policies, which worked closely with the authorities in all sectors to implement the Act, conduct any necessary investigations and impose sanctions. A programme had been developed to promote the employment of women and vulnerable groups, and the Department of Equality Policies was working with the labour authorities to address inequalities in the workplace.

46. **A representative of Andorra** said that, in 2024, for the first time, internationally standardized indicators had been used to gather data on the gender pay gap in Andorra. The results of those data collection efforts, to which some 2,400 companies had contributed information, would be published in the coming weeks. It was hoped that the results would enable the authorities to obtain a more accurate idea of the current pay gap.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*